



# AND THE ART OF LEGAL NETWORKING

BY: LINDSAY GRIFFITHS OF THE ILN

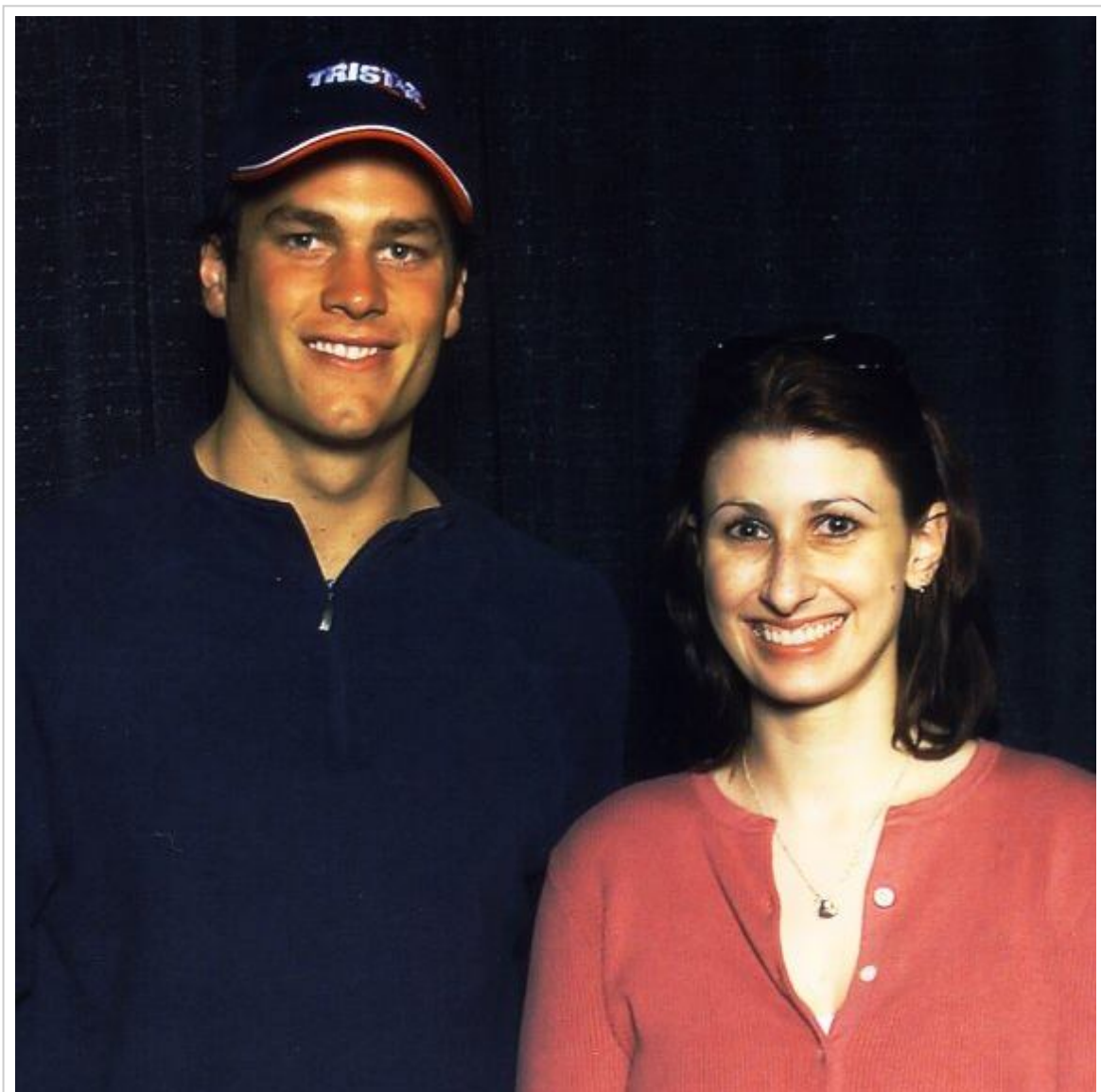
INSIGHTS & COMMENTARY ON  
*Relationship Building  
within the International  
Lawyers Network*

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## Super Bowl Commercials: The Good of 2017

BY LINDSAY GRIFFITHS ON FEBRUARY 8, 2017



Gratuitous photo of me with the winningest Super Bowl QB of all time

It's that time of year again – the time when football fans mourn the end of another season with the pigskin and marketing fans rejoice because the best and brightest (usually) bring out the year's highlights for strong ad campaigns. Also, guacamole tends to abound, and when is that ever a bad thing?

