

GAME PLAN?

AND YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA  
SUPER BOWL 2018

WHAT'S

Nº1

This is the **first** piece in a three-part series about capturing all of the marketing opportunities associated with the Super Bowl.

If you'd like to see the other two pieces, check out [nisonline.org/professional-resources](https://nisonline.org/professional-resources)



## HEATHER RULE

WRITER, JOURNALIST AND BLOGGER

Heather is a writer, journalist and blogger passionate about sports and social media. She works as an in-game social media coordinator with Major League Baseball, providing updates for the Minnesota Twins social accounts. She's also a freelance writer and sports reporter, covering a variety of Minnesota high school sports, writing columns about the Minnesota Wild and blogging about IndyCar racing on her personal blog. Her bylines have appeared in the Star Tribune, USA Today, Chicago Tribune/Pioneer Press, 1500ESPN.com, ZoneCoverage.com and USAHockey.com. Twitter is her favorite social media platform, partly because it's a great way to share all kinds of fun GIFs.

### FIND HEATHER ONLINE:

Check out her website: [heatherrule.com](http://heatherrule.com)

Read her sports blog: [thoughtsfromthestands.blogspot.com](http://thoughtsfromthestands.blogspot.com)

Follow her on Twitter: [@hlrule](https://twitter.com/hlrule)

Like her Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/heatherrule86>

Follow her on Instagram: [instagram.com/hlrule](https://www.instagram.com/hlrule)

Follow her on Pinterest: [www.pinterest.com/heatherrule86/](http://www.pinterest.com/heatherrule86/)

Connect with her on LinkedIn: [www.linkedin.com/hlrule](http://www.linkedin.com/hlrule)

# PREGAME:

## WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT SOCIAL MEDIA AHEAD OF THE SUPER BOWL

The Super Bowl is one of the biggest events of the year. Whenever people want to convey the size or importance of any other event, in sports or otherwise, what do they say? “It’s like the Super Bowl!” From the pregame festivities to commercials, snacks and the actual game, the Super Bowl can be an event every winter that unites sports fans and non-sports fans all over the world.

On Feb. 4, 2018, the Super Bowl comes to Minneapolis and U.S. Bank Stadium, home of the Minnesota Vikings. Minneapolis last hosted the Super Bowl in 1992 at the Metrodome, years before social media hit the scene.

Super Bowl LII is a chance to showcase Minnesota – the Bold North. It’s also a chance for local brands to showcase themselves in conjunction with the big game and all the events leading up to it. Consider that the economic impact of the Super Bowl coming to Minneapolis will be more than \$400 million with more than 1 million visitors coming to the metro area, plus thousands of media members, according to the event’s website, [mnsuperbowl.com](http://mnsuperbowl.com).

There are plenty of things brands can do to prepare for the event via their social media channels. One of the first and easiest things you can do is sign up to receive the Super Bowl Host Committee emails. Sign up on [mnsuperbowl.com](http://mnsuperbowl.com) right at the top of the page. The emails can provide some insights on how brands can adapt their social media approach in advance of the Super Bowl.

# **FOLLOW** ALONG **MAKE SOCIAL ACCOUNTS** SUPER BOWL-FRIENDLY **FOCUS** YOUR ENERGY **FESTIVITIES** START BEFORE **GAME DAY** **#BOLDNORTH** **BE PREPARED**

First, go to the source to follow all the latest news and happenings with the Super Bowl. Follow the official accounts on social for the event: @mnsuperbowl2018 on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat. Right away, this could spark some ideas for events companies might want to attend or thoughts they'd like to share via social.

It also helps to make sure to do some **RESEARCH IN ADVANCE** to prepare a social media campaign. Make lists of all the hashtags for the game, performers, teams, players, broadcasters, reporters or brands. Knowing all this in advance will help during the live-Tweeting stages of the game. Also think about what messages or topics could be delivered during the game relevant to brands. Not everything may get used and things could change, but having some sort of game plan will be a benefit in the long run.

FOLLOW ALONG  **MAKE** SOCIAL ACCOUNTS  
SUPER BOWL-FRIENDLY **FOCUS** YOUR ENERGY  
FESTIVITIES START BEFORE  GAME DAY  
**#BOLDNORTH**  **BE** PREPARED

To properly monitor all that goes on and everything that gets posted surrounding the Super Bowl, make sure to set up your social media accounts to make this easier to follow. For example, setting up TweetDeck rather than using Twitter.com could be a big benefit on game day.

