

The SuperBowl is one of the most watched sporting events on television. Because of this, the commercials that are played are a moment when companies go all out to promote their brand to millions of people. Now, I want to talk about one of the unique commercials I've seen. The commercial was created by Coinbase, a popular crypto exchange platform. The ad really stood out not for its popular actors, celebrities or even storytelling, but for its simplistic design.

The plain black background and the bouncing QR code, that was based on the famous bouncing DVD screensaver effect, invoked curiosity to the audience due to its simplistic design.

The intended audience was Super Bowl watchers and tech-savvy people and older people who remembered the old DVD effect. The invoked audience was anyone who scanned it out of curiosity. The unintended audience were the people outside the U.S and people who may not be able to scan a QR code.

The purpose of the commercial was to introduce people into cryptocurrency and hopefully convert that into people that use Coinbase as their primary platform.

The message was clear and straightforward. Scan this QR code and get free Bitcoin. Additionally, it created a sense of urgency to scan the QR code before it disappeared. Also, it was essentially effortless for the audience because there was no need to remember a website or type one, all they had to do was just pull out their phone and scan it.

As I said previously, the medium for this ad was a TV commercial, the website the QR code took them to, and youtube.

Some context is that the ad was created during the crypto boom, which increased awareness of crypto. Also it was created primarily for people who live in the US. Finally, it right after covid's peak, so a lot of people were still recovering and working remote.

This ad effectively used ethos, pathos, and logos.

First, the ethos was established because not everyone may know Coinbase as an exchange, however it was played during the superbowl, so it would likely be legitimate, and not a scam.

Logos were effective because the message was clear, once they scanned the code, and were offered 15 dollars in free bitcoin, it was common sense to sign up.

This used pathos effectively by creating nostalgia, as many viewers remembered waiting for the DVD logo to hit the corner of the screen. Also at the end screen, was in a retro font, which also created nostalgia.

However the ad was ineffective at the same time. First off, there are a number of people who don't even know what a QR code was or how to even scan it. This combined with the fact that following the viewing of the ad, the site for Coinbase crashed. This meant that the ad was effective in grabbing attention, but in the end, it failed to convert a great number of people.

Overall, the Coinbase Super Bowl commercial was unconventional with a minimalistic design, which led to a successful campaign with a bunch of engagement to their website. Yet there are downfalls, like the site crashing due to too much traffic. But in the end, this ad transcends many of the mundane marketing campaigns of today—proving every once in a while that less is more.