


The Post-Game Playbook



A stylized graphic of an American football, split vertically. The left half is dark brown with red laces, and the right half is white with red laces. The football is positioned on the left side of the slide, partially cut off by the edge.

This is our Super Bowl.

In a world where many are tempted to, as Kendrick says, turn the “tv off,” the Super Bowl represents a rare moment where advertising actually captures our collective attention. Each year, the big game provides the ultimate stage for big ideas to shine. As some of the minds behind that big thinking, Ogilvy always takes the opportunity to understand what work wins (even though we don’t get a ring).

As one of the last remaining monocultural moments, the Super Bowl gives us a glimpse at the sentiment of society. Meant to appeal to the entire country, the ads give hints at how people are feeling and what resonates with them.

How brands can go

From a One-game-wonder

Brands want to make the loudest noise at the Super Bowl. They know they need to stand out, but they also have to meet expectations on the one night people actually *want* to watch ads. So, they often end up sticking to the playbook — absurdist humor, celebrity overload, talking animals, nostalgic nods, you know the drill. While those plays might entertain in the moment, they can't always carry your brand into the next season.

To the Hall of Fame

Trying to hijack attention by aligning your brand to something of meaning to your audience, (a trend, a celebrity) but with no association with the role your brand plays in your audience's life? That's how you fumble.

Brands that create a lasting legacy are ones that act not as **a mirror**, reflecting mass trends back to a wide audience, but as **a magnet**, manifesting real humanity and empathy to drive impact and resonate with culture long past the big game.



