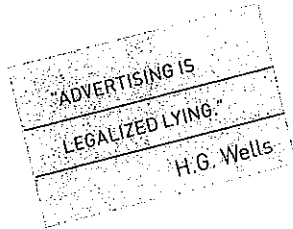


Product Placement



"Quiet on the set!", "Rolling", "Sound", "Background" and ...

"Action!" Each day these words are spoken on countless movie sets all over the world. It is film time! Millions of viewers watch.

But motion pictures are not just Art or even Entertainment – they involve, of course, money – and lots of it. Because here is where advertising and movie-making meet!

toss throw

As a TV ad at Super Bowl (American football) costs around 2.4 million dollars per 30-second slot, companies are increasingly looking for cheaper ways to promote products. This is where product placement comes in. A product of a certain brand is "placed" in the film so that every movie-goer or video watcher will get the idea: when a movie star uses a recognizable product, people in the audience will pat themselves on the back and say, "Look how smart I am – I'm using the same thing as the hero in the movie!" If it's something they haven't consumed recently, it will bring it back to mind. And most products in Hollywood films are hand picked. Product placements very rarely happen by accident.

THE WISH LIST: HOW PRODUCTS GET INTO FILMS

The discussion within the film production team usually gives birth to the "wish list". This is a list of those specific products – vehicles, locations, airlines, etc. that are defined by brand name. These products will then be used in the film, for example by someone brushing his or her teeth with a special toothpaste brand.

In the practice of integrating specific products and brands into filmed entertainment, cash does not necessarily change hands. Rather, a placement firm supplies goods or equipment to be used in the film, or tosses° in some extra products (food, for example) for the crew. In other cases an airline may agree to donate round

trip tickets for the production team, in exchange for on-screen exposure°.

Placement firms support the studios by supplying props° that would be expensive. This can save substantial° costs. If a film needs a jet, a boat, a yacht – they will turn to product placement, for example the computer (Apple) or cell phone (Nokia) used in *War of the Worlds*. And maybe you can guess which popular brown soda featured in the following films: *Are We There yet*, *Boogeyman*, *Four Brothers*, *Hitch*, *Mr and Mrs Smith*, *King Kong* and *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*?

Well placed on-screen brand exposure can immediately increase sales, enhance° brand image and improve employee° morale.



exposure making something known
props things used by actors in a movie
substantial large, high
enhance make better
employee someone working in a company
minor under 18 years old



JAMES BOND WITH AN OMEGA WATCH IN *CASINO ROYALE*.

THE LIMITS OF PRODUCT PLACEMENT

Product placements also depend a lot on how the product will actually be used. If an alcoholic beverage is shown in the film, the producer does not want minors° to drink it on-screen, or someone to drive after drinking.

There are more definite no-no's: Airlines are very cautious about security issues and won't touch a scene that shows gunplay

on board or even at an airport. The aircraft going down to crash in the TV series *Lost* has no identifiable airline brand name.

Telephone companies make sure that their phone cords are



COMPANIES DON'T WANT THEIR PRODUCTS TO BE ASSOCIATED WITH DISASTER, LIKE IN THE TV SERIES *LOST*.

never used to strangle anyone. Products never want to be associated with bad guys – like members of the Mafia – or a disaster.

But no director can promise to get a certain product into a certain movie. Yet due to generous offers, dialogue, or even the whole plot,

can actually change at

short notice. TV stations sometimes cooperate with big compa-

20 nies to produce a storyline designed to promote certain company products.

GOOD PRODUCT PLACEMENT

great success in product placement is Swedish Saab: “We know our business and brand very well. It’s a matter of having excellent contacts with film production companies and their staff,” they say. One season a Saab was placed in an entire episode of *Seinfeld* that focused on Jerry’s car (his mechanic thought he wasn’t taking enough care of it ...).



A SEINFELD SAAB.

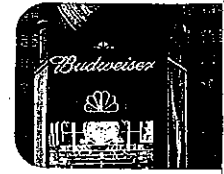
EFFECTS ON MOVIE-GOERS

30 All product placements should fit in naturally and charmingly – otherwise, the viewer gets turned off. Some research shows that consumers (movie watchers) have no objection to prod-

uct placement as long as it is not overdone. They would rather see a can that says "Bud" than a can that says "Beer". Movie watchers are grown-ups who do not need to be protected, according to one product placement firm.

verbal involving words
gratification satisfaction

5 How do agents evaluate a product placement when doing business with a film maker? Well, there is a scale of 1 to 5. Five is a verbal^o or hands-on with the product. Four is a product passing by, like a bottle on a table between two characters as they drink the beverage. Three is a sign flashing by. Anything less than that is not
10 considered to be of value. On *Friends*, we see all coffee brands in the cabinet, but the audience can't see the labels – that is below three.



"ADVERTISING IS THE ART OF MAKING
WHOLE LIES OUT OF HALF TRUTHS."

Edgar A. Shoaff

All in all, product placement is an inex-
15 pensive way for a product to get visibility and power. But given the long lead times in film production, it doesn't give instant gratification^o. The companies involved have to take some risks, but using product placement they are getting into one of the most powerful media in the world – film.

20 The question now is how far the evolution of the Internet and on-line gaming will move product placement. The new owners of *www.youtube.com*, for example, calculate to earn back their investment costs through advertising. Is this possible, or will it make such sites unattractive?



FRIENDS WITH LOTS OF
OPPORTUNITIES FOR
PRODUCT PLACEMENTS

