

**TAKING THE**  
**W** | **WHO,**  
**WHAT,**  
**WHEN,**  
**OF A SUCCESSFUL SUPER BOWL AD**

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*Game Day Analytics Challenge 2022*

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## INTRO

Every year the Super Bowl tops the list as the most watched event in the United States, making its advertising spots highly sought after. Spending millions of dollars for seconds on the screen, brands do all they can to get people talking about their product.

Throughout this paper, “engagement” will be the primary term used to describe the influence of each particular ad, calculated by adding tweet count, favorite count, and retweet count related to each ad. With such high stakes, companies try a variety of techniques to foster increasing engagement each year. The question arises: what are the driving forces behind engagement for ads aired during the Super Bowl? The answer to this question could save—or cost—a company millions of dollars.

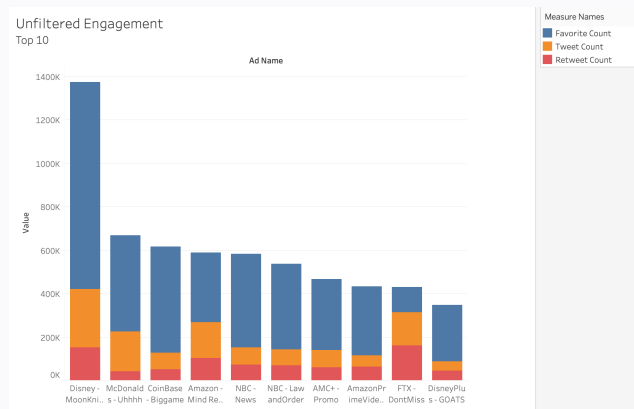
## BACKGROUND

The following findings will be invaluable to any company considering airing advertisements during the Super Bowl. The paper will discuss precursory hypotheses, how data was gathered, which hypotheses proved true, and suggested solutions for creating a highly engaging ad.

Based on preliminary research, presence of celebrities, quarter aired, and ad length seemed to be key indicators of ad performance. Theories also arose that racial and gender inclusion could have a potential impact on ad engagement, so these metrics were also tracked during airing of the Super Bowl ads.

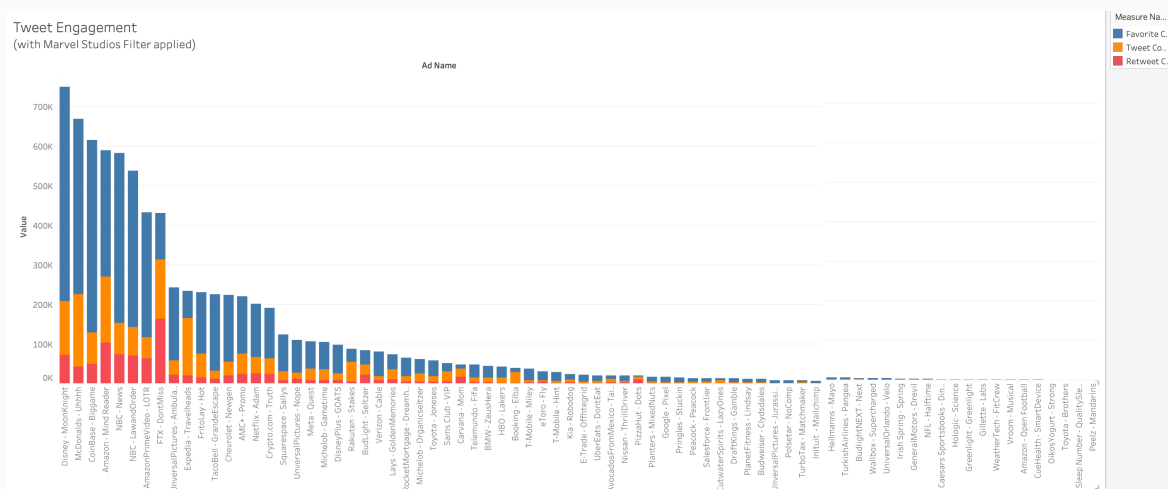
Besides the additional metrics added, the data used comes predominantly from a pre-prepared dataset gathered using the Twitter API and another dataset including various keywords derived from each advertisement to link tweets to ads. The keyword