The Highlight Reel



Home Field Advantage



Beyond the Spot: Integrated Impact



The Scroll Bowl



AI's Tush Push



From the Sidelines to Center Field



Super Bowl LIX's Ins and Outs



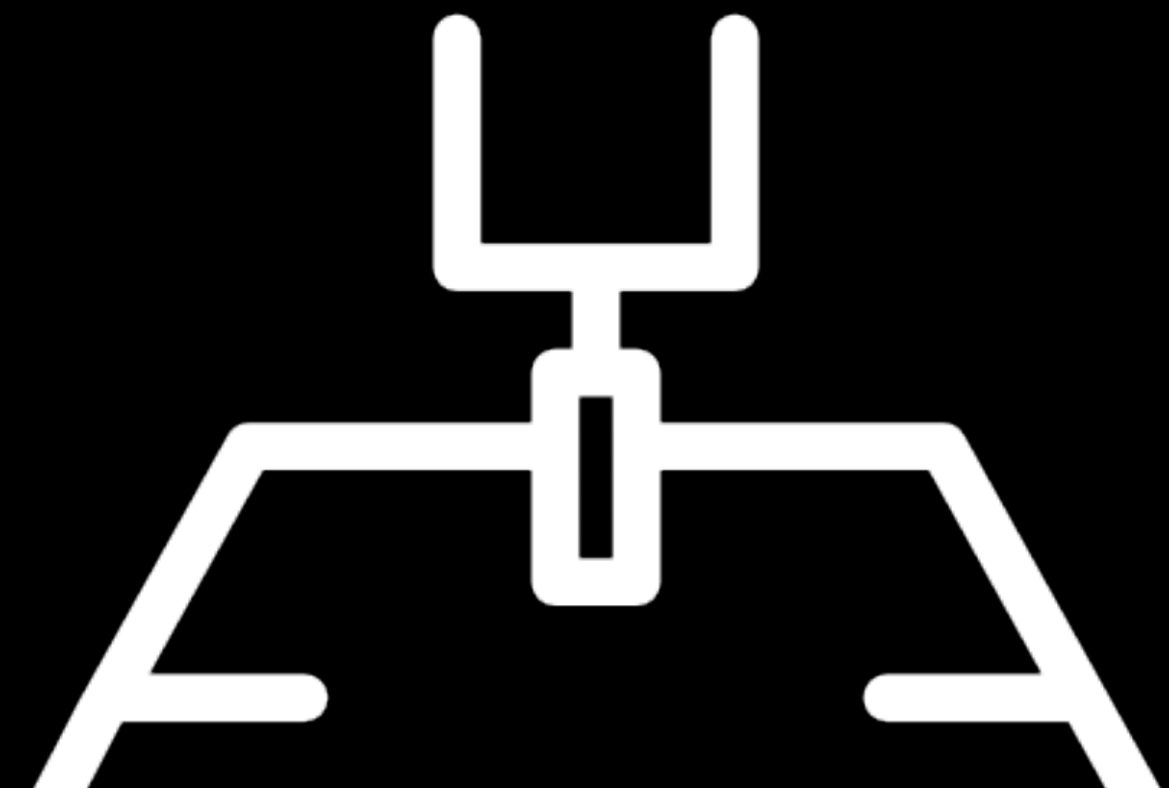
Home Field Advantage

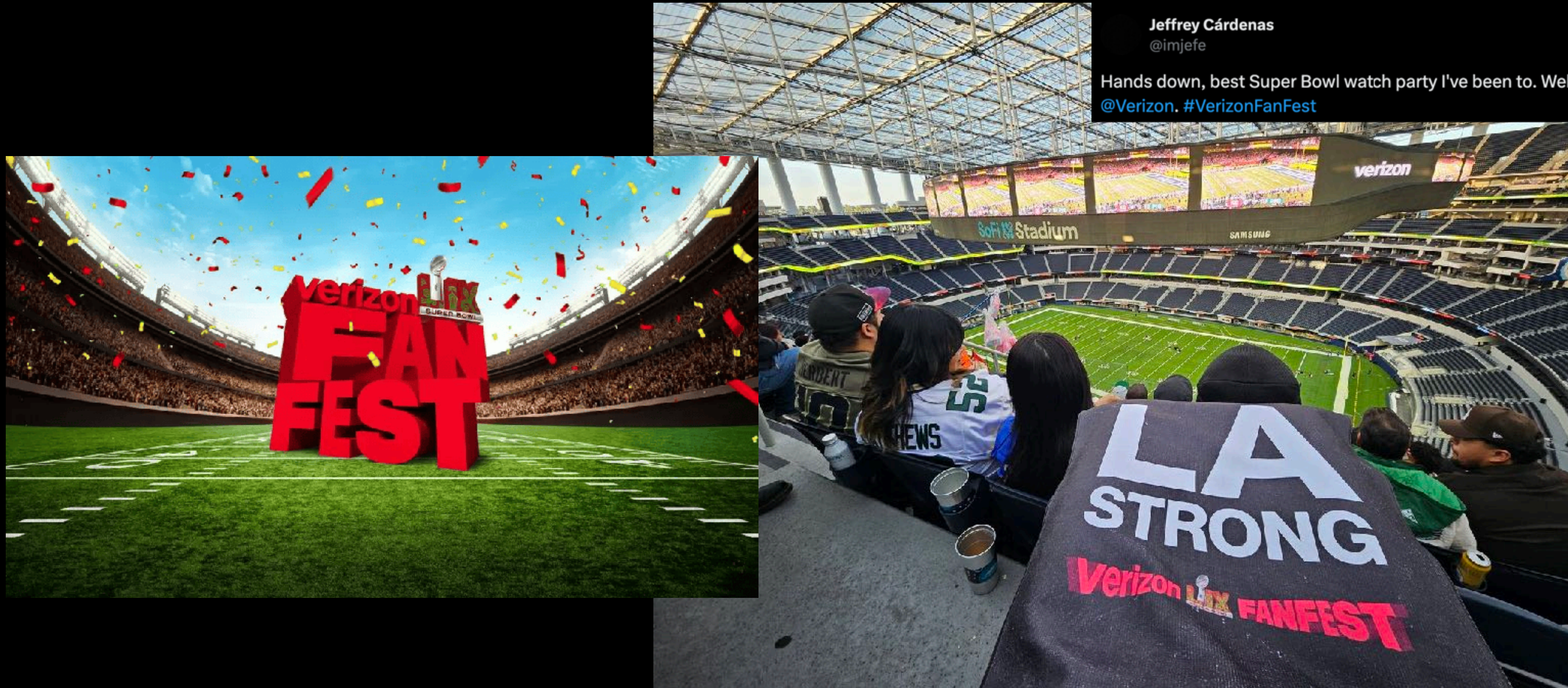


With a record 127.7 million people tuning in to the Super Bowl on Sunday, the big game is the best place for a national eye grab. Yet, in a fragmented cultural landscape, brands have learned that when you speak to everyone, you speak to *no one*.

With new consumer demands and sky-high prices for a :30 spot, notable big name brands opted for regional buys and on-the-ground activations over the traditional national TV advertisement this year.

While hyperlocal advertisers may not get the widespread media coverage that comes with a national spot, their targeted approach allows for one-on-one connection with consumers, building stronger relationships with real world impact.





After the massive success of its star-studded "Can't B Broken" 2024 Super Bowl campaign featuring Beyoncé, Verizon decided to take a different approach in 2025—one that focused less on the national spotlight and more on rewarding its loyal customers where they live. Recognizing the power of personal connections and the growing desire for community-driven experiences, Verizon launched its first-ever "Super Bowl Fan Fest," a groundbreaking initiative that brought the excitement of Super Bowl Sunday directly to fans across 30 NFL markets.



Google Workspace took a hyper-targeted approach with its "50 States, 50 Stories" campaign, spotlighting small businesses from each state and showcasing how they use Gemini, Google's AI technology, to streamline operations and achieve success. By profiling real entrepreneurs and tailoring messaging to resonate with local communities, the campaign created a personal and relatable narrative that successfully highlighted the practical, human-centered benefits of Google's AI tools amid cultural tensions and growing fears around AI.

