



FAST TAKE

SUPER BOWL LI

Key Social Trends and Pro-tips

WAVEMAKER



SB51: MAKING A SUPER BOWL SIZE STATEMENT IN SOCIAL MEDIA

History was made as the New England Patriots mounted a record-setting comeback against the Atlanta Falcons, including the first overtime in Super Bowl history. Millions tuned in not just for the game, but also for the halftime show, which saw record viewership, and of course the commercials! Brands did their best to match the level of energy that the Patriots' Tom Brady and the team brought through a series of emotionally-driven and politically-charged messages, with the occasional interjection of humor. While brand messaging broke new barriers, this year's second-screen marketing was largely derivative from years past, with few brands taking risks on creating new and innovative experiences.

Now that you've re-played the halftime performance and maybe even a few of your favorite commercials, MEC offers a deep dive into the key marketer trends, from the influence of the political climate to the continued fragmentation of audience attention. In this Fast Take, we cover Super Bowl by the numbers, key social observations and pro tips, complete with a Moment Matrix that links to this year's social media moments.

SUPER BOWL 51 BY THE NUMBERS

\$5MM

Cost of a Super Bowl TV Spot
([source](#))

\$500K

Cost of Twitter Trend ([source](#))

113.7MM

Average TV Viewers
([source](#))

\$500K

Cost of Snapchat Advertising Package (source: Internal Data)

415MM

Super Bowl Related Interactions Across Facebook + Instagram ([source](#))

27.6MM

Tweets using #SB51 ([source](#))

1.7MM

Estimated Viewers Across Streaming Devices
([source](#))

KEY OBSERVATIONS AND PRO-TIPS

1. Brands in the biggest spotlight delivered politically charged messages.

Brands that earned the most conversation shared emotional stories that expressed company values. Some brands intentionally designed spots to make a political statement, such as Airbnb, 84 Lumber and Audi, while others claim audiences read into their purposefully non-political message, such as Budweiser. Ultimately, three of the top five top most talked about ads were politically charged; however, the social conversations were polarizing among consumers, with many questioning the brands corporate policies and message authenticity.

PRO TIP | The Trump-era has made audiences highly sensitive to messages that can be construed as political. Brands should only make a political statement in their marketing if it is an authentic depiction of how the company behaves in the real world.

2. Social platforms assumed different roles in brand activation strategies.

With 27.6MM mentions of #SB51, Twitter is still the hotbed of conversation for the Super Bowl among audiences and brands. Brands, however, also tapped into Facebook, Instagram and YouTube to boost content that extended the scale of their TV campaigns. Meanwhile, Snapchat was used by brands like Budweiser, Campbell's and Gatorade to drive audience engagement, and Pinterest got into the game with a board-generator providing event hosting needs.

PRO TIP | Strategically select the platforms most relevant for your campaign goals, and tailor the brand experience for that platform's key strengths. You don't need to play across every platform, only the platforms that align with your core objectives.

3. The appeal of the TV spot reveal still pays off.

Many brands continued the trend of teasing their TV spots in advance of the big game, allowing for longevity; however, this approach can dampen the swell of excitement that comes when an ad airs live on game day. For *Stranger Things*, Netflix chose not to pre-seed their spot, resulting in the brand winning the most brand mentions on Twitter (307K) while receiving about the same number of average video views online in a fraction of the time (3.5MM).

PRO TIP | Content with a strong value exchange can greatly benefit from a live reveal approach, tapping into consumer surprise and delight; evaluate content strength to decide the best approach for scale.

KEY OBSERVATIONS AND PRO-TIPS

4. Brands struggled to expand the role of livestreaming.

Following the Squarespace Key & Peele live commentary during Super Bowl 50, the hope was to see brands advance the role of livestreaming in complementing the TV experience. Unfortunately, the few brands who tested livestreaming were basic in nature (e.g. Budweiser streamed the Clydesdales). Both Snickers and Hyundai sought buzz for running live TV spots, but struggled to enlighten audiences of the special live production, and did not receive recognition for their efforts.

