

Marketing Matters

By Richard D. Czerniawski

HALL OF SHAME SUPER BOWL LV ADVERTISING

Will Ferrell is one of my favorite comedic actors. I don't know Kenan Thompson nor Awkwafina. It must be a generational thing. Yet, all three starred in the GM (General Motors) "No Way Norway" 90-second TV spot aired during Super Bowl LV. This ad totally missed the mark. The only mark that counts—generating sales.



It's "Hall of Shame" advertising. What was GM thinking? To whom was this ad targeting? Consumers? Regulatory agencies? Its dealers? Its employees? Who??

What was the communication behavior objective they hoped to achieve? Trade-up your GM internal combustion vehicle for one of their new EVs? Switch from a competitive gas, environment polluting vehicle, hybrid, or EV to a GM EV? Hold off from doing either or anything until 2025?

What was GM promising consumers? Longer battery life for more mileage per charge? Longer and more than what? Current EVs? Well, I believe GM will be pursuing a moving target as battery life continues to advance behind new technology. In fact, mileage has increased 6-fold since the first EVs.

You can view the "No Way Norway" ad here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mdsPvbSpB2Y&feature=emb_rel_end

Your guess to any of the aforementioned questions I posed is as good as mine. More than likely, you can't answer the questions either. And, if you can't infer the strategy, then it's unlikely the strategy was clear to GM or their advertising agency.

This ad was a huge investment. At \$5.5-million per 30-seconds of air time, this spot cost \$16.5-million (sans any discount). The cost doesn't even include production, which might add another \$1.5-million, or more, significantly more. However, I guess \$15- to \$20-million to spend on the Super Bowl is a drop in the bucket (.00017% of revenue) to a company whose revenue was \$116-billion in the 12-months ending 30 September 2020. So, perhaps, they can afford to squander a mere few million here and there.

To what end? Does it make you want to motor down to a GM dealer and purchase an EV? Well, hold on, the ad informs viewers that they will be rolling out 30 EVs by 2025. So, maybe we just need to wait a few years.

Is GM trying to proclaim a leadership role in developing and transforming America to EVs? C'mon now, Tesla filled the space that GM abandoned more than 20-years ago.

Maybe GM wants to demonstrate its and America's power in punching Norway—in the face! Will that rally their dealers and employees?

“OK, now everybody, let's get out there and punch Norway in the face!” N-a-a-h, I don't think so.



The ad did have an effect on Norway and current EV competition. Here's a look at Audi's response to "No Way Norway":

<https://gmauthority.com/blog/2021/02/audi-reacts-to-general-motors-no-way-norway-ad-campaign-video/>

The Audi ad makes GM and its ad appear rather silly. But the GM ad is more than silly; it's foolish. It not only squanders resources but advances GM as an arrogant, inept, laggard bully—even if it possesses advanced technology in its Ultium battery.

"No Way Norway" is Hall of Shame advertising.

GM, what were you thinking?

“NINETY-NINE PERCENT OF ADVERTISING DOESN’T SELL MUCH OF ANYTHING.” David Ogilvy

Is your advertising among the ninety-nine percent? Read Chapter 9, Brand Communications that Suck, in **AVOIDING CRITICAL MARKETING ERRORS: How to Go from Dumb to Smart Marketing**. It will identify those critical errors and, importantly, point the way to developing advertising in the Top 1%. Learn more here: <http://bdn-intl.com/avoiding-critical-marketing-errors>

Peace and best wishes,

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