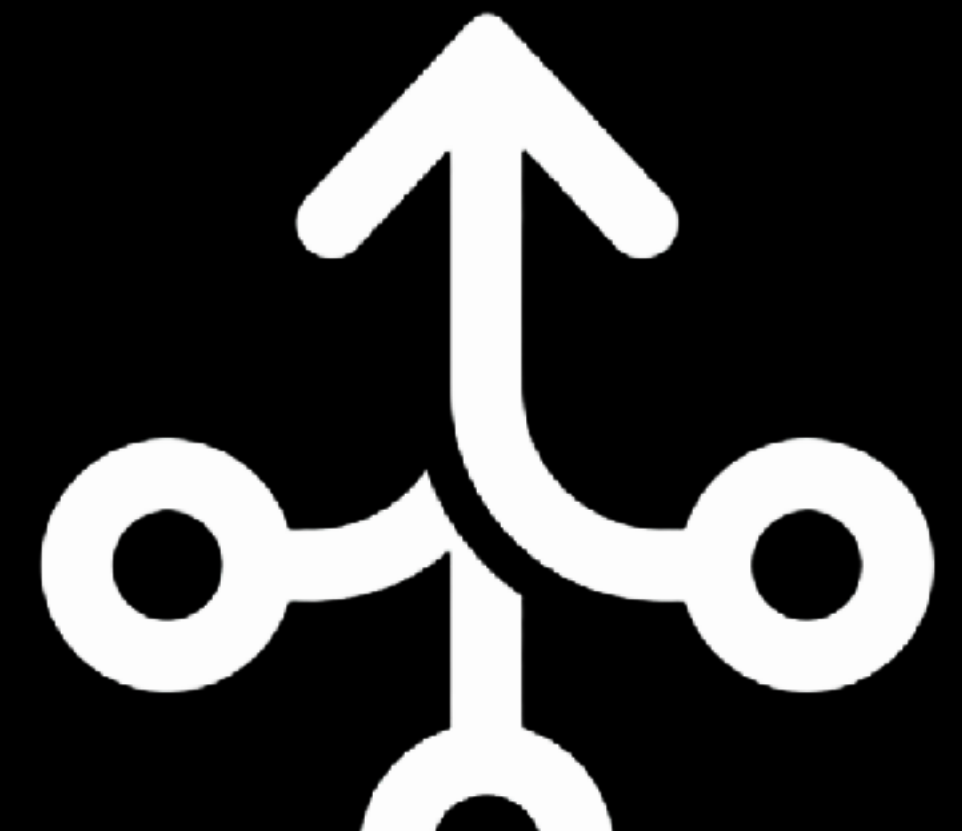
Beyond the Spot

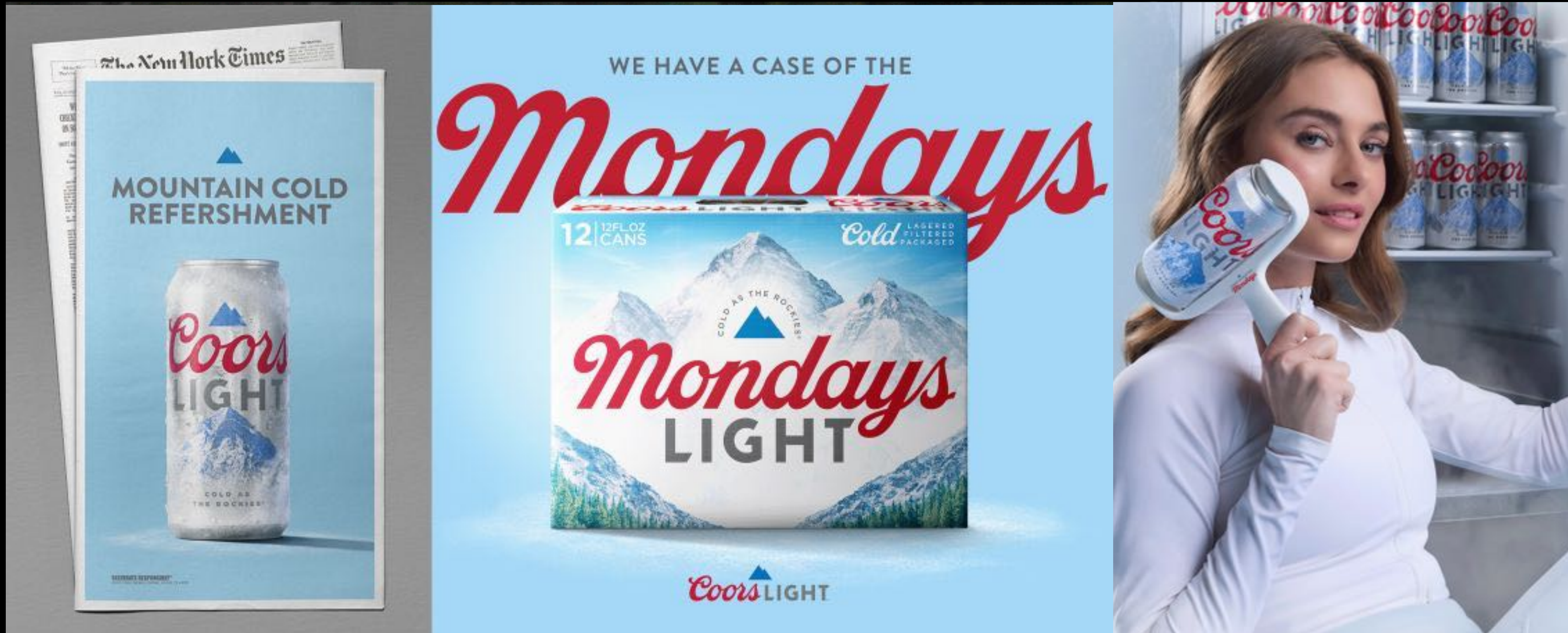


Traditionally, a big game commercial is deemed successful if it generates buzz post-game. While that cultural relevance strengthens a brand's position in culture, it is only part of unlocking the \$8 million investment's full potential.

