

Thanks to genius marketing, clever advertising, and more than a little luck, the **Super Bowl** is no longer just about football.

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By Nathan Lee Adamus

Although it was created to crown the National Football League's champion, the Super Bowl has become the most televised sporting event in the world, and has evolved into a cultural and marketing phenomenon.

It's practically impossible to walk into your office or workplace the week before the big game without seeing a Super Bowl squares sheet lying on your desk. And what about the Monday after the big game? Well, it's likely that half your coworkers call in sick with pounding migraines that make their heads feel like a deflated football.





### Advertising Dollars

In 1967, the average cost of a 30-second spot during Super Bowl I was \$37,500. Fast forward to 2000, and you're looking at roughly \$2.2 million. Just 15 years later, and that number has more than doubled to \$4.5 million. Even if you're several years removed from algebra class, numbers don't lie. No one is dropping \$4.5 million on television advertising unless they're sure that damn near everyone is watching.

## Super Bowl Stats

**1.23**

**BILLION** Number of chicken wings consumed.

**11.8**

Depth (in feet) of guacamole ingested if spread across a football field.

**28 Million**

Lbs. of potato chips devoured.

**293,000**

Number of miles of potato chips consumed if "Lay'd" end-to-end.

**325.5**

**Million:** Gallons of beer chugged.

**8 Million**

Lbs. of popcorn consumed.

**7 Million**

Number of employees who will not show up to work on Monday.

**4 Million**

Number of pizzas inhaled by viewers.

**493**

Number of Olympic-sized swimming pools you can fill with all that beer.





room. A young boy stops him and offers his own bottle of Coke. The lineman's mood is so completely changed after he drains it that he casually tosses his game jersey to the boy with the now-famous line, "Hey Kid, Catch!"

Although there's still some debate as to exactly what commercial sparked the largest spike in Super Bowl interest and activities, many advertising gurus cite a 1984 Macintosh computer commercial aired during Super Bowl XVIII as the catalyst. Apple's George Orwell influenced "1984" television spot—featuring a sledgehammer wielding female hell-bent on shattering IBM's rigid plans for a dystopian society—was the talk of the town.

And then of course there was "Bud ... weis ... er." From the Clydesdales, to talking frogs, to "Waaaaaaaasssssup!", no corporation has revolutionized the advertising 'game' as much as Anheuser-Busch. Their clever ads rarely had anything to do with barley and hops, and everything to do with brand recognition. Thanks to Anheuser's new direction in television advertising, Super Bowl Sunday spots were no longer about selling a product; it was about force-feeding viewers a brand.

Soon everyone was talking about the Super Bowl and reciting lines from the most-memorable ads. The media ran with it. Now the week after game day is filled with stories and debate addressing everyone's favorite and least favorite commercials.

### **"Can't come in. Basement's flooded."**

Estimates indicate that almost \$1 billion in work productivity will vanish into thin air the day after the Super Bowl. It's difficult to put an exact figure on lost productivity, but a "Side-



lined by Sports" study in 2012, claims that Super Bowl pregame and postgame activities will kill a staggering 8.7 percent of corporate payrolls.

CFOs and office managers are now hip to the underlying cost of the big game on their business. In 2013, business owners began pushing for Congress to pass a law making the Monday after the Super Bowl a national holiday. Spearheaded by the lobbying group 4on4.com Fantasy Football, the petition's goal of 100,000 signatures fell short of its intended goal, garnering just 2,625 signatures—nowhere near enough to get the White House's attention. We have to assume they were asking the wrong people.

According to a Blimpie survey in early 2015, 26% of those surveyed felt the Super Bowl should be a national holiday. If those numbers seem extremely low, a whopping 43% also suggested moving the Super Bowl to Saturday. Either way, folks get it.

The good news is that if there's anything that can sway lawmakers into taking action, it's lost revenue.