2017 was a little bit different, and definitely in a bad way. We had a little bit of a warning, because advertising was down – Tim Calkins, Clinical Professor of Marketing at the Kellogg School of Management, Northwestern University talked about some of the reasons for it in his post "[Why Super Bowl Ads Are a Tough Sell in 2017.](#)" And it makes sense. In seven years, ad buys for the Super Bowl have at least doubled in cost (really, NFL?), and that doesn't take into account that companies now must create an entire social campaign around their 15-60 second spots. Where they used to have to draw only on their creativity for the ad, and perhaps a fully branded campaign around it (depending on the brand), they now have to consider both the social impact and the social engagement that the spots will generate – before, during and after they air.

This year's crop of spots also saw some big names absent too – no Doritos or Butterfingers meant that we were already lacking some traditionally funny giants right off the bat. The tense political climate of the moment had a lot of people asking whether brands would play it safe, or take risks. In some cases, it had fans misreading the intentions of brands' ads, because of the context of the environment. Overall, it was a ho-hum crop of spots – both on the good side AND on the ugly side. While I still have a few for you in the "ugly" category for next week, I felt like I was missing both the highs and lows of previous Super Bowl ads.

But without further ado, let's look at my top five commercials for this year, and what lawyers can learn from these spots.

## Audi #DriveProgress Big Game Commercial – “Daughter”

Audi #DriveProgress Big Game Commercial – “D...



Although this was a controversial commercial for some, this was my absolute favorite spot of the night.

It speaks to me on a number of marketing levels – Audi’s car appears only at the very end of the spot, but it’s a car commercial throughout, with kids racing in a soapbox derby. It very nicely ties in their brand promise of progress, which they’re telling us infuses the whole brand, from the technology that their cars offer to the equal pay opportunities and corporate social responsibility promise that they have. And where we typically see brands embracing support for women’s rights with women boosting up other women (think Dove, etc.), Audi is using the father/daughter bond to illustrate this issue, something that is key for its entire purchasing audience.

### **What are the lessons for lawyers and law firms?**

This ad is so smart, I’m not even sure everyone even appreciates all of the levels and nuances that Audi touches here with this campaign. They leverage the heck out of this ad and its message to get their money’s worth out of it and the social campaign around it, so even despite the negative press surrounding it, I find it to be incredibly brilliant and I applaud them. Lawyers and law firms can learn so much from this one:

- Find creative ways to brand throughout your messaging. As I mentioned above, Audi uses the soapbox derby to create a car commercial that only barely features one of their cars. Look at ways you can do the same in your own marketing. I’m not talking about hidden scales of justice or columns, but what subtle and overt ways within both your practice messaging and your overall firm messaging can you consistently deliver and reinforce the content of who you are as a lawyer and a firm?
- Branding isn’t just a “what;” it’s a “who.” Audi is a car company and they sell cars. But they also sell the experience. Here, they tell us that they sell progress. From that, we can take it to mean that they sell innovation, the latest technology, top-of-the-line materials and systems. Lawyers and law firms don’t just sell legal services. You also sell the experience. What is the message of that experience that you want to communicate? You may already know it, or you may not. If you do, how can you communicate it, as Audi does, throughout everything you do? Not only do they do it with their cars and in their ads, but their corporate social responsibility promise – their very business practices – reinforce their brand promise. Does yours?
- Don’t be afraid to embrace the issues that you believe in, but go into that with your eyes wide open. We’re in a very sensitive political time at the moment, and issues you may see as human rights’ concerns, others consider to be political ones. That’s not to say you don’t make a strategic decision to discuss them or take a stand on them, but do so with the full knowledge that it will have a polarizing effect on your client base.
- Embrace social. The time to ignore the social side of any marketing campaign is over. Social media is no longer a separate area of marketing, but an integrated piece of whatever campaign you are engaged in. It should touch every event, piece of content, presentation, victory, networking

opportunity, RFP that you have whether it's from a research perspective, a promotional one, or engagement.