A Super Bowl campaign should not be a standalone effort with the hope of transforming a business. Instead, it should serve *as the centerpiece* of a larger, integrated strategy. Brands that win strive for coherence over consistency; instead of churning out the same content across channels, they craft tailored extensions that align directly with their business goals, in ways that are primed to resonate on that channel.

Brands pay for a blip of viewer attention, making it easy for audiences to miss or quickly forget. Brands that win build their campaign narrative over time, both leading up to and following the big game. This strategy broadens reach, reinforces the brand-campaign association, and creates space for a comprehensive activation ecosystem.





Coors Light built up a campaign story and created an extensive activation ecosystem around their Super Bowl commercial that featured their product as the cure for “slow Mondays.” The spot was teased weeks leading up to the big game, building intrigue and buzz. The company redid packaging, used press releases, changed their website, launched a social campaign, and even created gag merch all to ensure that the influence of their campaign was maximized beyond the 60 second spot.



Uber Eats launched its campaign at the start of the 2024 NFL season, featuring Matthew McConaughey's playful conspiracy theory—that football was invented to sell food. Throughout the season, the brand built anticipation through a series of ads including collaborations with Martha Stewart and Charli XCX. The campaign culminated in a 60-second Super Bowl commercial. By weaving the narrative over time, Uber Eats expanded its reach and reinforced its brand recognition.

The Scroll Bowl

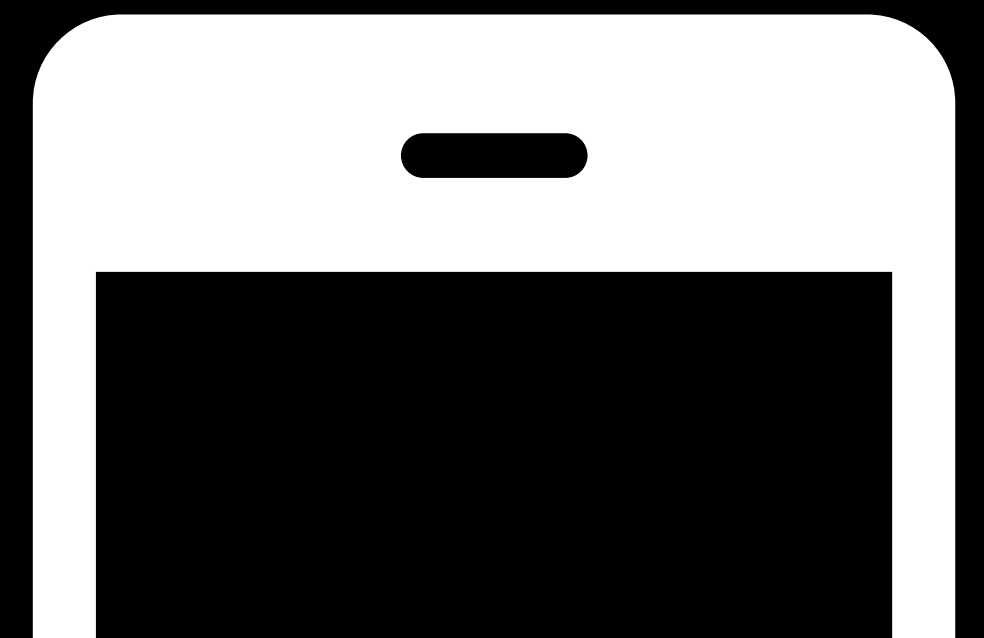


With over 79% of consumers checking their phone during the game, some brands took the opportunity to evolve the game from a single-screen experience to a multi-screen phenomenon. Tapping into this “second screen culture,” brands looked to hijack attention by flooding social media with real-time entertainment, interactive sweepstakes, and attention-grabbing stunts.

Though we don’t have results from brands like Perdue and Twix on how many people tuned into their second screen stunts, the lack of media coverage and online conversation is an indication these campaigns fell flat.

