

NEWS

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Study Concludes: 2003 Super Bowl Raised San Diego's National Visibility

A rigorous study conducted by Competitive Edge Research, a San Diego public opinion research firm, concludes that more Americans are now aware of San Diego after the city hosted Super Bowl XXXVII. In the week before the Super Bowl Competitive Edge found that 57.3 percent of US adults had no impression or a neutral impression of San Diego. After the game San Diego was a blank slate to only 51.8 percent, a significant increase in visibility of 5.5 percent. This roughly equates to another 11 million Americans learning about the city.

But was this increased visibility due to game coverage or perhaps other phenomenon? Breaking the data down by Super Bowl viewers versus non-viewers shows that viewing the game actually increased the effect on San Diego's visibility. Among game watchers visibility increased 7.5 percent while among non-viewers the difference was only 2.3 percent. "Competitive Edge's method is able to clearly show that it was Super Bowl coverage that increased San Diego's visibility," said the firm's President, John E. Nienstedt.

The study also reveals some fascinating insight into the dynamics of the Super Bowl's effect on the host city. Competitive Edge found that San Diego's national image was fairly strong prior to the Super Bowl. The study further showed no evidence that hosting the game created a more positive or negative impression for the city. This means that the benefit gained by San Diego came from increasing its visibility, not changing people's minds about it. Nienstedt says that, "the Super Bowl can take a city with a lot of positives – like San Diego – and lift it up, but it is doubtful that a host city with a benign or negative image would derive much benefit."