## Kia Super Bowl Commercial – “Hero’s Journey”

2017 Kia Niro | “Hero’s Journey” Starring Melissa ...



Another car commercial gets top nod from me this year, this one starring Melissa McCarthy. Traditionally, I don't like celebrity commercials, because I think the brands rely too heavily on the star power of the celebrity, and get lazy about the marketing itself, but this one is a smart ad. McCarthy is funny and the repetitious nature of her “eco-warrior” adventures serves as a great reinforcement of the car that Kia is selling, which is “eco-friendly” because their claim is that it's the most fuel-efficient crossover. Their #smarterway hashtag is rather uninspired though, and sure enough, if you look at the most recent tweets for it, the majority of them have nothing to do with the Kia.

But it's clever and funny, so in a crop of lackluster spots, I'm a fan.

### **What are the lessons for lawyers and law firms?**

- Use your influencers well. As I mentioned above, a lot of advertisers using celebrities or well-known personalities rely solely on star-power to get the message across. That can be memorable, but chances are, what you remember is the famous person...not the brand. When you're doing your own influencer marketing, such as working with industry leaders on guest posts or bringing in well-known experts to speak at firm events, ensure that your firm's “voice” and brand are still front and center, and that the strength of your message is the main thing getting across to the audience.
- Humor still sells. We had very few funny ads this year, and perhaps that's just the climate we're in at the moment. But a bit of levity was and can be a good thing, as long as it's not overdone or offensive (some people like offensive humor; I'm not one of them, particularly when it comes to your marketing). Well-placed laughter that puts a fine point on your brand, if that's what your

message is about, can be an excellent thing – Kia is known for their laid back, relaxed style, so humor suits their ads well. If they’d done an ad like Audi’s, it probably would have fallen flat.

- Check your hashtags. As we talked about above, the social component of any campaign is essential. While I know it’s difficult to come up with a clever hashtag, at least do some due diligence before releasing your official campaign collateral to ensure that yours is being used in the way that you want. Kia likely believes that either their social investment is sufficient enough or their social clout is strong enough that they’ll dominate the hashtag, but “#smarterway” doesn’t speak to me about this ad or their brand at all. Running a campaign-level hashtag or even a better brand hashtag that they truly own would have done wonders for this – and Kia is a huge brand. So before running your own online campaigns, ensure that your hashtags are going to be relatively free of other traffic that might confuse visitors, be consistent in the hashtag that’s used, and endeavor to keep it in line with the campaign and brand messaging for consistency.

## “BUSCHHHHH” Super Bowl Commercial

“BUSCHHHHH” Super Bowl Commercial



Busch is a newcomer to Super Bowl commercials, and this one is a hit for me. It’s just the right mix of weird and funny to be memorable, and what’s memorable about it is the brand name. Throughout the Super Bowl, we often see a ton of beer commercials (beer companies know their audience after all), and other than the Clydesdales, it’s often hard for beer companies to have strong enough branding in their commercials for you to truly differentiate one from another. I’m usually a fan of their advertising because they use humor so effectively, but for a change, in this spot, they also use it to make their brand memorable.

While I’m not sure Busch is going to be changing hearts and minds about the quality of their product with this ad (sorry, guys), they are doing wonders for their brand recall which will have an impact in terms of purchases among comparable products.