### **Another Bowl, Another Record**

Last year's Super Bowl was the most watched broadcast in television history

with 112.2 million viewers. Ask half of those viewers which team won, and they're likely to respond with a slight tilt of the head and a blank stare. Ask them what their favorite commercial was, however, and you'll hear Doritos, TurboTax, or "I don't know what it was for ... but the one with the talking baby."

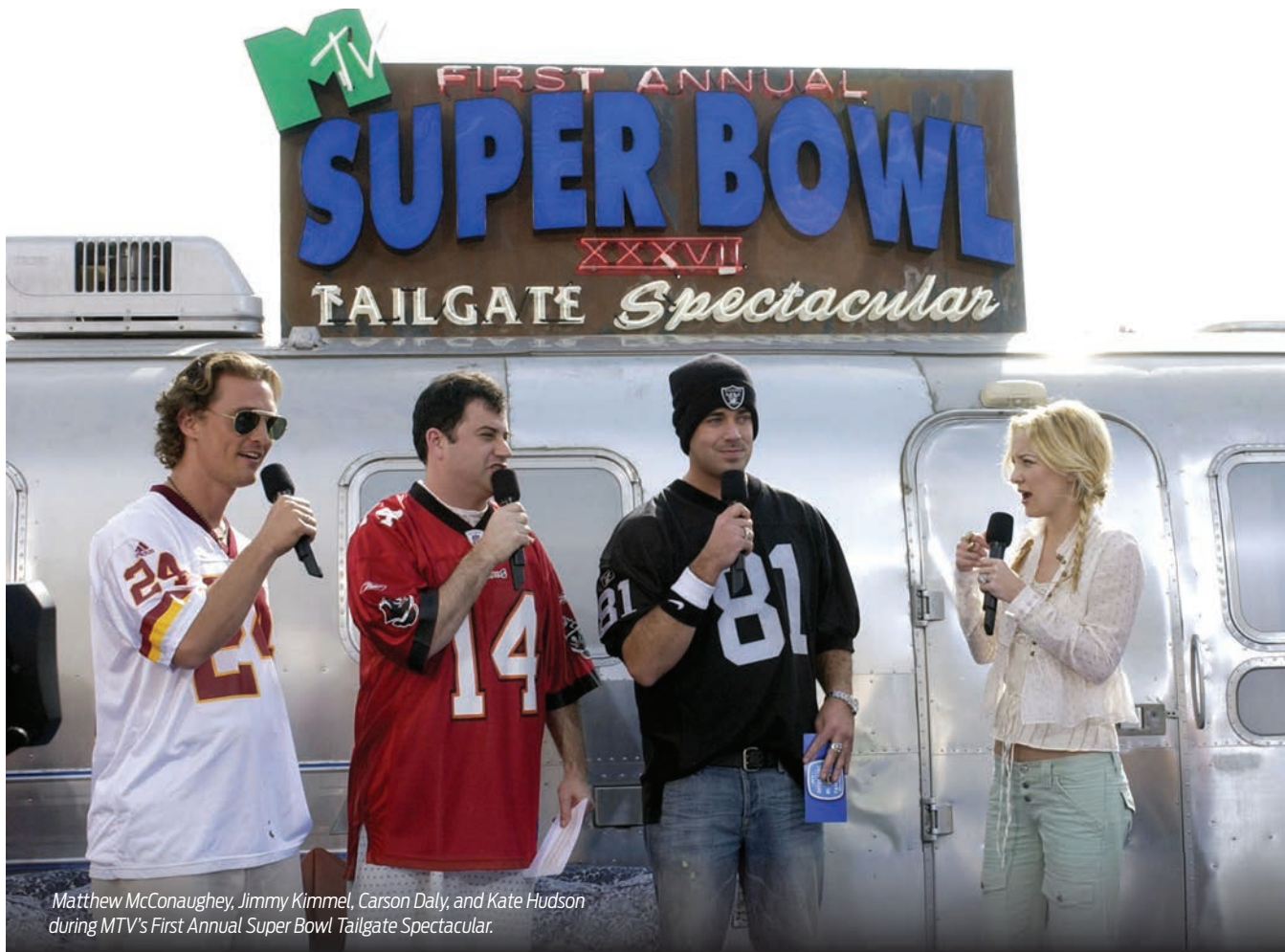
We can argue all day about who came first—the chicken or the egg—but the Super Bowl wouldn't be a cultural phenomenon without commercials, and many corporate entities would not be who they are today without the Super Bowl.