**TWEETDECK ALLOWS USERS TO SET UP MULTIPLE COLUMNS OF SELECTED INFORMATION.**

So, rather than just seeing a home feed of every account that's followed, a user can add columns and scroll through them. Set up columns for specific users, a home feed, notifications and/or mentions (this one is great for keeping track of engagement), lists, direct messages, trending topics and searches.

For trending topics, this might be one to monitor in the days leading up to the game and during the game. A list of trending topics will appear and users can choose which one to add as a column. It's likely that Super Bowl or **#BOLDNORTH** will be there. Of course, as the official hashtag of the event, it might be a good idea to search #BoldNorth and add it as a column anyway. The search function can be very helpful here: Search @mnsuperbowl and add that column, for example. If there are any other key terms that are relevant to a brand and/or the Super Bowl, consider adding it as a column to monitor.

One other step to take might start with creating lists. Users might want to identify certain accounts to keep an eye on with Super Bowl content. This could be other brand competitors, sports reporters covering the game, prominent local sports fans or fans of teams involved in the Super Bowl. Create as many lists as seems like a good fit. Combining them into one list titled "Super Bowl 52," for example, might be a good way to go. Or you could have a couple lists, one for competitors and one for fans. Either way, add any of the relevant Super Bowl lists that are created as a column to follow in TweetDeck. This will make the accounts easier to view so they won't get lost in the clutter of a regular home feed.

**AS ALWAYS, IT'S A USER'S PREFERENCE ON HOW THEY'D LIKE TO ORGANIZE HIS OR HER FOLLOWERS, LISTS AND PLATFORMS.**

If it's easier to follow accounts to have them in the home feed, do that. Or maybe it's a better option to separate them out into lists since the content they'll provide is only relevant for the Super Bowl. It's important to find something that a specific brand is comfortable with and works well for those updating the accounts.

FOLLOW ALONG  MAKE SOCIAL ACCOUNTS  
SUPER BOWL-FRIENDLY **FOCUS** YOUR ENERGY  
FESTIVITIES START BEFORE  GAME DAY  
#BOLDNORTH  BE PREPARED

**EACH SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM IS DIFFERENT, SO MAKE SURE TO PLAN ACCORDINGLY WHEN PLANNING CONTENT.**

Audiences will vary depending on brands and which social media platform is used. Twitter is good for real-time conversations, news, sharing GIFs and quick comments (even with the fairly new 280-character limit extension). Engage others with GIFs and brief text. Visual brands could have a bigger focus on places like Facebook or Instagram to share photos and post meaningful updates more sporadically than Twitter. Stick to the basic YouTube for posting videos or brand ads that in the hopes of seeing them go viral.

Yes, the commercials are a big reason for people to tune in to watch the Super Bowl. Some say the commercials are more fun than the game.

**THE PROBLEM IN THE PAST FOR BRANDS IS THAT THE HIGH EXPOSURE ALSO COMES WITH A VERY HIGH PRICE TAG. THIS IS WHERE SOCIAL MEDIA CAN BE EXTREMELY BENEFICIAL.**

Brands no longer have to rely on spending millions of dollars to get their message across on Super Bowl Sunday. Putting together a solid social media campaign leading up to and during the Super Bowl can still be an effective way to get messages out there. Eyes are on the game, but eyes are also on smartphones and social media.

Don't wait until the big day Sunday to post social media ads. The hype will be high all week long before the game, so posting anything in that window is sure to do well. Brands could always consider posting video ads on YouTube ahead of the Super Bowl, even making fun of themselves when it comes to ad funding. In 2014, the beer Newcastle launched an ad before the game on YouTube with actress Anna Kendrick who jokes she is not "beer-commercial hot." The company couldn't afford to advertise during the Super Bowl, so they improvised. The ad received nearly 800,000 views on YouTube and also received a bunch of media publicity for the creative effort.

**ALSO, IF THERE'S A TIME TO TAKE A RISK OR TRY SOMETHING NEW WITH A BRAND, THE SUPER BOWL IS A PERFECT VENUE.**

Traditional TV commercials always try to push the envelope and be remembered for that creative or humorous spark. Think the same way about social media messages.