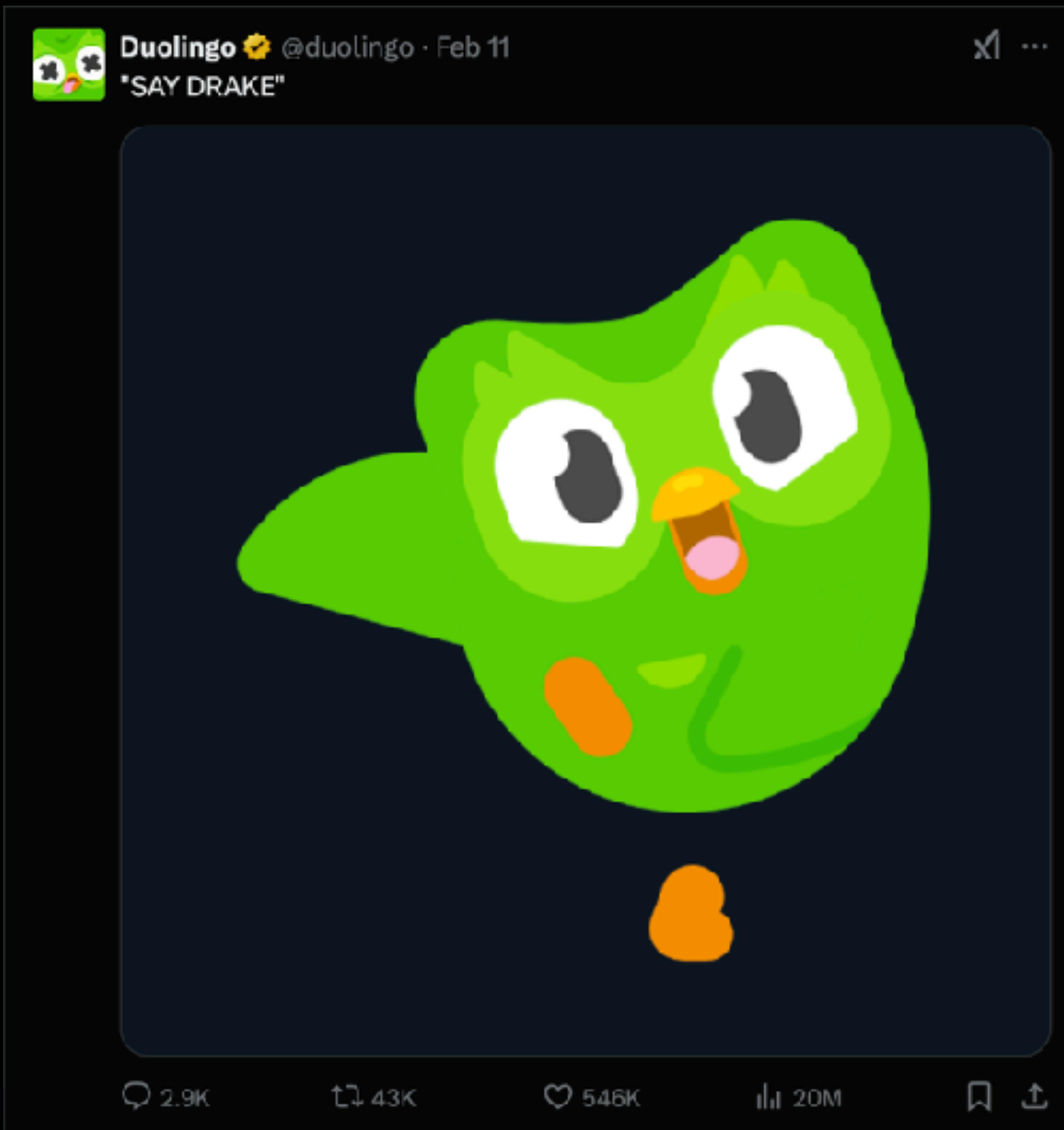
Why? Yes, people are second-screening it; but they are doing so for *connection*, not for *promotion*.


Brands who tapped into this shift correctly do so organically, engaging with cultural conversations surround the big game, rather than interrupting them.





Wayne Brady partnered with Perdue Chicken for a first-of-its-kind live improv show during the Super Bowl on his Instagram account. These performances were inspired by in-game moments, commentary, and fan suggestions submitted via social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok. Though, despite Brady's 500k Instagram followers, his most-liked post around the activation didn't even hit over 620 likes. This begs the question - how many people *really* tuned into an instagram live while they were watching the already captivating Super Bowl?



