How Oreo's Super Bowl Ad Was Created

MAE ANDERSON, AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — A timely Tweet that was praised. A story of a baby Clydesdale growing up that tugged at heart strings. A Jamaican accent that caused controversy.

In the world of advertising, any publicity can be good publicity. The goal is get people talking. And there's no bigger stage in advertising than the Super Bowl, which determines the annual championship of the National Football League. For the last few years it has been one of the most-watched events in U.S. TV history with more than 100 million viewers tuning in.

Companies spend millions to create Super Bowl ads that they hope will have people gabbing around the water cooler the next day. But the holy grail is keeping them talking weeks, months and even a year later.

This year, dozens of big companies from Pepsi to yogurt producer Chobani are spending an estimated $4 million for a 30-second spot during Super Bowl XLVIII on Sunday in hopes they'll do just that. But as they gear up for the biggest day in advertising, they can take lessons from some of the most talked-about Game Day ads last year.

Here's a look back at how those ads came to be, and what the companies that created those spots plan this year:

"DUNK IN THE DARK"

Last year's Super Bowl taught advertisers the power of a good defense. One of the most memorable Super Bowl ads was a spur-of-the moment social media post by Oreo that went viral.

When a blackout hit the stadium early in the third quarter last year, Oreo was prepared to create instant social media content because the cookie maker and its digital agency 360i had been working on a campaign for Oreo's 100th anniversary. The campaign featured a different ad every day that responds to news events for 100 days.

"We knew how to seize that moment," said Janda Lukin, senior director on Oreo at parent company Mondelez.

About 10 people at a 360i's social media command center in New York immediately huddled with others on the phone. Ideas flew back and forth. Ten minutes later, the ad was out on Twitter and Facebook. No one recalls who came up with the ad, which featured an image of an Oreo in partial darkness and the tagline "You can still dunk in the dark."

In the first hour, the ad had more than 10,000 retweets on Twitter and 18,000 likes and 5,000 shares on Facebook. "We didn't realize how far it was going to go," said 360i CEO Sarah Hofstetter.

Even with the success of the spot, this year, Oreo is sitting out the big game. In 2013 the Super Bowl was the best channel to kick off Oreo's "Cookie vs. Creme" campaign, but this year the company says it's using other channels as its marketing evolves.

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