FOLLOW ALONG  MAKE SOCIAL ACCOUNTS  
SUPER BOWL-FRIENDLY FOCUS YOUR ENERGY  
**FESTIVITIES** START BEFORE  GAME DAY  
#BOLDNORTH  BE PREPARED

It's true that the Super Bowl isn't just about the football game. Actually, for many people the game itself can be just a minor part of the whole spectacle, and sometimes the game doesn't really live up to the hype either. From parties to hours and hours of pregame coverage, there's so much to cover before the game even happens.

In Minneapolis, things will really kick off with a 10-day festival starting at 4 p.m. Jan. 26 and leading right up until the game. The event is filled with no/low cost activities to showcase the best of Minnesota. There will be free concerts and ice sculptures, plus national broadcast sets. This free fan fest called Super Bowl LIVE presented by Verizon will take place on Nicollet Mall in downtown Minneapolis. It's free and open to the public, so it's a great chance for locals to take in some of the Super Bowl atmosphere – even if they don't have a ticket into the game.

Don't overlook this opportunity to share social media content as part of the #BoldNorth. Think about attending the events and sharing thoughts on social media with the #BoldNorth hashtag. Share photos and, if possible, try to incorporate the events with a brand.

FOLLOW ALONG  MAKE SOCIAL ACCOUNTS  
SUPER BOWL-FRIENDLY FOCUS YOUR ENERGY  
FESTIVITIES START BEFORE  GAME DAY  
**#BOLDNORTH**  BE PREPARED

This is the hashtag the Super Bowl is using to make it a unique brand to Minnesota. Obviously with the event held in the heart of winter, expect some focus on the ice, snow and chilly weather. Anything brands can do to take advantage of this hashtag within social media could be a good reflection on its own brand.

Even something as simple as posting a photo of a big snowfall – perhaps making a snowman, braving the cold to take a walk or shoveling snow – and **ADDING #BOLDNORTH TO THE POST COULD GET SOME TRACTION WITH A BRAND.**

Anything posted that's related to the Super Bowl should think about using this hashtag to keep the tie-in with the event.

FOLLOW ALONG  MAKE SOCIAL ACCOUNTS  
SUPER BOWL-FRIENDLY FOCUS YOUR ENERGY  
FESTIVITIES START BEFORE  GAME DAY  
#BOLDNORTH  **BE** PREPARED

The actual game will be unpredictable – as much as all the sports experts will analyze every single thing they can about the game for days and hours leading up to kickoff. There are still some things that can be done beforehand to be a leg up.

The Super Bowl's official website has a constant countdown with days, hours and minutes until the game. It might be worth putting together a countdown graphic with a brand's logo or colors to post on social leading up to the game. Keep it more spaced out at first, like one month, two weeks, but as it gets closer the countdown could shift into days or hours. It's a simple post that can keep a brand name out there and drive a conversation with customers and perhaps reach new ones when including the Super Bowl hashtags.

Along with the countdown, brainstorm other ideas for graphics or GIFs that could be stockpiled in a folder and ready to post at a moment's notice. Once it's known which teams will be playing, it could be nice to create some kind of "congratulations!" graphic ready for both teams to post when the game is over. Again, here's another opportunity to use a brand's logo or colors to personalize it. Depending on how sports-focused an account is, this same idea could be used to update scores at the end of each quarter. It's not completely necessary, though it is another chance to get a brand's name out there in front of people.

Pay attention to engagement in regard to Super Bowl posts leading up the Feb. 4, too. It seems obvious, but don't ignore those that engagement with these special posts. Also, don't be afraid to reach out and engage with others first when it comes to Super Bowl Tweets, Instagram photos or Facebook posts.

Social media resources are different for each account, company or brand. Whatever the resources, **COME UP WITH A PLAN OF ATTACK FOR SUPER BOWL-RELATED POSTS.** How will the posting responsibilities be delegated? Who will put together graphics? Who will handle engagement? It's also important to think about how social media will be monitored on game day.

Preparing in advance for social media campaigns will help a ton when the big game arrives.

This is the **first** piece in a three-part series about capturing all of the marketing opportunities associated with the Super Bowl.

If you'd like to see the other two pieces, check out [nismonline.org/professional-resources](http://nismonline.org/professional-resources)

Visit us at [nismonline.org](http://nismonline.org)

Call us at **763-200-NISM**

Follow us

