

## Television

### Big beef: Super Bowl ads ignore mom

*Yet women make up nearly half the audience*

By **Diego Vasquez**

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*We generally think of the Super Bowl as the testosterone bowl, a time for beer ads, male bonding and the consumption of hot wings. But in fact the big game is a great place for advertisers to reach women. Nearly half of the adults 18-49 who watched the Super Bowl last year were women, according to ACNielsen, and 91 percent of moms plan to watch the Super Bowl this year, including 30 percent who plan to do so apart from their husband or boyfriend, according to the Marketing to Moms Coalition. Yet most of the ads during the Super Bowl are aimed squarely at men, not women. Nearly all moms say that they don't think advertisers target them during the game, even though 85 percent wish they would. Further, 53 percent say they are more interested in the advertisements than the game, the highest rate for any demographic. That's according to research released by the MMC, which also found that mothers would like to see spots for food companies, household cleaning products, toys and baby products during Sunday's game. MMC CEO Maria Bailey talks to Media Life about why moms feel marginalized, what they're looking for in the Super Bowl and advertising in general, and who's going to win the game.*

**Why do moms feel as though they're being ignored by Super Bowl advertisers? How long have they felt disconnected?**

Eighty percent of moms say if they had to pick a title for themselves at home, it would be CFO, chief financial officer, so they feel like they are controlling the money. Almost 91 percent of moms say no, Super Bowl advertisers are not targeting me. Advertisers are really missing 50 percent of the market by not targeting women as well. There hasn't really been anyone who's stepped forward and spoken to women, let alone mothers.

I think NASCAR has led the way among sports to help others realize that women are fans too. When Tide took over sponsorship of a car, it was a big thing. They've seen the return on their investments when they do this. Last year Office Depot entered NASCAR because they realized 40 percent of viewers were women.

I think the Super Bowl advertisers for a long time have ignored mothers. We've been monitoring advertising since 1999. It's getting better, and I think you're starting to see in the last couple of years car manufacturers starting to look more at the mom market, not only with minivans but all types of cars. I think as marketers' budgets have shrunk, smart ones realize they have to spend more wisely.

**Why should marketers pay more attention to moms?**



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Because they're controlling 85 percent of the household spending, which equates to \$1.7 trillion dollars in spending a year in the U.S., making them cumulatively the largest consumer group in the country.

Think of this: mothers in the U.S. every year spend the same as the gross national product of Portugal, Spain and the Philippines. So, I mean, you might as well go where the money is.

**What would advertisers have to do to make moms feel more included?**

Well, we actually asked them how you would want advertisers to speak to you, and they said they want to be spoken to as women, with humor, but recognize multiple roles.

If I was going to tell Allstate Insurance how to best spend their ad dollars on Super Bowl, I would make sure that there's not only men in their commercials, but also women, and ones who are controlling the buying for whatever product they're selling.

**What sort of ads generally play well among moms? Can we assume that GoDaddy and Budweiser aren't some of them?**

No, it's everyday, funny, humorous things that the family can laugh at. It wasn't until "Desperate Housewives" that marketers started to think you know, moms can be sexy.

The appeal to "Desperate Housewives" is it allows moms to laugh at themselves, because they almost all can relate. Almost all of us like to be the dirty girl like Gabrielle, even if it's way down underneath. The writers get us, they know what it's like.

**What type of advertisers would moms like to see during the Super Bowl? Realistically, can we ever expect to see ads for something as non-masculine as baby products, or is that just a pipe dream?**

We asked them about what they would like to see, or expect to see. By brands, they mentioned Procter & Gamble, Clorox, household products, food products, but you also have to remember that the baking industry could be advertising to moms, because they're not just buying diapers and formula anymore.

According to the 2000 census, single mothers are the fastest-growing segment in the United States. These are Gen X women who are financially independent, choosing to be single after they have a baby.

Even real estate companies—[an ad] could be geared toward women without the exclusion of men. I don't think men have a problem with marketers marketing to women or sending unisex type messages.

**What was moms' reaction to the spate of really edgy, and borderline offensive, advertising during the 2004 Super Bowl, when Janet Jackson's nipple was exposed? Did that impact their hopes for future advertising?**

We actually asked moms right after that happened about advertising geared toward mothers, and we didn't ask specifically about Janet Jackson. Many of them, 30 percent, said they see advertising that actually offends them as a mother.

When asked for examples, the Janet Jackson thing was No. 1. Granted, it was conducted right after the Super Bowl that year, but it definitely had an impact.

**Why are so many of them interested in the Super Bowl ads when they don't feel like they're being targeted by the advertisers?**

You know, I think they're looking at it as entertainment. It's a curiosity of what they're going to see. There was one question, 'Which are you most interested in, the game or the ads?' Fifty-three percent said advertising. I think it's a curiosity, wanting to peek into the package, you know? Even if it's not for you.

But it just goes to the point that if you have half of these women, and that's really what they want to see, what marketer wouldn't want the captive audience? Why doesn't Target or Wal-Mart advertise? That would be the perfect advertiser, these women are in their stores every week.

**What's the difference between targeting moms and dads in advertising?**

Men like to know the features of products. If you're selling a camera, he wants to know if it's got 200 pixels, a rechargeable battery, etc., while a mom wants to know the benefits of the camera.

Will it take a picture of a 3-year-old outside at a birthday party and not have red eye? A car as well, a guy wants to know how many horsepower, etc., a woman wants to know the benefits. Will the van carry more groceries than the Suburban? Women look at how [a product] will benefit their lives.

**What's the most common misperception marketers make about moms?**

I think some of the biggest is that they're only buying diapers, formula and food products. The other is that moms don't want to hear from them, but women in general love relationships.

We nurture relationships with consumer products and brands, but we want to know that someone else nurtures this relationship. I think a lot of marketers just assume that we're going into the store to buy the cheapest cereal.

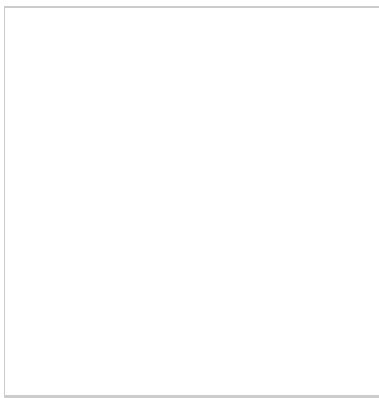
**Who's gonna win the game?**

Well, I'm rooting for the Steelers; my family is from Pittsburgh originally, so I'm going with my heritage.

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*Diego Vasquez is a staff writer for Media Life.*



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