

Zen & The Art of Legal Networking

INSIGHTS & COMMENTARY ON RELATIONSHIP BUILDING WITHIN THE INTERNATIONAL LAWYERS NETWORK

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Superbowl Commercials - The Good - Lessons for Lawyers



Okay, I admit it. I love commercials.

So much so that when I ordered the DVR service with my cable, I wasn't sure I would fast forward through them.

(Don't worry, I do)

Not all commercials, of course. I just love the well done ones. Like the [Old Spice campaign](#) - but that also combined my love of social media, so I'm a bit biased.

So for me, although I really enjoy football, the Superbowl is really about the commercials - they are the best of the best in advertising - at least, they're supposed to be. If

you're paying \$3 million for a commercial spot, it should be the best work your company can get.

What does this have to do with legal marketing? I'm not a huge fan of legal commercials, I must admit. But I think there are solid marketing lessons to be learned from my favorites.

And from the bad commercials - let's be honest, there were more than a couple of those last night!

So without further ado....

I think everyone had a favorite last night. According to a national poll done, the two favorites were the Doritos pug teasing commercial and the Budweiser dog sitter/server commercial. They were certainly well done, but my favorite was one that leaked out a few days before the big game. That's right, the Volkswagen Darth Vader Commercial.

Volkswagen Darth Vader

I like this commercial for several reasons, and I admit, the main one is because it's cute.

Also, once the commercial aired, I found out that "Darth Vader" is a [heart patient in Los Angeles](#) - even more reason to love this commercial.

But let's get to the marketing benefits of this commercial:

- It's cute & funny, so it's memorable.
- The commercial ends with the car, which is the best part - so it's clear that it's a car commercial. You know what they're selling.
- Additionally, they do a good job of selling one of the benefits of the car - it can start remotely.

How can this translate for lawyers? Figure out what makes you memorable and what the unique benefits are for clients who hire you - then, communicate them clearly. (Also, never be afraid to use humor - although humor can often be fairly low brow, it is possible to be funny in a classy, professional way that's appropriate for the profession)

Some of my other favorites (also supported by the group I watched the Superbowl with):

Misunderstanding - Chevy Cruze

I have an elderly grandmother with less than perfect hearing, so maybe this commercial speaks more to my family than to others, but it really made me laugh. In addition, because of the confusion and repetition, it communicated memorably that that name of the car is "Cruze," that it gets 42 miles per gallon, and that's it's a hybrid car. Very well done commercial.

NFL Best Fans Ever Superbowl Commercial

This was another excellent commercial and fan favorite. Why? It communicated with a wide audience through it's variety of television shows and stars, and communicated with all football fans by incorporating the logos of all the NFL teams. The group I watched the game with was intently watching to see which stars would be wearing their team's logo and which show would be featured next. Additionally, their ability to use the logos and fan paraphernalia in a way that you almost couldn't tell they were added in was really fabulous.

Pepsi Spots:

Love Hurts:

What's not to love about a commercial where someone is unexpectedly hit in the head with a can of Pepsi? Again, humor ruled the night - and it was memorable for Pepsi, because you definitely remember that a can of soda was thrown at someone, and the earlier scenes where his wife/girlfriend was trying to keep him from eating poorly remind you that it's a no-calorie version of the soda.

Torpedo Cooler:

For anyone who's ever been bullied, this is the perfect revenge commercial. Funny and memorable, because of the use of Pepsi Max throughout the commercial. It doesn't do an excellent job of reminding you that it's the no-calorie version of the soda, but it's cool, funny, and edgy, which all fit in with Pepsi's branding.

Doritos House Sitting:

You've got to have a bit of willing suspension of disbelief for this clever ad, but it incorporates their product throughout the ad, reflects the casual, fun attitude that characterizes Doritos, and is memorable.

And finally, another fan favorite - the Chrysler Eminem commercial:

This is the only non-funny commercial that I truly liked - the parallels between Eminem's rise to fame from incredibly difficult beginnings and Detroit's current rise from the economic crisis were well illustrated, both visually and through audio. It was classy and slick, just like Chrysler...and it was a little bada\$\$ too. It gets you thinking, "Maybe I'm a little bit of a bada\$\$ and maybe I need a Chrysler." As [Nancy Slome](#) said on Twitter "Powerful narrative; understated, then pow - direct!"

Some honorable mentions:

- [Bridgestone Reply All Commercial](#): I liked this because it was funny, but didn't include it in my top commercials list because I didn't think it highlighted the product well enough. Clever ad, but not for a tire commercial. It wasn't sufficient to have the employee rushing around in his car to communicate the product.
- [Bridgestone Beaver Commercial](#): This commercial did a better job of highlighting the product, and showing you the benefits (i.e. Bridgestone tires can stop effectively, even in the rain). Plus, who doesn't love a beaver giving a funny little salute?
- [Audi Big Game Commercial](#): This was a favorite of mine, but again, it didn't do a great job of product placement. I did chuckle when I watched it though.
- [Doritos Pug Attack](#): This was one of the top two commercials nationally - Doritos did a good job generally of including their product throughout their spots and since I'm currently obsessing over Doritos, I think they did a good job of encouraging their audience to buy them.
- [Sonata Hybrid](#): Another great commercial, this asks you to question yourself about what if we'd always settled for the first thing that came along. Not striking as a car commercial, but overall clever and memorable.
- [Cars.com's Go First](#): Another humorous commercial selling the benefits of using cars.com - the ability to read reviews and learn more about others' experiences. It might have been better had they included examples with cars.

So let's recap - what's useful for lawyers and law firms here:

- Good marketing fits in well with your brand - figure out who you are and what you want people to know about you, and make sure everything you're doing to communicate with your target audience is aligned with this message.
- Be memorable - whether this means being a little funny or telling a captivating story, figure out what is the best way to deliver your message so that your audience will remember you.

- Keep the focus on your product and it's benefits - the best commercials, in my mind, combined the first two points with emphasizing their products and what makes them appealing to consumers.

In my next post, I'll cover the commercials that I think missed the mark - or totally went wrong - and the lessons we can learn from those.

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