

Coke Plans Interactive Marketing Blitz for Super Bowl

MAE ANDERSON, The Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Most people will be cheering for the San Francisco 49ers or Baltimore Ravens during Super Bowl XLVII on Feb. 3.

But Coca-Cola is asking viewers to cheer for three very different groups in an interactive marketing blitz during the big game: a troupe of showgirls, a band of cowboys and a biker-style gang of "badlanders" — all on a quest for a thirst-quenching Coke in a desert.

The campaign, which will include TV spots as well as a Web site and interaction with consumers on social media sites like Twitter and Instagram, is the world's largest beverage maker's latest attempt to capture interest of people who watch the Big Game with a second screen such as a tablet or smartphone nearby. With Super Bowl ads costing around \$4 million for 30 seconds, it is increasingly important for marketers to make that investment count, extending Super Bowl campaigns online before, during and after the game.

"The second screen is a huge deal for us," said Stuart Kronauge, president of sparkling beverages. "It doesn't matter where consumers are, be it TV, mobile or tablet, we need to be there."

To engage the more than 100 million viewers who tune into the Super Bowl every year (last year, 111 million watched the game, according to Nielsen), The Coca-Cola Co. decided to create its own game.

A cinematic 30-second TV ad created by longtime agency Wieden + Kennedy in Portland, Ore., which will run on network TV and on Youtube.com beginning Tuesday, sets up the game's premise. Three random groups, a troupe of show girls in a pink bus, a group of cowboys, and a gang of so-called "badlanders" on motorcycles and ATVs wearing leather attire, are all in the middle of the desert. They race toward what looks to be a giant Coca-Cola, but it turns out to be a wooden sign that indicates the Coke is 50 miles away.

"Vote now to decide who wins. Cokechase.com," copy reads.

A 60-second version of the spot can be found at that Web address and will air during the first half of the Super Bowl.

Beginning Wednesday through the end of the Super Bowl, which airs Feb. 3 on CBS, users can vote online or send a tweet to choose their favorite group, and try to sabotage other groups. The winner, tallied in real time, will be shown in an ad immediately following the final whistle of the Super Bowl.

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The effort follows Coke's campaign last year that also targeted "second screen" viewers. Ads during the Super Bowl showed animated polar bears watching the Super Bowl and directed viewers to a Web site where people could watch a live feed of the bears throughout the entire game.

In a Webcast on Wednesday, Pio Schunker, senior vice president of integrated marketing, said that although that campaign garnered 9 million viewers who watched an average of 28 minutes, there were some missteps. The effort was too passive and the company did not thank viewers who logged on to watch the bears, he said.

This time, the first 50,000 viewers who vote on cokechase.com will get a free Coke or Diet Coke, if they log on to Coke's rewards site and register.

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