

'Made in America' Ads Get an Opening

Tariffs lift appeal of domestic-made items but marketing claims must be solid

By PATRICK COFFEE

Ford Motor released an ad campaign this month titled "Committed to America," stating that it assembles more vehicles in the U.S. and employs more hourly workers in the country than any other automaker.

"From America. For America," its tagline read.

President Trump praised the campaign on his Truth Social platform, writing, "A Great Ad by FORD!"

The virtue of buying American-made products has remained a rare point of bipartisan consensus in an increasingly divided country. But Ford is likely at the front of a wave of advertisers that will re-emphasize their domestic bona fides as President Trump's new tariffs turn up the heat on imports, marketing

and legal observers predict.

Many advertisers will have to choose their words carefully, however, because even companies with factories in the U.S. often source many components from abroad. Marketers in industries that rely heavily on imports, such as automotive, pharmaceutical, technology and apparel, risk overstepping if they cannot fully substantiate any "Made in America" claims.

"I think marketers will be stepping up to the plate, and those who have the ability to

make the claim will make it," said Ronald Urbach, partner and co-chair of the advertising group at law firm Davis+Gibbert.

The campaign is an extension of Ford's longstanding position as an American brand, but the tariffs also provide an opening for the company, said Phil O'Connor, head of marketing communications for Ford Blue, the company's combustible-engine division.

"We were in a unique position to reinforce why we're such a good option in times of

uncertainty, given that the uncertainty is driven specifically by tariffs on goods that are assembled and parts that are assembled outside the U.S.," said O'Connor.

The Federal Trade Commission will likely intensify enforcement efforts against companies that make misleading claims about their U.S. provenance, according to Urbach.

Home goods company **Williams-Sonoma** agreed last April to pay the FTC \$3.17 million, which the commission said then was the largest fine

yet for a "Made in the U.S.A. case," for violating a 2020 order regarding imported products, including those manufactured in China, that were inaccurately labeled on its website as being made in America.

Williams-Sonoma had agreed to pay \$1 million in 2020 after the FTC found that the company made unsubstantiated "made in America" claims about several product lines. A Williams-Sonoma spokeswoman attributed last year's fine to an administrative mistake.

Ripple to Buy Credit Network for \$1.3 Billion

By DENNY JACOB

Cryptocurrency firm **Ripple** said it would acquire credit network Hidden Road for \$1.25 billion.

Ripple said the acquisition would combine its crypto operations with ownership and operation of a multiasset prime broker.

"The U.S. market is effectively open for the first time due to the regulatory overhang of the former SEC coming to an end, and the market is maturing to address the needs of traditional finance," said Ripple CEO Brad Garlinghouse.

The deal is expected to close in the coming months, pending regulatory approval.

Garlinghouse has been seen as one of the biggest winners from the Trump administration's embrace of crypto and plans to consolidate the U.S. government's crypto holdings.