**What are the lessons for lawyers and law firms?**

- Don't be afraid to be memorable. I've seen a lot of law firms in recent months branding on promises of valuing their clients, having great lawyers, caring about their clients' businesses. Those things are important, don't get me wrong, but as I listed them, did a single firm for any of those concepts come to mind without me having to use the firm's name? No. There are firms with unique names, and some even truly differentiate themselves (think MoFo for example). Don't be afraid to embrace that in your marketing – if you at the firm are thinking of the name or a nickname in a certain way that makes it more memorable for everyone, chances are your clients are too. Own it, leverage the heck out of it. Busch figured out that popping a can of beer kind of sounds like the Busch name. Now people who have seen that commercial might think of that when they crack open a beer. Or might have a favorable response when they see a six pack of Busch, because they remember chuckling about the commercial. Associate good, warm feelings with your brand, and people will more easily be able to call it to mind.
- Consider all the senses. That's something we as marketers can tend to forget – depending on the medium of the content, we're focused just on how something looks, or on how it sounds. But bring all of them into it – this ad is about sight, sure, but it's also about the Busch *sound*. Remember when Knobbe Martens did a series of ads about how the firm name is pronounced? They were focused on how it sounded – and it was brilliant. So brilliant that I could call it to mind immediately without having to google them. When you invest in all of the senses, or at least more than one, you're attaching yourself to more than just one part of the audience, making it that much more likely they'll remember you in the future.

## Tide Commercial 2017

Tide | Super Bowl Commercial 2017 with Terry Br...



Tide does a nice job here with a cute ad. It's a nice tie-in with the Super Bowl itself (both teams on the field are accurate) and using Terry Bradshaw, and I quite enjoy the quickly viral nature of Terry's stain and ensuing antics. Including the viral campaign in the ad itself is an excellent way to make you want to engage with it, rather than making it sort of an afterthought of the commercial, with a hashtag at the end. Technically, it

could be any detergent I suppose, but Tide does a nice job with brand placement at the end. Even better, they really nailed it with their social campaign – more on that in a moment.

### **What are the lessons for lawyers and law firms?**

- Weave your social media campaign into your marketing efforts to really leverage them effectively. The difference between Kia's Twitter efforts and Tide's is night and day – when you look at [#bradshawstain](#), you can see that Tide has essentially deputized thousands of people to be brand ambassadors. They've provided people with free samples of Tide and asked them to tweet about their stains with this hashtag, and of course, qualifying the posts with the #ad tag as well. But as a result, the hashtag is entirely filled with Tide-related posts. Entirely. Whereas Kia's is mixed with other types of posts, in part because #smarterway is too ambiguous to be easily owned by one brand. How can lawyers and law firms learn from this? Allow the members of your firm to be brand ambassadors for your firm. This involves training and policies to be in place, of course, as well as monitoring, but everyone at the firm is already a brand ambassador in person, so why not show them how to do it online as well? With each campaign the firm conducts, set members of the firm up for success with suggested tweets, options for hashtags, recommendations for LinkedIn, etc. For lawyers, learn how to make it part of your daily routine to research clients and potential clients you're meeting with on LinkedIn, to connect with referral sources online, to share articles, firm successes, and your colleagues' content with your audiences. Use your time in line for coffee to scroll through the LinkedIn app and comment on posts, share updates, or read articles – you don't have to get fully caught up every day, but if you take those few minutes to connect with a few people, that can make a big difference over time.
- Find ways to own your niche without being overpowering. As we mentioned, Tide shows up at the end of this ad to let us know that they're the reason that Terry Bradshaw was able to quickly get a barbecue sauce stain out of a white dress shirt (why he also had to take his pants off, we'll never know). They're so confident that they don't have to scream their dominance at us throughout the commercial. Like Tide, you are also problem solvers. How can you effectively communicate the problem that you solve, but showing us the solution, and then just casually dropping into the conversation that you're the one that solved it?
- Get comfortable with social investments. Tide not only had to make a significant ad buy here (the spot is 75 seconds long), but they also had to spend a lot on the commercial itself, and the social promotion around it – both to become the promoted brand alongside this hashtag and to develop all of those brand ambassadors. You don't have to spend as much as Tide did, but social media has really evolved past organic virality at this point (for the most part). To be seen on certain platforms at some of the numbers that you want to be seen at, you may have to get comfortable with the idea of making an investment in social ads. It used to be that the only investment in social media was time, but that's no longer the case, so don't ignore that as part of your budgeting process.

# Bai 2017 Big Game Ad – Starring Justin Timberlake & Christopher Walken

Bai 2017 Big Game Ad - Starring Justin Timberlak...



Even though I was never a big fan of N\*Sync, I really chuckled over this ad. Bai, whose ads I really hated last year, did an excellent job this year with their play on words of N\*Sync's most famous song "Bye Bye Bye" with their own "Bai Bai Bai."

