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Super League and Panda Express Prove Gaming Drives Full-Funnel Brand Impact, Evolving Initial Campaign into Always-On Marketing Platform

Independent Nielsen study confirms in-game exposure drove statistically significant lifts in brand awareness, consideration, and recommendation, moving the program from a single test to a standing, cross-platform presence on Fortnite and Roblox

SANTA MONICA, Calif., Oct. 05, 2026 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Super League Enterprise, Inc. (Nasdaq: SLE) ("Super League"), a play-first advertising and audience intelligence company, working alongside Panda Express's Media AOR, The Many, has helped Panda Express evolve a short-term gaming test into an always-on presence across Fortnite and Roblox. The multi-phase program meets the brand's next-generation target of 18-to-34-year-olds inside gaming platforms that reach [an estimated 220 million monthly active players](#) globally, combined. Over 18 months of continuous projects, strong results justified scaling the initiative, turning it into a standing platform that Panda Express controls.

"The brands that treat gaming like a media buy get a flight that runs and ends. We push our partners toward something different and give them a reason for fans to come back between campaigns, not just during them," added Rhiannon Apple, EVP, Super League. "The past 18 months offer third-party proof that in-game exposure moves real brand metrics."

Proving the Concept

The program began in the second half of 2025, when Panda Express launched inside Fortnite and Roblox. Early activations centered around major cultural moments, including a festive Lunar New Year celebration featuring the brand mascot, Pei Pei. Players were invited to sample virtual menu favorites like Honey Walnut Shrimp, Kung Pao Chicken, and The Original Orange Chicken within custom game environments.

Player reactions were overwhelmingly positive, as gamers praised the seamless integration and interactive mini-games that felt native to the player experience rather than like intrusive advertising. This enthusiastic feedback shaped every phase that followed.

The results validated the strategy of returning to immersive platforms. On Roblox, analysis comparing exposed players to control groups showed that players who recalled the activation were more likely to consider Panda Express for near-term purchase and significantly more likely to recommend the brand to friends, signaling meaningful mid- and

lower-funnel lift. On Fortnite, in-game survey results showed strong awareness and positive brand perception among exposed players, reinforcing gameplay as a high-performing environment for engaging Gen Z.

“Repeat investment only happens when the results are there,” said Rhiannon Apple, EVP, Client Strategy at Super League. “The brand lift data, combined with authentic player enthusiasm, made it clear this was a program worth re-activating. Together with Panda Express and The Many, we’re continuing to prove that play can be a measurable, repeatable growth strategy for brands.”

Proving the Impact

Expanding upon the learnings, the initiative transitioned into custom integrations throughout early 2026, incorporating cinematic scenes within Fortnite and a pop-up Roblox obstacle course. This phase focused on measuring brand-specific KPIs and achieving meaningful reach.

The same Nielsen study also validated that virtual environments drive core commercial metrics, with all key variances reaching statistical significance at a 90% confidence threshold.

- In-game exposure produced a 3 percentage point uplift in overall Brand Awareness.
- Interactive mechanics successfully nurtured audiences throughout the funnel, resulting in a 3 percentage point lift in both Brand Consideration (67% compared to 64%) and Brand Recommendation (64% compared to 61%).
- Exposed players demonstrated markedly higher ad and transaction recall relative to the unexposed baseline:
 - Overall brand recognition held exceptionally firm across both platform communities, cementing Panda Express's market position among young consumers.
 - Virtual placement boosted overall campaign recall by 9 percentage points compared to unexposed audiences.
 - When surveyed regarding recent dining choices across competitive quick-service options:
 - Exposed gamers reflected a 5% increase in near-term restaurant visits versus the control group.
 - Engaging virtual narrative elements and reward touchpoints effectively linked digital engagement to real-world store purchases.
 - When evaluating likelihood of near-term visits: Campaign participation created a 5-percentage-point shift toward high purchase intent over a 30-day window.
 - Native virtual touchpoints and menu features (including Hot Orange Chicken) systematically converted casual play into active purchasing consideration.

