



**Your on the  
Street Reporter**



**Uyless Black**

**Re-branding the NFL**

## **Re-branding the NFL**

When an organization wants to change its image, it often goes through a process called *re-branding*. This procedure may include changing its product, its day-to-day operations, even its culture. For profit-driven enterprises, it boils down to finding ways to make more money, maybe for the benefit of customers.

But maybe not. Increasing revenue and profits is often the motivation for re-branding, resulting in the customers forking out more money to buy or rent the same service or product. The company advertises that it is offering improvements; thus, enticing the customer to stay loyal and stick around.

A re-branding announcement is often accompanied by an existing product that does not offer improvements but more useless bells and whistles. Or the re-branding may be nothing but a name change, with the product or service staying the same.

Take the NFL, the organization with a monopoly on professional football in the United States. Its membership consists of 32 teams and is the most popular spectator sport in the US, with 37 percent of adults in the country ranking NFL games their top dog. It is a huge cash cow for its owners.

In previous football seasons, the highly watched Thursday Night Football game was aired on a conventional public television channel, such as ESPN. Until this season, all NFL playoff games were also offered on these stations, with NBC, CBS, ABC, and ESPN vying for carrying these advertising revenue gems on their affiliate stations throughout the nation (and increasingly, in Europe).

The NFL is undergoing a re-branding on how they offer their monopoly to their customers. They now use Amazon Prime for their Thursday night game. This playoff season (2024), some of their games are offered on Peacock.

If you want to watch any of these games, you must subscribe to Prime and Peacock, or other fee-based stations. They no longer run on the public television networks.

### **Prices, Fan, and the Advertiser**

Prime charges its viewers \$14.99 a month for its offerings (\$8.99 for fewer programs). Peacock charges \$5.99 a month.

Consequently, if you are a diehard football fan, which I am, you must now pay for membership to these streaming companies to watch games. In the past, the cost to viewers was “paid” by watching advertisements shown between plays and quarters.

We put up with the ads, even those that are foisted on us by NFL-dictated timeouts---none that have anything to do with a team calling them.

The NFL is re-branding to bring in even more money to its owners: Ad Age reports that “Advertisers paid an average of \$419,045 for a 30-second commercial window during NFL games in October [2023]. ... That sum marked a 15 percent increase compared to the same period one year ago, when 30 seconds of airtime during games cost an average of \$363,016.”

Super Bowl commercials of 30 seconds cost a company \$7 million. Nice work if you can get it.

### **The Same Re-branded Brand for the Fans**

These streamed games are the same as they were on the conventional TV stations. One might expect that the NFL, with its control over professional football, might offer its fans an

enticement to pay to watch a game that was once free---say, cutting down on the timeouts for advertising.

Nope, this re-branding is the same brand as before. Same merchandise. Same number of advertisements. Now, football fans---such as this writer---who have no interest in paying monthly for a service that I would otherwise never use, must fork over money to, say, Peacock to watch some of the NFL playoff games. As I am writing this report, a game---one I wanted to watch---is being played on Peacock between Kansas City and Miami.

Most of us can afford \$5.99 a month. Nevertheless, I am not going to pay it; my personal protest against the NFL's disregard for its fans. But I am beating a dead horse. Given the migration of TV viewers toward streaming stations and the profits that will be made from users' subscriptions, this restructuring could have been predicted.

### **Alternatives**

I surfed the Net to look for alternatives to using Peacock. I came across other companies that offer the Kansas City/Miami game, such as Sling and Fubo. But they charge a monthly fee, which is more than the fees of Prime or Peacock. An alternative is an old-time indoor antenna for picking up a game through the air waves---a medium of questionable quality and the requirement to install the antenna.

### **Re-branding the NFL Name**

In the opinion of this football fan, the NFL no longer stands for the National Football League. I've re-branded its name. As I do not use profanity in my writings, I leave it to your imagination to substitute the word "Football" in the league's name with two other words. To help your interpretation, the first word begins with "F" and the second word is "you."