But rather than just replacing the words of the original and having the band members sing it, which probably would have had most of the audience groaning, they instead brought in Christopher Walken to dramatically read the chorus. It's so utterly ridiculous, and if you're at all familiar with the song, it begins to dawn on you as he's speaking what he's doing. The punchline is the presence of Justin Timberlake, who doesn't even have to say a word. Excellent use of the ridiculous (for a change, Bai), great play on words, and really great use of celebrities.

## What are the lessons for lawyers and law firms?

- Much of what we've already seen. Influencer marketing remains important, but using your influencers correctly is key. Timberlake is the right choice here, because you will necessarily associate his "Bye Bye Bye" with "Bai Bai Bai" which is excellent brand connection. Walken is not especially connected, but his dry wit is key to the delivery of the lines, and the two together are memorable enough that the connection is still strong. When doing your own influencer marketing, you want to do your research as to who will be the right person or people to associate your brand with (whether that brand is your firm or your name as a lawyer). There's so much research out there at the moment as to how to do influencer marketing effectively, that I highly recommend doing some reading before jumping into it, starting with the [Content Marketing Institute](#).
- Don't be afraid to make a play on words to make your brand more memorable. We saw it with Busch, and we're seeing it again here with Bai. Bai also extended this into the hashtag for the campaign, #baibaibai, which you're also going to be able to remember without looking it up. They're



not offering something that's so totally wildly different from others in the marketplace, but they have a name that people will remember, so they're capitalizing on that. What makes people remember you or your firm?

- Appealing to all of the senses. Sight is probably the least important of the senses in this ad, with sound dominating. Anyone who is familiar with the N\*Sync song featured in the spot knows that it gets stuck in your head and that's part of what Bai is counting on. They leverage the song's memorability for additional brand "stickiness." And they do it well. Keep thinking of ways that you can use other senses to break through to your audiences.
- Humor still works. Bai does an excellent job here with a classy and funny ad. We've said before that humor isn't for everyone, and it's not, but don't be afraid of it because you're a professional services firm. If being funny feels right and you can make it work in your marketing, go for it.

And there is one honorable mention ad that appeared after the Super Bowl was over...

## A Better Super Bowl | NFL Hyundai Super Bowl LI

A Better Super Bowl | NFL Hyundai Super Bowl LI



I'm a bit of a sucker for these ads, having had a number of family and friends serve long deployments overseas in the military, but SUPER well done to Hyundai. Let's talk about why I love this ad so much.

- They barely mention Hyundai, and they never mention cars. There's a small logo in the corner of the spot, and they reference the brand at the beginning and the end of the ad. That's it. Otherwise, it's entirely about the military personnel that they're highlighting (who, by the way, they recorded during the Super Bowl – so this was an ad created for the Super Bowl DURING the Super Bowl).
- It's about their brand promise to us, which is that "Better Drives Us." Like we saw with Audi, Hyundai is talking about being better (and I love the play on word with the use of "drives" here), but instead of just telling us what that means in terms of their cars, they show us with their corporate social responsibility work. Wow.

- Can law firms do this? You bet. I can't talk about it yet, but there was a law firm that entered into this year's Your Honor Awards and did something very similar, focusing entirely on the charity work they do, not from their perspective, but entirely from the charity's. And it was memorable and brilliant. It's something that makes ME want to send them work (and they're not a client of mine). So I can only imagine that it reinforces for their own clients and potential clients that this is the kind of firm that they want to be aligned with. Once it's announced, I'll talk more about it here, but in the meantime, consider how your own firm can do more showing and less telling.
- Storytelling is effective. Yes, I care about the features of the car I drive. But I can look that all up on the internet, or walk into a dealership and talk to a car salesman about it. Facts are easy to find. I need the story. What's the "tug at the heartstrings" piece that I can't see from reading your bio? From looking at your list of recent cases or where you went to law school? Tell me THAT. Show me why to care about you and your firm – show me what you care about, so I know that you'll care about me.

What were your favorite commercials this year? Tomorrow, we'll be back with a look at the "bad" spots from 2017 – we're saving the ugly for next week!

