

The background of the top section is a photograph of an American football game. A player in a green jersey with the number 81 is running with the ball, while several players in white jerseys are tackling him. The scene is captured in a dynamic, action-oriented style with a blue color cast.

# BEYOND THE 30 SECOND SPOT: THE SUPER BOWL AS A CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC ENGINE

The Super Bowl is often represented as the ultimate premium purchase: “30 seconds costs millions.” While that headline captures attention, it misses the bigger story. The Super Bowl is one of the few events in media, civic, and corporate culture that combines scarcity, uniqueness, and anticipation at massive scale; as such, it creates opportunities and resets expectations in a singularly powerful way for advertisers, municipalities, and public-private partnerships. Below are a few examples of how its influence extends far beyond the broadcast itself.

## **Media Impact: Capitalizing on a Cultural Touchstone**

In 2015, a 30-second spot cost about \$4.5M. In 2026, it’s around \$8M–\$10M. Though part of that jump represents inflation, it also captures the value of attention in a media structure that has significantly fragmented over the past decade.

Brands aren’t just buying TV time – they are investing in an ongoing media ecosystem for which the original broadcast is just the beginning. Because of the special cultural role of the Super Bowl and its storied ad history, interest in the ads is high even among those who would never watch the game. In past years, these ads would be rerun on TV and then maybe YouTube; however, now a much more granular approach is possible. After the game airs, the brand will continue to be promoted well past its original audience through:

- **Social and creator campaigns**
- **Paid amplification**
- **Behind-the-scenes content**
- **Real-time measurement**

Today, the real value of a Super Bowl ad is its reverberation through multichannel media, reaching consumers in a highly targeted campaign that was impossible in 2015.

## Municipal Impact: A Super Multiplier

Thanks to the compound effect of tourism, hospitality revenue, event-based job creation, tax revenue, ancillary events, and free advertising as a vacation destination, the Super Bowl drops a short but sharp economic amplifier on a host region. The numbers are difficult to capture and often debated, but estimates range around ~\$720M for Phoenix in 2015 and \$370-\$630M for the Bay Area this year when all is said and done.

In fact, the impact studies themselves create value for their host cities as alignment tools. They require cities, host committees, and sponsors to justify investment, negotiate roles, and decide how to fairly partition the full economic benefits. In doing so, they shape how regions pitch themselves for future mega-events.

### A Recent Example: Las Vegas' playbook for Super Bowl LVIII

While hosting the Super Bowl in 2024, Las Vegas treated it as a proof-of-concept for becoming the U.S. capital of premium live experiences, using its host status to drive the following:

- Accelerated infrastructure development timelines
- Newly-negotiated long-term sponsorship agreements for the Strip
- Advancements in operational systems and expertise, which translates to increased future major event bids
- Record-breaking tourism demand during a traditionally slow month

### The Bottom Line

The Super Bowl is a rare event that generates rare opportunities across a wide spectrum of platforms, serving simultaneously as:

- A premium media asset
- A regional economic shock
- A civic branding accelerant
- and increasingly, a negotiating table for future bids, sponsorship norms, and public-private alignment.

So although the “30 seconds” headline makes noise, the real story is the system around the game, which is where the modern Super Bowl creates lasting value.



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