Even if your favorite team finishes 1-15 this year and hasn't sniffed a playoff berth since prohibition, you can guarantee that unless your basement is legitimately submerged under 2 feet of water, your football and material wants, needs and desires will all be quenched on February 7th, 2016 during the 50th edition of the Super Bowl.

Just remember to drink lots of water before passing out after the third quarter, because for now, Super Bowl Monday is still reserved for cottonmouth, video searches and brain inactivity.

And until the DASB (Day After Super Bowl) becomes a national holiday, you still have to go to work.





Matthew McConaughey, Jimmy Kimmel, Carson Daly, and Kate Hudson during MTV's First Annual Super Bowl Tailgate Spectacular.



Katy Perry's halftime performance in 2015 had social media buzzing when "Left Shark" ignored the rehearsed choreography and went rogue.

KMAZUR/WIREIMAGE

TOP - M. CAULFIELD/WIREIMAGE - BOTTOM - KEVINMAZUR/WIREIMAGE





If you do manage to survive two-dozen Buffalo wings, nachos, pizza and four rounds of Fireballs and Jager Bombs, you probably won't be getting much work done.

The Monday after the Super Bowl should be a national holiday.

Even if the game was a nail-biter, with plays rivaling "The Catch" or "The Call", odds are your workday will be spent discussing your favorite Super Bowl commercials, followed by searching for the ones you missed on YouTube, all on company time. If the first two rounds of the NCAA basketball Tournament continue to cause a documented workplace decline in productivity, the day after the Super Bowl is, for lack of a better term, a complete blowout.

Regardless of who's playing, who wins or who gets to say, "I'm going to Disneyland", the Super Bowl has changed the way we watch football, not only across America, but around the world.

### A Shift in Marketing

For the first few years, the Super Bowl was predominately a consolation prize, one more game tacked on to the end of the season. At Super Bowl I, one end of the stadium was filled not with fans, but with empty seats. Even though the contest was broadcast on national television—by two networks (CBS & NBC)—many fans couldn't have cared less about the outcome. It was, after all, just a game between a couple of small market teams, the Green Bay Packers and the Kansas City Chiefs.

Although football has recently seen a huge uptick in female fans, in those early years it wasn't something the average woman cared to watch. Now, just as many women as men view it, often due to the events and activities associated with Super Bowl Sunday, including the elaborate, and sometimes controversial, halftime show.

The East Coast/West Coast feud that developed between Tupac and Biggie was built on the foundation of a stolen concept that NFL marketers have perfected.

Although we're paraphrasing due to inappropriate content, Tupac told his East Coast homey—and future enemy—that if he wanted to sell records, he had to create songs geared toward a female audience. In other words, if you can get women to want your records, the men will in turn want them.

Yes ladies, we are this gullible.

But how do you get a large population of women and men who aren't fans to care about a silly game of football?

Easy. You don't make it about football.

### The Super Bowl Shopping Spree

An early NFL attempt to shift audience perception of the Super Bowl appeared in 1973. That year, a Noxzema commercial featuring "Broadway Joe" Namath and future Charlie's Angel and poster heartthrob, Farrah Fawcett, made headlines due to a less-than-subtle sexual innuendo involving shaving cream.

In the 80s, Coca-Cola premiered a memorable ad featuring "Mean Joe" Greene as an injured and grumpy player limping down the tunnel to the locker

## A CULTURAL PHENOMENON



*Sorry folks, no boobs here. Janet Jackson's "wardrobe malfunction" has made her name the most searched term in the history of the internet. Al Gore would be proud.*