PRO TIP | There is a big opportunity for brands to think out of the box and be the innovators in this space. Live events are exciting, and, when properly executed, pique consumers' interest and desire to access content in real-time.

5. Brands leveraged influencers large and small to cut through noise.

Brands continued to tap into celebrities and influencers to cut through the noise and amplify their brand message. This was a key tactic employed by T-Mobile, using Justin Bieber, Snoop and Martha Stewart to share memes and solicit user generated content. Alternatively, brands like Avocados From Mexico employed micro-influencers to push participation in their #sweeps. While this was successful in getting them to rank high in volume, a large volume of posts are canned messages en masse.

PRO TIP | Influencer amplification can be an effective tactic in cutting through clutter. Keep in mind brands must allow influencers (and even encourage them) to publish original and authentic posts for the brand to gain their full value.

6. Brand on brand conversation continued but with less audience recognition.

Some were snarky, some were funny and some were...uncomfortable. Brands have continued inserting themselves into each other's conversations by taking advantage of real time replies across social platforms like Twitter and Facebook. While this used to be *the* grassroots tactic to breakthrough the noise, it's been three years of this behavior and has become part of the normal Super Bowl chatter, removing some of the thrill.

PRO TIP | Always stay true to your brand's voice and persona. Do not feel the need to force a conversation or commentary to win a moment if it does not feel organic or on-brand.

7. Brands are narrowing in on events within the game.

According to Nielsen's ratings, halftime viewership surpassed that of the actual game for the second year in a row. Rather than trying to compete, brands like Intel and Tiffany & Co. narrowed their focus to the halftime show, rather than the game as a whole.

PRO TIP | Identifying key moments/microevents within larger events allows brands to hit their audience in a more precise and focused way.

More from MEC Clients at Super Bowl LI...

Tiffany & Co.'s Super Bowl spot marked their return to TV for the first time in two decades (although, fun fact: Tiffany has designed the Vince Lombardi championship trophy since 1967), featuring Super Bowl halftime show performer Lady Gaga in a 60-second spot that aired in 10 local markets. Designed to launch its new fashion jewelry collection, Tiffany HardWear, the unscripted spot featured Gaga, Tiffany's newest face of its Legendary Style campaign, talking about her passion for the brand and her own creative process, airing immediately before her live halftime performance. The spot's placement was destined to fan the flames of excitement for fans tuning into Gaga's performance (and burning up social media with anticipation), driving social chatter via the #TiffanyHardWear hashtag. The momentum will continue with a integrated digital and social campaign to extend reach and frequency later this month.

Michelin debuted its "Caring" campaign, shifting the focus from the animated Michelin Man to the emotions surrounding real-world 'mobility' situations. The 30-second spot tied into nearly every form of media, including paid social video ads that ran across Twitter, Instagram and Facebook and extended the versions of the three real-world stories to drive engagement. It also included paid-search "moment marketing" with the goal of driving conversion and site traffic during and after the big game, a strong compliment to the always-on search campaigns the brand consistently runs targeted to in market tire shoppers.