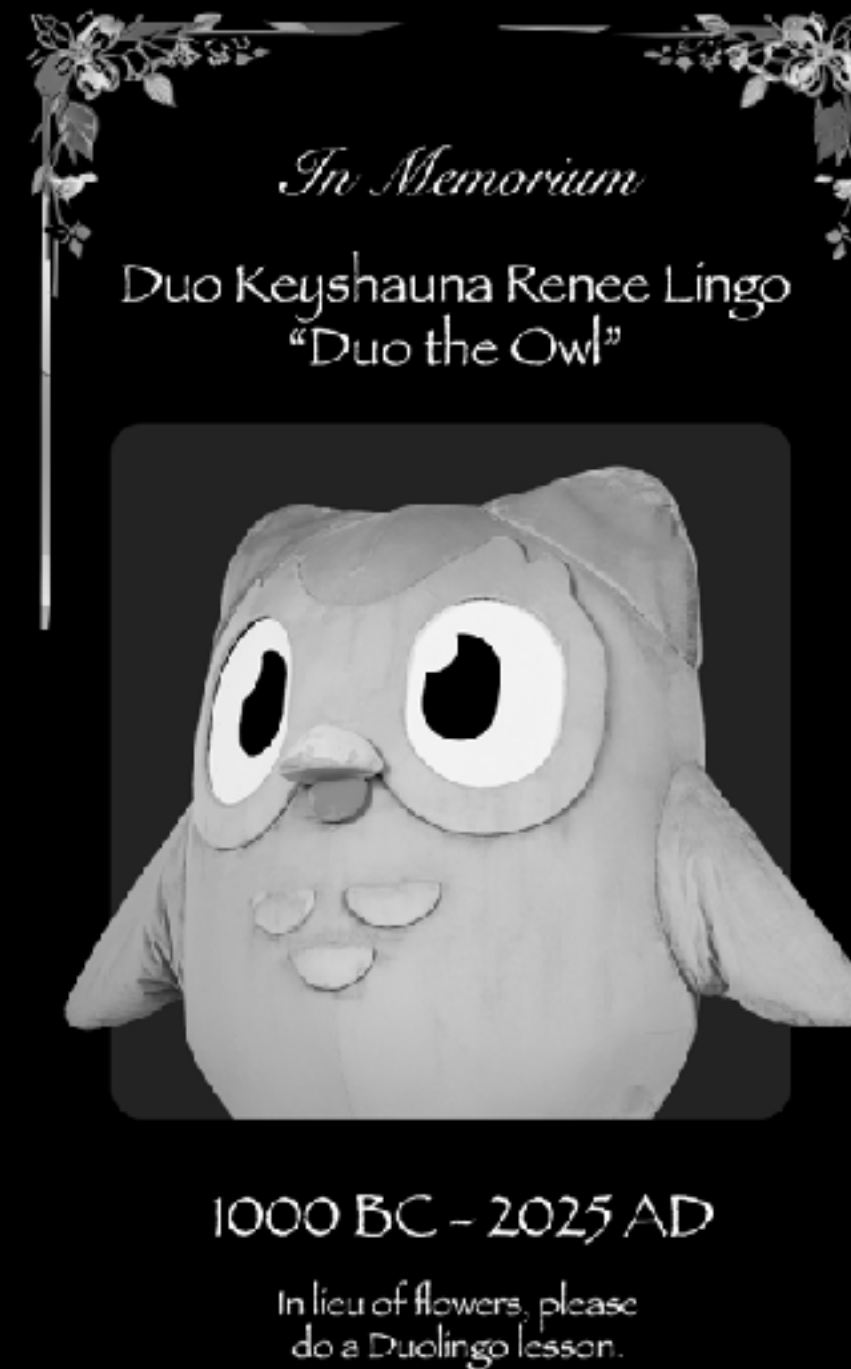


It is with heavy hearts that we inform you that Duo, formally known as The Duolingo Owl, is dead.

Authorities are currently investigating his cause of death and we are cooperating fully. Tbh, he probably died waiting for you to do your lesson, but what do we know.

We're aware he had many enemies, but we kindly ask that you refrain from sharing why you hate him in the comments. If you feel inclined to share, please also include your credit card number so we can automatically sign you up for Duolingo Max in his memory.

We appreciate you respecting Dua Lipa's privacy at this time.



WARNING:
Some of the following images might be disturbing to some some Owls.

Duolingo, a brand which typically leverages second screening and real-time social interaction as a way to connect with their audience, was notably silent during this year's Super Bowl. On Tuesday after the big game, the brand finally chimed in, using a reference Kendrick Lamar's halftime show. 40 minutes later, the brand used X to announce their iconic mascot "Duo the Owl" had passed away. Tying this into some of the shady rumors connected to the Canadian Rapper Drake, the brand was able to drum up conversation and hijack the attention around the game by using second screens the way people actually engage with them, to *connect*.

AI's Tush Push



Just like the Eagles' famous play, AI is making a concerted effort to change the course of the game.

Promoting the controversial AI on the biggest national advertising stage has its risks, which is likely why 31 out of 39 Superbowl advertisers reportedly did not use AI at all in their 2025 ads. AI is seen as detached from humanity, with many Americans feeling hesitant or scared to use it.

