

Handbook of Product Placement in the Mass Media: New Strategies in Marketing Theory, Practice, Trends, and Ethics

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This *Handbook of Product Placement in the Mass Media* is a compilation of research and commentary addressing the theory and practice of product placement in the mass media which is a promotion management subject. The book examines product placement, related media marketing strategies, and their impacts on consumers. Product placement or embedded marketing is a form of advertisement, where branded goods or services are placed in a context usually devoid of ads, such as movies, the story line of television shows, or news programs. The product placement is often not disclosed at the time that the good or service is featured. Product placement became common in the 1980s. In April 2006, Broadcasting and Cable reported, "Two thirds of advertisers employ 'branded entertainment'—product placement—with the vast majority of that (80%) in commercial TV programming." The story, based on a survey by the Association of National Advertisers, said, "Reasons for using in-show plugs varied from 'stronger emotional connection' to

better dovetailing with relevant content, to targeting a specific group."

The contributors are national experts in a variety of mass media specialties, who address product placement in terms of historical context, Hollywood, brand synergy and brand identity, and legal/ethical issues. One will also find fascinating case studies focusing on product placement in movie and television programs, in books, and as a marketing technique for medical products—plus examinations of the impact of adding an audible reference to a visually prominent brand placement and of the use of generic or fictitious products in otherwise 'realistic' films. This volume examines the phenomenon of product placement and related mass media marketing strategies. A sampling of topics includes the evolution of product placements in Hollywood cinema, the ethics of product placement in media entertainment, and the influence of presentation mode and familiarity. The papers were originally presented at the 2001 convention of the National Communication Association. The volume

has been simultaneously co-published as *Journal of Promotion Management*, Vol. 10, Nos. 1/2, 2004.

The collection is grouped into various sections namely, the practice of product placement and controls on product placement, case studies, commentaries, interviews and reviews. The first section, "The Practice of Product Placement", is a functional section that provides a general context of product placement. It starts with a sketch of the background of the early development of product placement in single sponsored programs in media like radio and television by media Historian Kathleen J Turner. The next document written by the author along with Peter G Bourdeau analyses the increasingly dominant role of product placements in the narratives of blockbuster movies since 1977. Cultural Critic, Susan B Kretchmer, explores the evolution in television and the Internet entertainment vehicles. The media scholars and practitioners Charles A Lubbers and William J Adams discuss two major elements, the under-examined multi-billion-dollar revenue producers in the current movie promotion mix-merchandising and promotional/partner tie-ups. This section concludes with an examination of normal distinctions between the cinematic world and the real world by Scott Robert Olson.

The second section, "Controls on Product Placement", provides a closer look at the legal and ethical issues surrounding the practice of this controversial industry which is very complex. The documents/arguments of

media scholar Paul Siegel is against locating product placement within the Supreme Court's commercial speech doctrine. A thorough analysis of the ethical challenges and controversies surrounding the practice is discussed by Lawrence A Wenner. Public Relations practitioners and mass media ethicists, Dean Kruckeberg and Kenneth Starck, offer a review of consumer communities that urges the adoption of a public relations approach rather than a marketing viewpoint.

Several intriguing case studies are presented in the third section. A study by Beng Soo Ong found that although three-fourth of the sample were aware of the practice in both movies and TV shows, there was less exposure to the embedded brands in TV than in films. In "Product Placement of Medical Products: Issues and Concerns," Christopher R Turner extends the legal-ethical discussion to pharmaceutical marketing and focuses on an episode of television's Chicago Hope touting the use of a medical device that had not earned FDA approval. Ted Friedman in his essay argues that Tom Hanks' film serves as a valuable case study because of the conflict between its relentless product placement and its dark vision of contemporary global capitalism. Ian Brennan and Laurie A Babin present an empirical study that demonstrated audio cues are a significant factor in the success of movie product placements. Richard Alan Nelson examines a new form of paid product placement in novels.

The final section of the book includes a variety of personal reflections. Personal interviews were granted to the author and the author has preserved the full flavor of the opinions by presenting them in a Q&A style.

Advertising is purported to have a powerful impact on the American psyche and culture (pp. 1-8). The twenty-two articles in this book address product placement, the business process that seamlessly inserts an advertiser's commercial message into entertainment and informational media content of movies, books, computer games, television programs, radio shows, newsletters and the Internet. The editor has sought to gather the balanced view of eighteen experts who present the results of their theoretical and practical research into this controversial form of advertising. The book could be useful to those seeking to better understand how to optimally apply the advertising technique (pp. 9-89). Equally, the text provides support for those who are concerned about the ethical issues arising from unsolicited advertising secretly-hidden within a movie we pay to view or the unwarranted effects of the manipulative advertising slotted into our children's television programs

(pp. 89-147). While the global nature of today's markets for movies and television is recognized in the five case studies (pp. 147-213), the book fails to adequately address the cultural impact of product placement on the values, beliefs and the laws of countries other than the US.

The book concludes with the transcript of a round-table with eleven of the authors who provide informative responses to five questions currently pertinent to product placement as an advertising practice in the 21st century (pp. 219-237). Those seeking deeper knowledge may find the included resource guide useful (pp. 259-269).

The *Handbook of Product Placement in the Mass Media: New Strategies in Marketing Theory, Practice, Trends, and Ethics* is the first serious book in English to examine the wider contexts and varied texts of product placement, related media marketing strategies and audience impacts. The contributors are national experts in a variety of mass media specialties—history, law and ethics (both media ethics and medical ethics); cultural and critical analysis: contents analysis and effects; visuality; marketing, advertising, public relations, and promotion; and digital technology and futures.

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