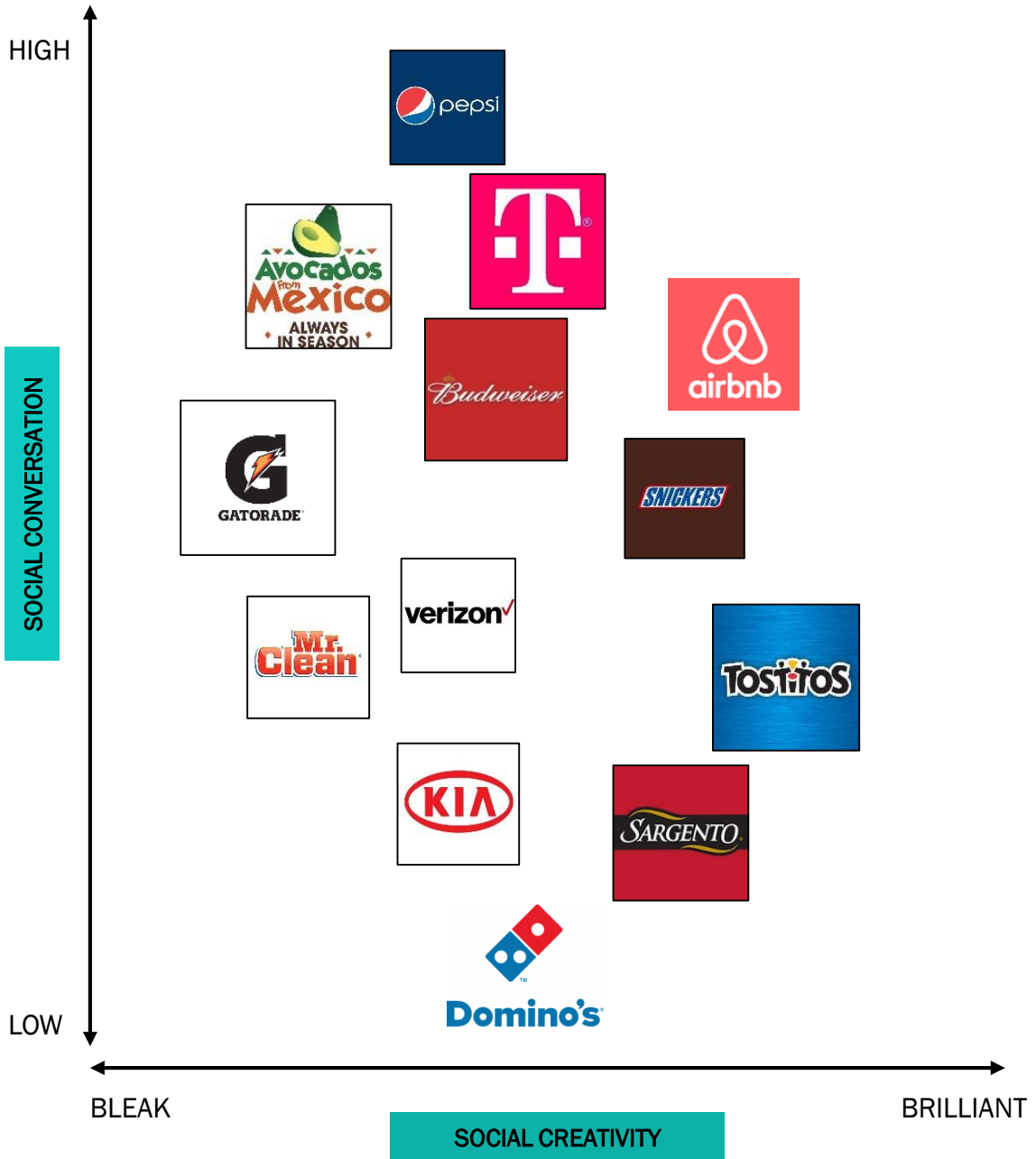
Campbell Soup Co. took a rather bold approach with two digital spots in the Fox Sports livestream for Chunky and Slow Kettle. To ensure the greatest impact with a digital-first audience, MEC sought out a unique partner in NowThis to co-create an over-the-top recipe spot native to the live stream experience. In addition, Campbell's sponsored a full editorial takeover on NowThis' Snapchat Discover centered around themes of food and football, further cementing the brands investment in digital and focus on delivering 360 experiences where consumers are increasingly spending their time.

GoDaddy, returning to TV after taking a brief hiatus, delivered a spot about the internet featuring small nods to past meme-worthy content. The campaign focused on GoCentral, its new mobile-friendly website builder, and quickly racked up more than 19 million video views across social channels and lead to a host of first time registrants building sites during the game.

TIFFANY & CO.



SOCIAL MEDIA MOMENT MATRIX [CLICK ICONS TO VIEW]





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For questions, please contact your
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