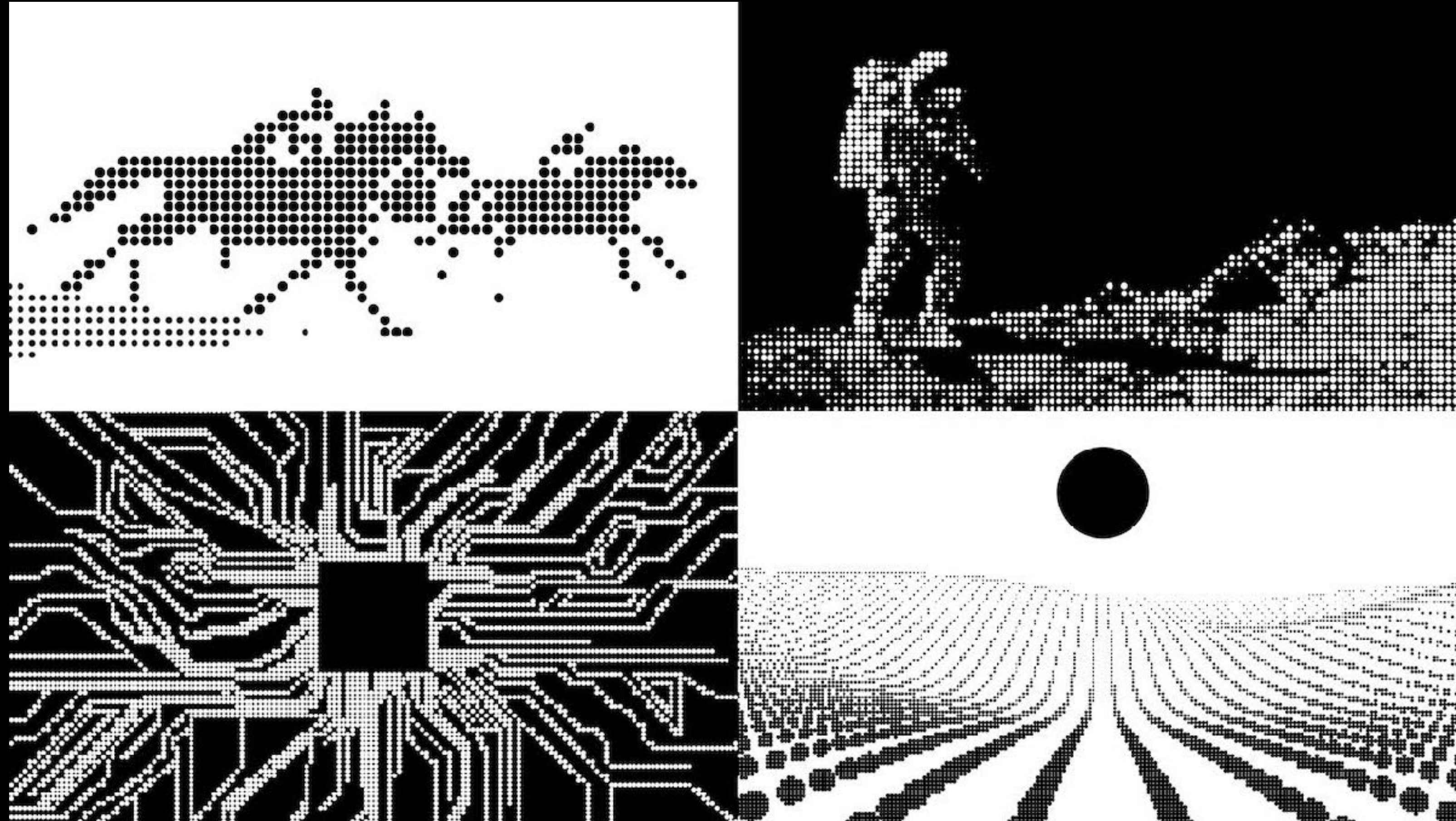
There's no better platform to break down this consumer barrier and show Americans the human side of AI than on a night where practically every individual – whether they live in a farm town or a major city – is watching. Leaning into real human use cases for this technology, these brands kicked off a national conversation about AI and confirmed that this technology is here to stay.



G

Dream Job Google Pixel SB Commercial

Google's emotional spot humanized AI by showing the human applications of their Gemini technology and the positive impact it has on people's lives. In this spot, a father uses Gemini Live, a new AI-powered voice chat, to practice answering sample job interview questions. As he answers questions about his most meaningful job, we see scenes of him raising his daughter, starting with a crying toddler and ending by dropping her off at college. This heartfelt take on artificial intelligence earned them an overwhelmingly positive response, especially from fathers and families.



OpenAI released an abstract commercial for their first-ever Super Bowl appearance. Using a pointillism-inspired animation style, OpenAI tracked humanity's technology evolution and placed ChatGPT's modern AI applications as the culmination of that progress. Some viewers thought the visual style and inspiring story was the perfect bold message for the Super Bowl, while others criticized it for being too high-level for viewers unfamiliar with AI, as it was intentionally general about specific AI uses.

From the Sidelines to Center Field



The Super Bowl might typically be a bro night, but this year's biggest winner was women's sports.

2024 was the year of the WAG – the wives and girlfriends of athletes. The Taylor Swift effect saw increased female viewership and has added nearly \$1 billion dollar's worth of brand value to the NFL since fall of 2023.

But at Super Bowl LIX, brands like Nike, Dove and the NFL took a different approach, focusing on women *in the game* instead.

The shift from women in supporting roles to power players this year is truly paying off for brands. Fans of women's sports are 54% more aware of sponsors, and 45% more willing to consider or purchase from sponsor brands. Plus, people are over 2x more likely to buy a product when it is endorsed by a woman athlete, compared to any other type of influencer – something to consider if your brand is looking into sports sponsorships.





Nike returned to the big game after almost 30 years, spotlighting women's athletics with icons like Caitlin Clark, Jordan Chiles, Sha'carri Richardson, and more. The spot highlighted all the ways female athletes have knocked down the restrictions society puts on them. Capitalizing on the increased interest of women's sports happening today, Nike is meeting the moment and showing off the power of these athletes and their sports in the *now*.



At 14, she'll think they're unbearable

Dove is using the now to change the *future*. Working with Ogilvy UK, the brand's 30 second spot spotlit the heartbreaking statistic that 1 in 2 girls who quit sports are criticized for their body type. By turning their focus from professional athletes to everyday girls in sports, Dove is poised to make a real impact in culture and change the way we talk to girls, adding momentum to their movement to build body confidence among young people all over the world.



