

Michigan State University advertising faculty to pick Super Bowl ad winner

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For the 10th consecutive year, Michigan State University's advertising, public relations, and retailing faculty will meet to grade the best and worst television commercials broadcast during Super Bowl XLI on Sunday, Feb. 4.

Each participating faculty member will grade the ads for creativity, strategy, execution and production values. Faculty will judge each ad in real time as the spots are viewed.

The cost of a Super Bowl advertisement has more than quadrupled in the past 20 years, reaching \$2.5 million in 2006 for a 30-second unit. That compares to the \$600,000 it cost to purchase a spot in 1987.

For the 2007 game, CBS is reportedly charging in excess of \$2.6 million for each 30-second spot — more than \$5 million a minute and that adds up quickly.

With more than 90 million viewers tuning in, most advertisers aren't blinking at the steep price tag.

"No other advertising is as costly because the audience is so vast," said MSU advertising professor Bruce Vanden Bergh. "The bar of creative excellence is very high, as are the expectations.

"The companies and agencies that generate positive buzz for their products in the Super Bowl spend the money to make creative ads that impact the game's audience and their potential customers. You have to be hip and funny and grab viewers' attention or you're going to lose a big audience and damage your brand."

According to TNS Media Intelligence, Super Bowl advertising totaled 682 minutes —that's more than 11 hours of commercial time — during the last 20 years.

During those 11 hours, 221 different advertisers bought more than 1,400 spots and spent \$1.72 billion in network advertising sales.

And, the top five Super Bowl advertisers alone have spent \$613 million on advertising, accounting for 35 percent of the total advertising dollars spent during the game.

"This is the most costly television advertising time of the year because the Super Bowl draws an enormous international audience," said Vanden Bergh. "Beyond that, there is an intense and growing interest in what has become a separate Super Bowl for television advertisers, and each year the creative bar gets raised.

"The interest in the Super Bowl ads has become so intense that if you don't meet a pretty high standard you actually risk doing harm to your brand."

MSU's Super Bowl television ad grades will be available and distributed immediately following the game.

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