An ad to promote a TV commercial…

You know the stakes are high when an advertiser takes out a full page ad to promote a TV commercial. Of course, it's not just any TV commercial—it's a commercial during the Super Bowl.



Top quarter of full page cars.com ad in Feb. 1 Washington Post

Super Bowl advertising costs are at an all-time high. According to Lisa de Moraes' TV column in today's Washington Post, CBS is charging nearly $4 million per 30-second spot. De Moraes says that due to the high cost and the clutter, advertisers are doing what they can to promote their commercials. Some advertisers are releasing the commercial prior to the game and others are giving viewers the option of choosing the ad ending.

Cars.com seems to think that producing a full page ad will focus eye balls on their commercial. Notice that in addition, the ad is promoting this website, where, in meta-fashion, they

have some drama about the focus group about the impact of the ad. Let’s see, based on this, I think we can expect a dramatic ad, or an ad with drama, or an ironic take on car buying, or an exaggeration. Or maybe the point is that we won’t know what to expect.

I am not sure this tack works. For one, the need to advertise an advertisement seems bizarre. And second, it sets up a very high expectation that this ad is going to stand out. If the commercial doesn’t meet expectations, then no one wins. The advertiser will have spent $4 million plus the cost of producing the video about the commercial plus the cost of advertising the ad (design, placement, etc.). I would say cars.com’s investment is a minimum of $5 million (and I don’t know how much the Super Bowl commercial cost to produce or how many newspapers the print ad ran in).

Will you be watching the Super Bowl?

Want to learn to blog?

If you would like to have a successful blog (consistent, interesting, and focused on your audience) and you are in the Washington, DC metro area, check out my next blogging workshop on February 28. More details and registration here.