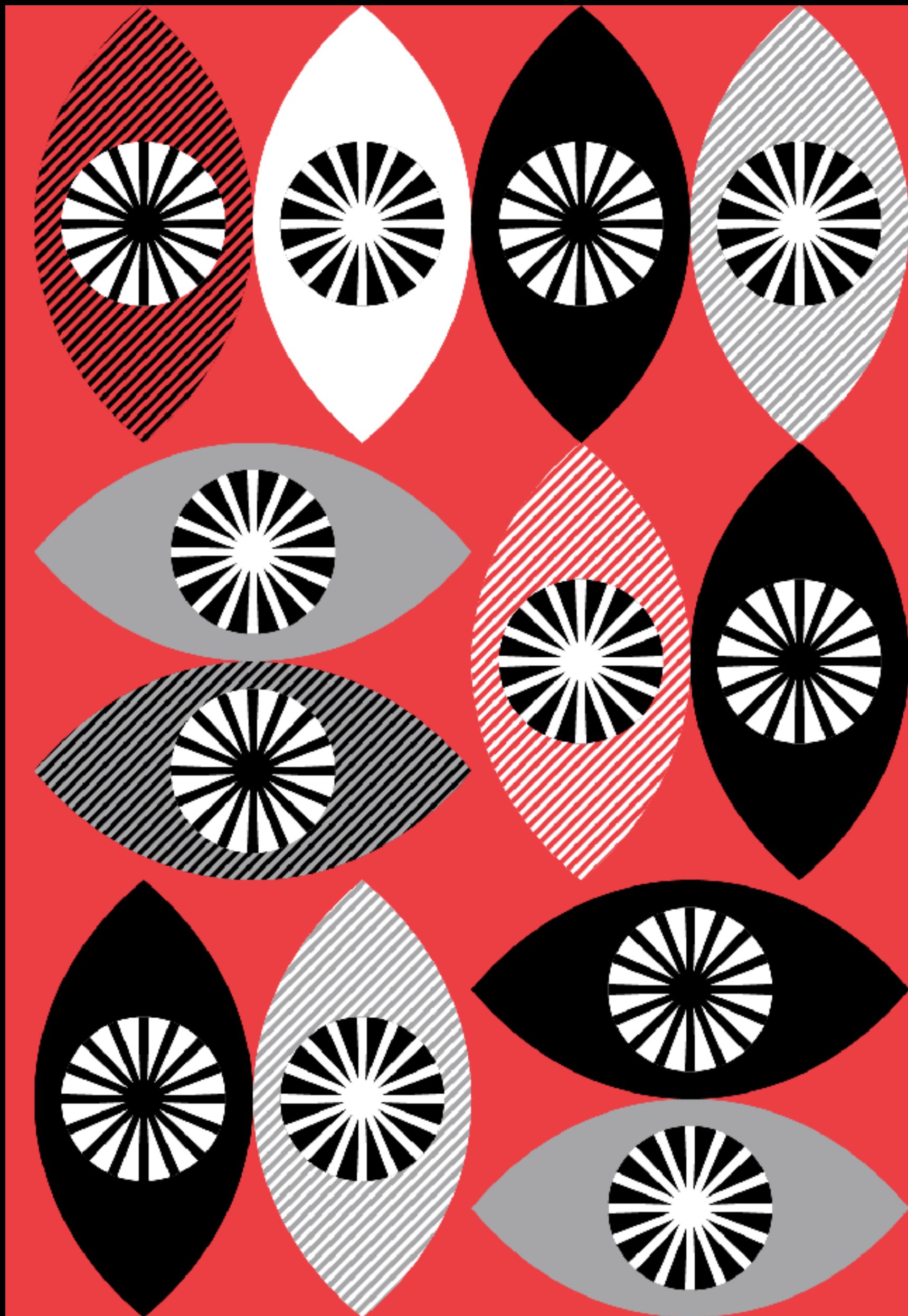
The NFL also used their spot to invest in the future of women's sports. Using men's sports stars like host Pat McAfee, player Justin Jefferson, and more, the league hoped to use emblems of masculinity to bring respect to women's sports. Some felt the spot missed the mark though, noting that the comparison of women's and men's sports continues to position women's sports as "a derivative of men's," rather than "a standalone entity deserving of its own space and recognition," per AdWeek.

In

- **Purpose-driven campaigns:** this year's big game returned to purpose over humor, with brands like Pfizer, Dove, and Nike leaning into their values to drive impact, not just get a laugh.
- **Chirping your competitors:** Dunkin' made a mark by calling out their competitors, the pretentious green baristas (IYKYK) who have recently been trying to make a comeback.
- **To ad people, Tubi:** The zeitgeist does always shift!
- **Sex Sells... when used slyly:** People are sick of oversexualization (ahem, Carl's Jr.) but sex can actually sell when used as a hook - see Novartis's "Your Attention Please" campaign.

Out

- **Pandering without a punch line:** Bud Light might've pleased the bros with Post Malone, Shane Gillis and the Manning brothers, but they certainly didn't win over anyone else just by getting the guys together over a cold one.
- **Celebrity overload:** We get it, you've got the budget to pay for the 30 second spot *and* 5 celebrity cameos. It's too much.
- **To everyone else, Tubi:** Left feeling confused, unsettled, and horrified.
- **4th quarter spots:** If the game is bad, no one is seeing your ad.



The Blip of the Blitz

It's the biggest day in advertising, but it's only 1 day. There are 364 other days in the year for your brand to make an impact.

Use the grand stage for what it is: a chance to capture the widest reach, to increase brand recognition, and to pique interest around your products. Don't just be there to be there, say something with your spot. Those who do will be rewarded not just in the cultural conversation, but also with enough ROI to make their shareholders do a touchdown dance.

Our team

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Thank you!



Ogilvy