AI Reworks 'The Wizard of Oz' for Big Screen

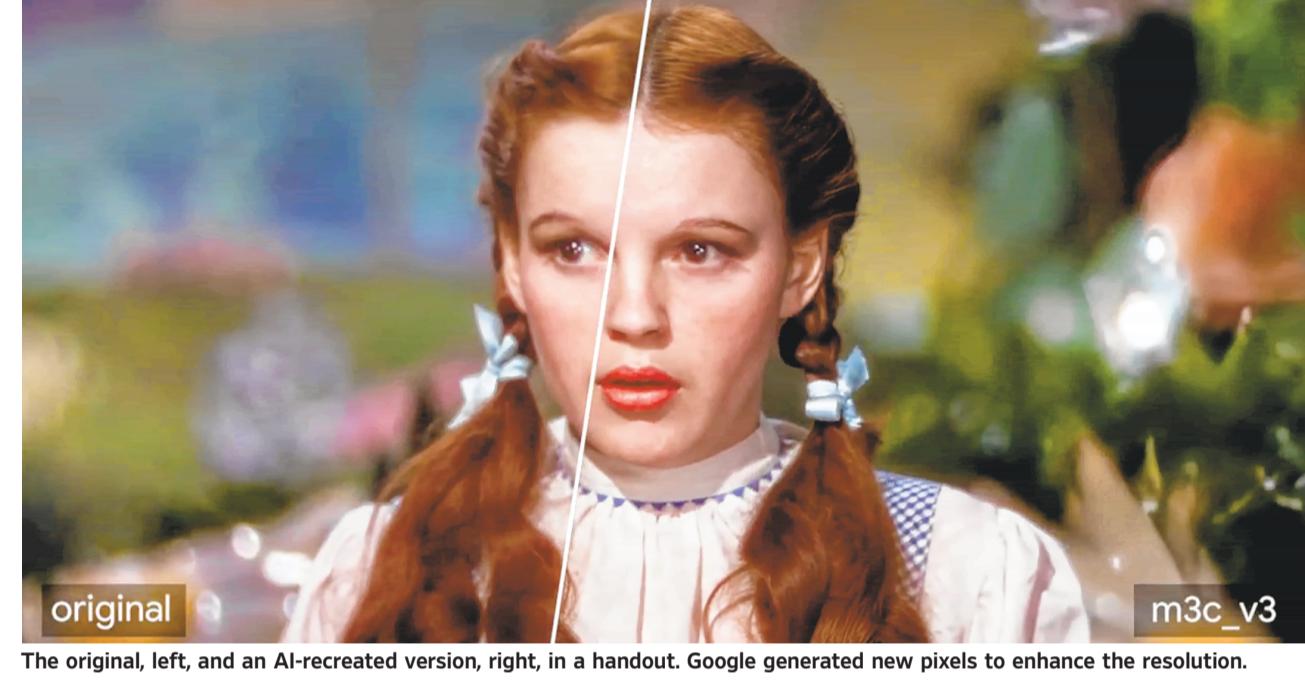
By ISABELLE BOUSQUETTE

Showing an 86-year-old movie, shot with a 35mm camera, on a 160,000-square-foot curved, immersive screen initially seemed impossible—even to AI engineers at Google.

But that is what Jim Dolan, executive chairman and chief executive of Sphere Entertainment had in mind when he decided to present "The Wizard of Oz" in the Las Vegas Sphere, on one of the highest-resolution screens in the world.

"When we first brought the project to Google and we talked to their scientists, I think they thought we were a little crazy," Dolan said. But the Sphere itself, an enormous steel globe just off the Strip, wrapped in an LED exoskeleton with changing colors and patterns, is also a little crazy.

Since opening in 2023, the venue's 17,600-seat theater has hosted performers like U2 and the Eagles and shown movies specifically filmed for its unique screen. It has never played an existing film, let alone one shot with 1930s technology. But after cutting an intellectual-property deal with Warner Bros., and sizing



The original, left, and an AI-recreated version, right, in a handout. Google generated new pixels to enhance the resolution.

up the capabilities of a few artificial-intelligence companies, Dolan put the Google engineers to work on getting the wonderful world of Oz Sphere-ready.

News Corp., owner of The Wall Street Journal, has a commercial agreement to supply con-

tent on Google platforms.

"Very, very, very big and very, very difficult" was how Steven Hickson, director for AI foundation research at Google DeepMind, described the project. "There are scenes where the scarecrow's nose is like 10 pixels," he added.

"That's a big technological challenge," he said about getting the character ready for the massive screen.

To make it work, Google's enterprise business, Google Cloud, and its research unit, Google DeepMind, invented new AI methods to enhance resolution and extend backgrounds to include characters and scenery not in the original shots. Google calls these techniques "performance generation" and "outpainting."

The Sphere will debut the movie on Aug. 28, but for cinephile purists, this isn't your mother's Wizard of Oz. AI has touched over 90% of the movie, said Ravi Rajamani, managing director, global head of generative AI engineering at Google Cloud. There might

also be other sensory elements, but Dolan said those are under wraps for now.

Thomas Kurian, CEO of Google Cloud, said viewers should think of it not as a cinematic experience, but an experiential one. "We're taking a beloved movie, but we are re-creating it," he said. "The only other way you could do it is to go back [in time] and film it with the cameras that the Sphere uses."

For example, in one early scene, Dorothy is seen talking to Aunt Em and Miss Gulch. Audiences know Uncle Henry is in the room, although off camera. In the version that will play in the Sphere, Uncle Henry is visible, along with a much wider background shot showing more of the house.

Google used generative AI models from its Gemini family, including Veo two and Imagen 3, to generate the new background and performances, fine-tuning the models on the original movie. The team still ran into challenges, in part because of the limited source material.

"You only have one movie for us to train this model on. And then some of these characters don't appear a lot," said Rajamani.

Google's team also consulted with professional filmmakers to help decide actions, expressions and performance. Oscar-nominated producer Jane Rosenthal worked closely on the project. Google also used new AI-powered methods to enhance the film's resolution. Standard techniques involve multiplying a shot's existing pixels. Google instead used AI to generate new pixels as it increased the size of the visuals.

AI has heightened divisions within Hollywood in recent years, as actors have fought for protections against the use of their IP to train new models and studios have received backlash for the use of AI in new projects. But Dolan isn't worried about any of those concerns surfacing here.

"I can't wait for the film and television industry to see what we've done," he said. "I think their jaws will drop."