Scaling Into an Always-On Ecosystem

With the concept and the impact both proven, the second half of 2026 marks the program's evolution from campaign to marketing platform. Rather than running another flight, Panda Express now maintains a standing, cross-platform presence:

On Fortnite:

- Three additional map integrations, each matched to a limited-time menu item
- Persistent in-game billboards running the full six-month flight, keeping the brand present between activations

On Roblox:

- The Panda Express Obby relaunched as a standalone, always-on destination rather than a campaign-length experience
- Six monthly content updates including new NPCs, seasonal courses, and menu tie-ins to keep the world current

Industry Recognition

The program's innovation has been recognized externally. The Panda Express x Super League gaming integration, "Leveling Up," won a 2025 Planning & Buying Award in the New / Emerging / Experimental Media category, recognizing first-to-market media developed by The Many for Panda Express. That campaign brought back Hot Orange Chicken for a limited time, integrating it directly into Fortnite and Roblox gameplay through in-game billboard teasers and 3D Pei Pei characters, driving 16% engagement rates in Roblox and 537,000 engagements in Fortnite, alongside 450,000 total engagements and 265,000 cutscene views that ran without interrupting gameplay. Additionally, the Lunar New Year program for 2026 has been named a finalist for OMMA 2026 Gaming.

The Discipline of the Approach

Across 18 months of deliberate testing and execution, from initial Hot Orange Chicken promotion to high-impact custom maps, each phase was designed to answer a specific question before scaling: could in-game menu integrations engage this audience? Did that engagement translate into measurable brand lift? Could the result be sustained as a standing platform rather than a recurring cost?

The answers were a resounding yes.

About Super League

Super League (Nasdaq: SLE) connects brands with the 3.5 billion-person global gaming population through advertising and branded content programs across gaming and digital media platforms. The Company generates revenue by delivering these programs through proprietary interactive formats, creator content, immersive experiences, data-driven insights, and strategic campaign services designed to improve marketing performance. By translating player behavior into actionable intelligence, Super League serves as a trusted partner helping brands reach and influence consumers who play video games. With a deep understanding of this highly engaged yet under-monetized audience, Super League is positioned to capture an increasing share of brand advertising spend as the market continues to expand.

About Panda Express

Panda Express is the largest family-owned and operated Asian dining concept in the United States, founded in 1983 by Co-Founders and Co-CEOs Andrew and Peggy Cherng. Known for pioneering iconic dishes like The Original Orange Chicken® and award-winning favorites such as Honey Walnut Shrimp and Kung Pao Chicken, Panda Express continues to inspire better lives through food, culture, and community. With more than 2,500 locations nationwide and a growing international presence, Panda Express brings American Chinese cuisine to generations of fans around the world.

Through Panda Cares®, the company's philanthropic arm, Panda Express has raised more than \$415 million to support education, health, and disaster relief efforts, positively impacting millions of lives since 1999. For more information, visit pandaexpress.com or follow Panda Express on social media.

About The Many

The Many is an independent full-service advertising agency, serving as Media AOR for Panda Express, based in Los Angeles that specializes in harnessing audience participation. They believe the most valuable brands of the future will be built by their most active participants—not passive audiences. A three-time AdAge Small Agency of the Year winner and holder of three world records, they steward more than \$100M in paid media and have been creatively awarded at Cannes, D&AD, One Show, and beyond. Operating within The Many Group's borderless ecosystem, the agency delivers both project-based and AOR partnerships. The Many doesn't do passive. They don't lead with process; they lead with participation. www.themany.com

Forward-Looking Statements

This press release contains certain "forward-looking statements" within the meaning of the safe harbor provisions of the U.S. Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995 that involve substantial risks and uncertainties. Forward-looking statements can be identified by words such as: "anticipate," "intend," "continue," "could," "plan," "goal," "seek," "believe," "project," "potential," "estimate," "expect," "strategy," "future," "likely," "may," "should," "will," "would" and similar references to future periods, or the negative of these words or other similar terms or expressions that concern Super League's expectations, strategy, plans, or intentions. Forward-looking statements are neither historical facts nor assurances of future performance. Instead, these are based only on Super League's current beliefs, expectations and assumptions regarding the future of its business, future plans and strategies, projections, anticipated events and trends, the economy and other conditions. Because forward-looking statements relate to the future, these are subject to inherent uncertainties, risks and changes in circumstances that are difficult to predict and many of which are outside of Super League's control. These and other forward-looking statements are not guarantees of future results and are subject to risks, uncertainties and assumptions that could cause actual results or financial condition to differ materially from those indicated in any forward-looking statements. Neither Super League nor any other person assume responsibility for the accuracy and completeness of the forward-looking statements. Therefore, you should not rely on any of these forward-looking statements as predictions of future events. Please review other risks and uncertainties described in the section entitled "Risk Factors" in Super League's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2025, as such risk factors may be amended, supplemented or superseded from time to time by other reports filed by Super League with the Securities and Exchange

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