table includes useful details about each ad including runtime and a timestamp. In initial data preparation, less useful columns, such as Twitter handle, were removed from the dataset, and columns for race and gender of the actors, motive of the ad, and whether a celebrity was present were added. Post-analysis review showed that the three “W”s: “who”, “what”, and “when” of an advertisement are the most important factors. “Who” refers to the presence of celebrities and gender and racial inclusion, “what” refers to the motive of the advertisement, and “when” is in which quarter the advertisement plays in and the timing of engagement relative to the ad air time.



Upon initial examination of the data, it was evident that engagement for the Disney MoonKnight ad (#1) was significantly higher than the next best ad. After further examination, it became apparent that certain tweets posted by @MarvelStudios for Moon Knight were going viral but lacked a strong relation to the traffic of the

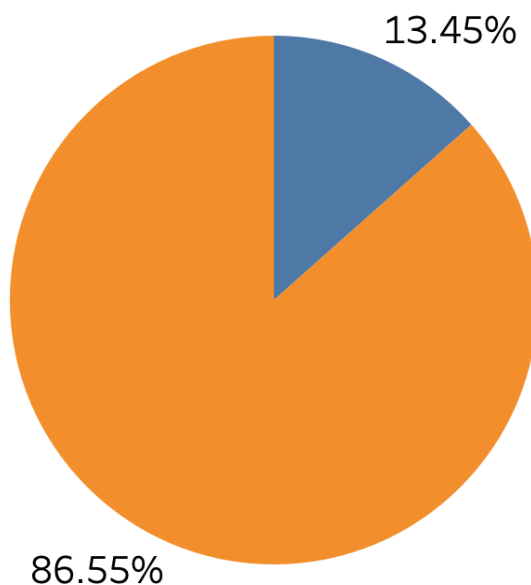
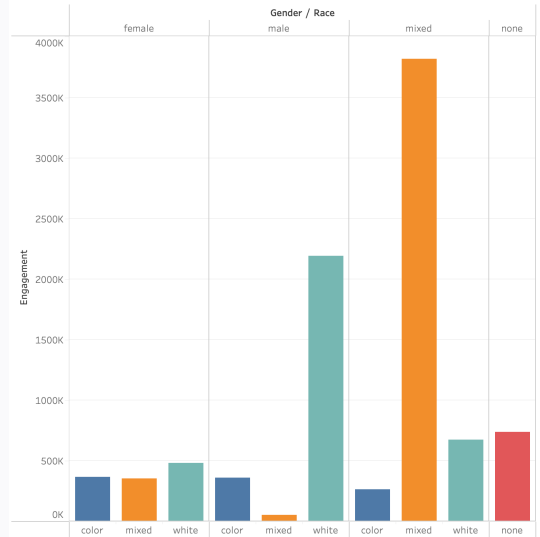
Super Bowl. This was likely due to Marvel's large following (8.6 million Twitter followers) and the preexisting anticipation for the movie.



## WHO

Advertisements that emphasized gender and racial inclusion proved to drive engagement noticeably more than the average. Average engagement for mixed gender and mixed race ads was 137,347.5. Average engagement for all ads was 107,324.9. The difference between the two was 30,022.6, a 28% increase from the average engagement of all ads.