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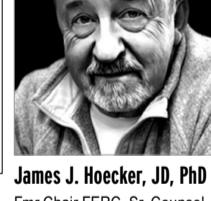
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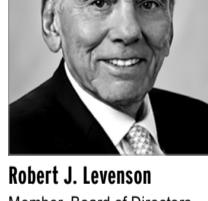
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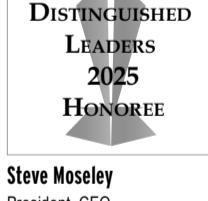
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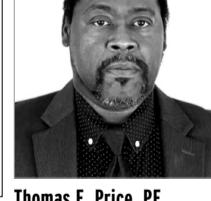
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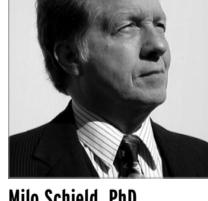
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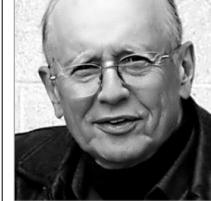
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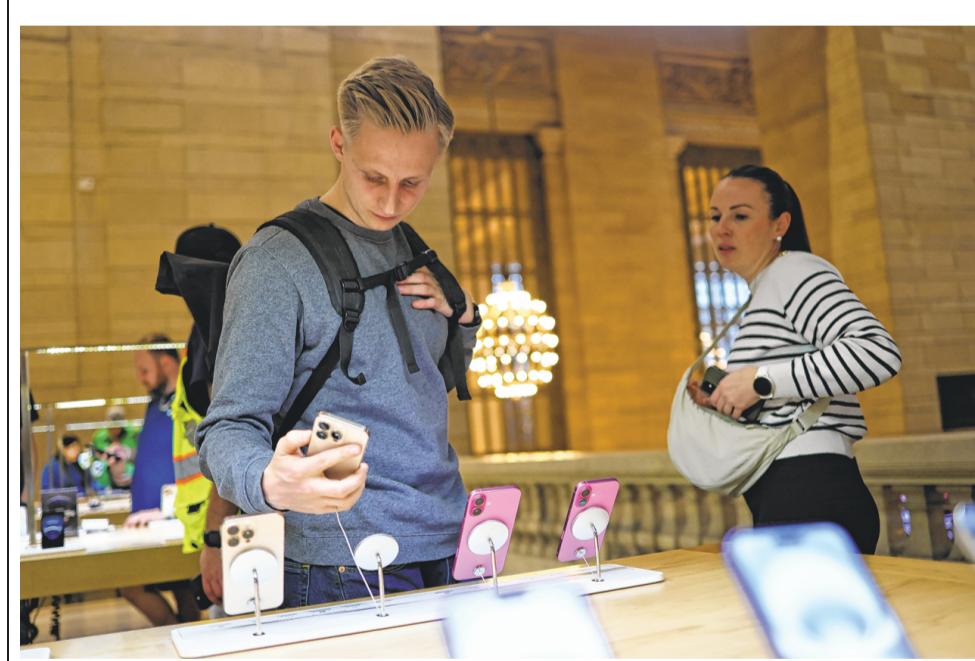
Felicity A. Williams, Esq.

Deputy COS to the Mayor
City of Pittsburgh



Fang Zhang

Senior Auditor
KPMG, LLP



Apple relies heavily on China to manufacture its iPhone. An Apple store in New York City.

MICHAEL M. SANTIAGO/GETTY IMAGES

iPhone Users Rush To Upgrade

Continued from page B1

tors—or pass it on to consumers.

Allison Post, a 69-year-old health writer and body therapist, said she had already been planning to upgrade her iPhone 8, which she has had for six years, but the tariffs spurred her to action.

"The tariffs for sure pushed me out the door," she said, adding that she also prompted her husband to get a new

MacBook. "Why pay what might turn out to be double?"

Apple relies heavily on China to manufacture its signature iPhone that makes up about 50% of the company's revenue. On Monday, The Wall Street Journal reported that Apple plans to send more iPhones to the U.S. from India to offset the high costs of China tariffs.

The company's reliance on China has spooked investors. Shares were down 19% from Thursday to Monday, the worst three-day performance for the company in nearly 25 years. Shares fell an additional 5% Tuesday.

"Todd Swanson, a retired physician in Idaho, said he upgraded three phones on his six-phone plan with Verizon

after the tariffs announcement.

He taken advantage of an offer from Verizon whereby customers pay a heavily discounted price for an iPhone in exchange for trading in an old phone and signing a three-year payment plan with the telecommunications company.

Swanson is worried the deal may no longer be offered after the tariffs go into effect in the coming days.

"We think those deals will go away," he said.

Watch a Video

Scan this code for a video on why iPhones aren't made in the U.S.