

MEDIA & MARKETING

ADVERTISING

Marketers Hone Digital Game

New Media Play Featured Role in Super Bowl Campaigns

By EMILY STEEL

SUPER BOWL ADVERTISERS have stepped up their digital game this year.

Interactive TV ads, sophisticated search strategies, Web-only outtakes, mobile-phone applications and social-networking campaigns are part of the game-day playbooks of major marketers, including Anheuser-Busch InBev, E*Trade Financial, CareerBuilder, PepsiCo and Pedigree, a dog-food brand owned by Mars.

"We're definitely trying to change our mind-set to use mass TV in a more efficient and effective way," says Matt Ramella, manager of media and digital marketing for Labatt Breweries of Canada, a unit of Anheuser-Busch InBev that also handles Canadian advertising for Budweiser. "Digital extensions pick up where mass media leaves off."

Labatt is among the marketers testing new technologies designed to make the most of the short exposure their ads will get on the Feb. 1 game broadcast. Drawing on technology from Canada's etc.tv, Labatt will give Quebec viewers who watch the game on sports network RDS the chance to use their remotes to click on links

embedded in Budweiser ads. The links will take them to a channel where they can watch longer versions of the ads, bookmark them to watch later or choose to return to the game.

The Budweiser ads will be the first Super Bowl commercials to use such interactive technologies. Labatt will pay for the interactive component of the ads based on the number of unique views. The brewer says the test is part of a broader effort to shift its traditional media spending to targeted digital ads.

Digital extensions for Super Bowl ads once were just an afterthought. The latest initiatives go beyond standard online display ads, sponsorships on Super Bowl-related Web sites and ensuring that the commercials aired during the big game appear on online hubs, such as YouTube's Super Bowl AdBlitz, where viewers vote for their favorites.

The shift comes as marketers strive to squeeze as much value as possible from their Super Bowl ad time, which this year costs as much as \$3 million for a 30-second spot. They have also gotten savvier about incorporating digital ad features in their campaigns from the outset, ad executives say.

"The economic climate has

forced people to wake up and be more efficient with their marketing dollars. A couple of years ago, this kind of collaboration would never have happened," says Josh Stylman, managing partner at Reprise Media, a digital-ad agency owned by Interpublic Group that handled the Super Bowl search and social-media ad strategy for Castrol motor oil.

Among other things, Castrol, a brand owned by BP, is buying online ads tied to Web searches for Castrol Edge, a new eco-friendly product it is promoting in its Super Bowl TV ad.

Several advertisers have used the Web as a vehicle to drum up interest in their ads ahead of the game. Since October, PepsiCo has sponsored a contest offering \$1 million to anyone who can create a Super Bowl commercial for its Doritos tortilla chips that scores No. 1 in USA Today's Super Bowl ad competition.

The contest has generated a significant amount of free publicity for Doritos. The ad videos have chalked up hundreds of thousands of views, and some contestants have launched their own Web sites to promote their entries.

Other advertisers, including Pedigree, E*Trade and Cars.com, are posting outtakes,



As part of its effort to promote dog adoption, Pedigree is posting outtakes from its Super Bowl TV ad to the Web.

"sneak peaks" or expanded versions of their commercials to the Web. The ad for PepsiCo's SoBe Lifewater features original music that will be available on Apple's iTunes Store.

Some Super Bowl advertisers are attempting to use their

30-second TV spots to create a digital ripple effect. CareerBuilder, the jobs site jointly owned by Microsoft and newspaper publishers Gannett, Tribune and McClatchy, has created an anonymous tipgiver.com, a Web site where visitors can send any-

mous messages to annoying co-workers or others. The messages feature characters from CareerBuilder's TV ad and lets senders choose from texts like "One out of 10 people think your barking-dog ring tone is funny, that one person is you."