Engagement by Race and Gender

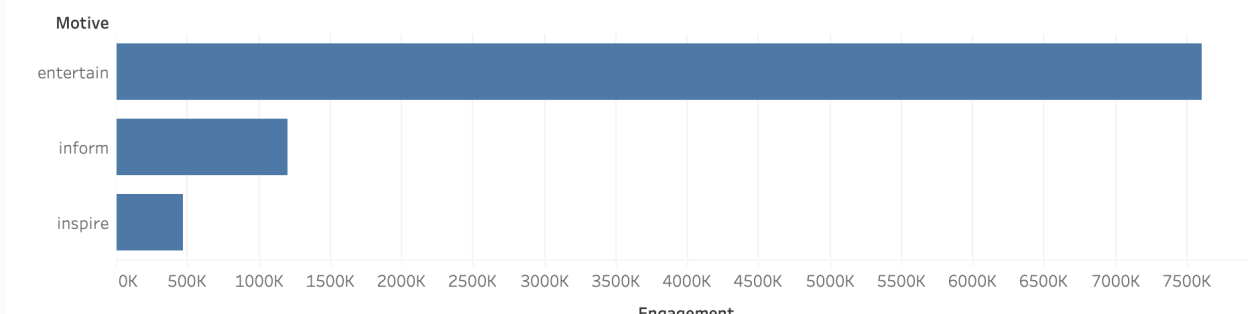


Additionally, having a celebrity star in an advertisement proved to be extremely effective. Over 80% of the top 10 advertisements starred a celebrity. Also, 87% of the tweets during the superbowl mentioned ads with celebrities in them.

## WHAT

Motive creates a huge disparity between those who performed exceptionally and those who failed to perform. The three categories used for motive are inspire, inform, and entertain. The vast majority of ads that brought any sort of engagement on twitter fell in the category of entertaining. Overall, ads with the motive to entertain outperformed others in engagement by 4.5x.

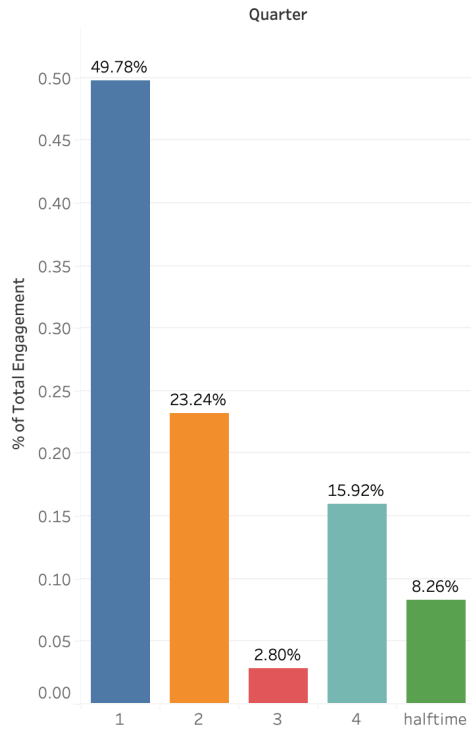
Engagements by Motive



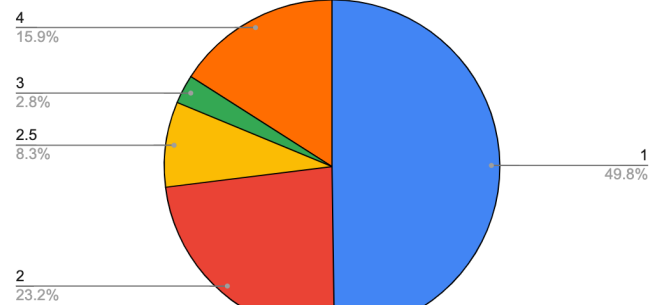
## WHEN

Timing is perhaps the most important factor for all of these ads. 50% of total engagement came from the first quarter alone. The timing can make or break the engagement of a well designed advertisement. Analysis was also done on engagement over the course of the game for the top 10 ads, showing us when ads aired that were well-received.

