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NFL Picks Winner of Super Bowl Viewer-Created Ad Contest

Sales Director at Maine Marketing Firm Will Have His Pitch Produced

By [Rich Thomaselli](#)

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NEW YORK (AdAge.com) -- The National Football League has chosen the fan whose idea will be turned into a Super Bowl commercial.



Gino Bona is the winner of the NFL's Super Bowl commercial contest. Here, the sales exec pitches judges his 'best NFL Super Bowl commercial ever.'

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Gino Bona of Portsmouth, N.H., is the winner of the NFL's promotion that gave fans the opportunity to determine one of the league's 30-second spots that will run next month in Super Bowl XLI.

Chevrolet and Frito-Lay are running similar promotions for do-it-yourself commercials for the big game.

Seven months without football

Mr. Bona, who works as a

[Like Chevy and Frito-Lay, NFL Asks Fans to Pitch a Super Bowl Ad](#) sales director at the Garrand & Co. marketing firm in Portland, Maine, traveled to Suddenly Advertising's Big Day Has a Do-It-Yourself Feel Giants Stadium in East Rutherford, N.J., in

November to pitch his idea to a panel of judges. Under the tagline "It's hard for us, too," Mr. Bona's idea described several scenes of fans' reactions as the Super Bowl comes to an end. After the game, fans pay season-long bar tabs and console one another as they struggle with the fact that there will be no more NFL games for another seven months.

The NFL received more than 1,700 submissions by fans for the promotion, which was titled "Pitch us your idea for the best NFL Super Bowl commercial ever. Seriously." It was backed by a national TV spot from GMR Marketing that first aired Nov. 5.

In addition to Giants Stadium, fans pitched their ideas to the NFL at events at Texas Stadium in Irving, Texas, and Invesco Field at Mile High in Denver. The NFL narrowed those pitches down to a group of 12 finalists and posted them at NFL.com/SuperAd, where fans voted for their favorite commercial idea Dec. 18 through Jan. 7. More than 200,000 votes were cast.

Appeal, creativity and 'heartbeat'

The winning pitch was determined through a combination vote by fans online, a panel of judges and the NFL. All of the initial pitches were scored by a panel that included NFL marketing executives, current and former NFL players, advertising professors at local colleges and members of the media. The judges rated fan pitches based on connection to the NFL, commercial appeal, originality and creativity, and "heartbeat," the emotional connection the pitch made with the judges.

The final judging panel was made up of award-winning actor and star of past NFL commercials Don Cheadle; filmmaker and award-winning TV-spot director Joe Pytko; and NFL Senior VP-Consumer Products and Marketing Lisa Baird.

Mr. Bona's pitch will be turned into the NFL's ad that will run during the CBS broadcast of Super Bowl XLI on Feb. 4. In addition to serving as a judge, Mr. Pytko will also direct the winning spot. Mr. Bona will be flown to Los Angeles next week to be on the set for the

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commercial. He also receives a prize package that includes airfare to South Florida for himself and a guest -- along with two tickets to Super Bowl XLI.

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