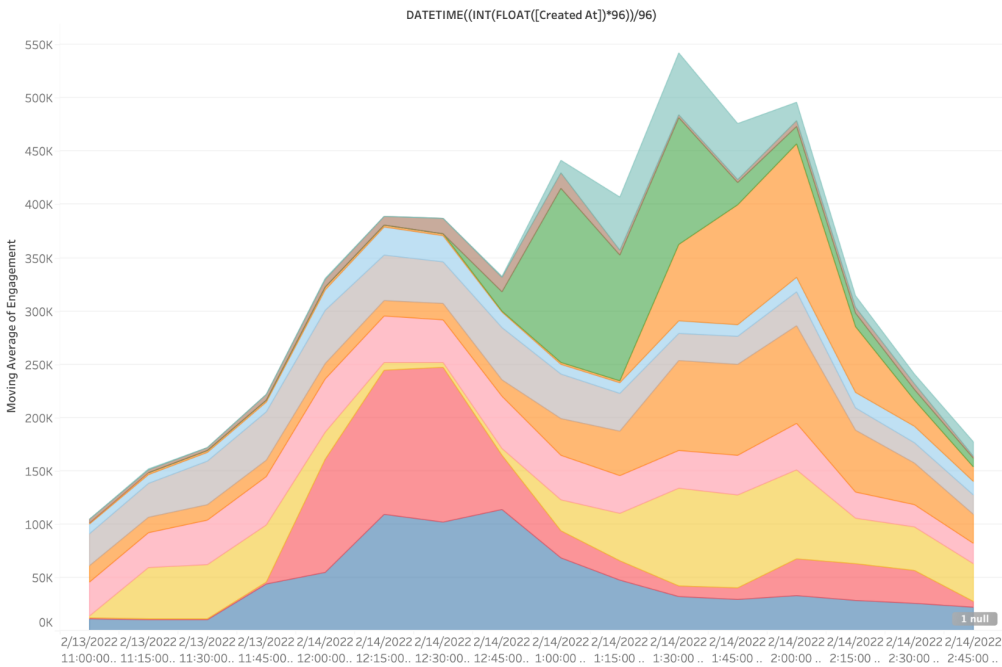
## Engagement by Quarter Aired



## % of Total Engagement vs. Quarter



## Engagement per Advertisement over Time



Ad Name

- UniversalPictures - A..
- DisneyPlus - GOATS
- FTX - DontMiss
- AmazonPrimeVideo -..
- AMC+ - Promo
- NBC - LawandOrder
- Amazon - Mind Reader
- NBC - News
- McDonalds - Uhhhhh
- CoinBase - Biggame
- Disney - MoonKnight

## CAVEAT

Engagement is not only measured using Twitter, social media likes, and other interactions. In the case of Coinbase Global, Inc. total engagement on Twitter still held their grossly plain ad in the top 10. Without celebrity or a clear motive, this iconic floating QR Code led to 20 million unique visitors within one minute on the website. According to one analyst, 117 million people saw the code, and down the pipeline led to an approximate 500 thousand new customers. ROI for this can be measured by estimating the cost of the advertisement at 14 Million dollars and the lower intent estimation of revenue per new user at 45\$. Multiplied by 500 thousand, the analysis puts them at 22.5 Million dollars of revenue. Coinbase proves that if an ad is unique enough, many other metrics can be forgotten. This may have been the case for them, but forgetting the reliable metrics for a very risky and vaguely defined “uniqueness” could very well prove to flop. Companies deciding the “who”, “what”, and “when” of their Super Bowl ad must carefully consider which route they would like to go. A steady and true route, or gamble with uniqueness.

## CONCLUSION

Any company seeking to increase engagement on social media platforms or otherwise must consider the three “W’s”. Bring gender and racial inclusion, celebrities, entertaining content, and early advertisement placement together in order to brew a storm of engagement on any platform. Although some brands have seen immense success running content that excludes one or many of the above metrics, following the three “W’s” of a successful Super Bowl ad will lead to a higher level of confidence in revenue estimates.

# APPENDIX

Included below are additional descriptive metrics to categorize SuperBowl LVI ads.

