

# Product placement in films and songs



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

## Product placement in movies and songs

### 1. Introduction

Over the last few years, the effective approach of traditional advertising has been doubted, mostly because of advancements in the field of advertisement filtering software and the excessive occurrence of traditional advertising (Guo et al., 2019). Consequently, according to Guo et al. (2019), product placement came as an attractive resource in advertising to reach viewers.

Product placement has been growing significantly in recent times (Balasubramanian, 1994; Mckechnie and Thou 2003). A good example of product placement can be seen in the movie E. T. from 1982 where there is an exhibition of Reese's Pieces sweets, and since then product placement became much more ordinary (Delattre and Colovic, 2009).

With this in mind, the overall objective of this paper is to investigate the insertion of product placement in movies and songs over the last years and discuss its benefits to both producers and marketers, as well as for the audience. Also, the paper aims to illustrate what are the possible effects of placement on the audience, presenting the results of some studies conducted in this field.

#### 1. 1Product placement definition and formats

Product placement is defined by Balasubramanian (1994, p. 31) as “ a paid product message aimed at influencing movie (or television) audiences via the planned and unobtrusive entry of a branded product into a movie (or

television program).” As stated by Eagle and Dahl (2018), product placements are present in both traditional media (radio, television and movies) and more recent forms of media (video games, online games, mobile phone applications, music videos and social media websites).

The classic product placement originates from an interdependent relationship between the person responsible for the appearance of products in movies and the product sponsor (Balasubramanian, 1994). The product sponsor searches for opportunities to place his products generally through a specialist firm that will stand as the intermediary to guarantee a safe story script before the production of the movie (Balasubramanian, 1994).

As reported by Eagle and Dahl (2018), product placement in traditional media can happen passively or actively, the former is when the product is only part of the scenery, and the latter is when the product is used by an artist as part of the script, with or without verbalization.

Placement is considered to be a hybrid communication method more trustworthy than a regular advertisement because the seller of the product is not recognised as the messenger (Balasubramanian, 1994).

Regardless of the format product placement may appear, for Eagle and Dahl (2018), marketers are willing to pay generous amounts of money for convenient chances to place their products in different media contents or backgrounds. This expenditure is not seen as unexpected in our current technological environment (Meyer et al., 2016).

In the present, young adults are the main focus of product placement as a group, since they are viewed as displaying similar preferences and lifestyle, despite their geographical differences, especially because of social media and technological interactions (Lee et al., 2011).

Publications relating to product placement in different formats of media are expected to remain propagating in the next years since the use of placement is believed to be expanding as well as new media formats (Guo et al., 2019). Therefore, product placement has been acknowledged by many papers as a significant research area (Guo et al., 2019).

According to Mckechnie & Thou (2003), product placement in movies is highly prevalent in the market due to the availability of its production content worldwide that crosses borders and cultural backgrounds.

As stated by Delattre and Colovic (2009), the placement of brands in songs is believed to be useful to attract some specific groups of consumers. However, there is scarce information regarding sponsored placement of brands in songs (Delattre and Colovic, 2009).

## 2. Benefits of product placement in movies

The beneficial aspects of product placement are substantial, being the most recognisable ones the alignment between the advertiser's message and the media's content, the fact that consumers find placement more reliable and natural, and the reasonable price when compared to traditional advertisements (Jusufović Karışık, 2014).

Product placements can help create a time frame in a movie or television show, bringing more authenticity to it (Sung et al., 2009; Balasubramanian et al., 2006). The realistic effect of product placement enhances the audience's experience with time-traveling, for instance, in *Mad Men* the use of Kodak Carousel slide projector allowed viewers to relive the 1960s (DeLorme and Reid, 1999). Most of the time, authenticity is improved when viewers detect what appears customary to them (Meyer et al., 2016; DeLorme and Reid, 1999).

Even though product placement may disturb the audience's involvement during a movie, for Meyer et al. (2016), the sense of a more accurate movie compensates for this negative effect.

According to Meyer et al. (2016), product placement in movies is highly advantageous for producers since, firstly, there is an upgrade in consumers' reviews, which lead to more successful movies, and second, the producers may have an extra income coming from the advertiser or have a decrease in production expenditure, depending on the agreement negotiated with the placement brand.

Overall, researchers have found that consumers' opinions about product placement are positive (Gupta and Gould, 1997). Americans have demonstrated to be more susceptible to acquiring products displayed in movies and revealed to possess a more positive understanding of brand placements in movies when compared to French people and Austrians (Gould et al., 2000). Mckechnie and Thou (2003) also found a tendency in

Americans to consent more to product placement when they compared Americans and Chinese people.

Moreover, de Gregorio and Sung (2010) have discovered that viewers who frequent movies in a regular basis are more susceptible to like product placements, which also happen with consumers who actively converse with other people about brands.

According to Meyer et al. (2016), producers could raise their placements in films, as long as in moderation since, in general, the number of placements was found to be inferior to the saturation point for conventional films (Meyer et al., 2016).

### 3. Effects of product placement on movie viewers

#### 3.1 Negative effects

According to Mckechnie and Thou (2003), when evaluating worldwide marketing strategies regarding product placement, it is vital to consider the differences and consistencies between countries, the product group, and the consumers individually.

In the study conducted by Meyer et al. (2016), they discovered that there is a saturation point for product placement to be approved by consumers, hence, when in excess, product placement can be viewed as negative because the high number of placements weakens audience's experience while watching the movie. Also, the saturation point seems to be lower for independent films than for conventional films (Meyer et al., 2016).

Furthermore, according to Meyer et al. (2016), when product placements are placed in independent films, consumers' opinion about the film will not be as positive as it is for mainstream films, especially because consumers perceive independent films as works of art.

Researchers have found that the rejection of product placements with ethically charged products (tobacco, alcohol and guns) by the audience is higher than with other types of products (McKechnie and Thou, 2003; Gupta and Gould, 1997). Gould et al. (2000) revealed that young consumers from America, Austria and France all agreed on ethically charged products being less suitable for product placement.

Therefore, product placements might have a negative effect when there are ethical concerns involved, as placement of ethically charged products, dishonesty, subconscious enticement, or exaggerated trading (Lee et al., 2011; Gould et al., 2000).

Consequently, brand placements that involve vulnerable consumers as targets or that encourage damaging products, such as illegal ones, have been closely examined by regulatory organisations, and they have been either restraining or inhibiting some unethical practices, due to the implications of persuasive approach on audiences (Russel, 2019).

### 3. 2Positive effects

Brand placements' recall in a movie may be higher or not depending on the interaction with actors on the scene (Wilson and Till, 2011; Gupta and Lord, 1998).

In the study conducted by Wilson and Till (2011), brand recall was superior amongst placements that occurred in the following circumstances: considerable time on-screen, actor collaboration on the scene, noticeable displays, and a minimum of two verbal mentions during the movie. The study also found that brand recall was higher in placements with both audio and visual appearances, compared to only visual and only audio placements (Wilson and Till, 2011). These results can support managers in their judgement of which product placements should be considered priorities (Wilson and Till, 2011).

Researchers have determined that despite the considerable effect product placements in movies might have on consumers' recall and behaviour, little is known about placements' influence on consumption tendencies and inclination towards these products (Jusufović Karışık, 2014; Balasubramanian et al., 2006). According to Balasubramanian et al. (2006), the lack of information is because of the problematic measurement of placements' impact in both laboratory and field situations.

For Lee et al. (2011), it is key for marketers to acknowledge the expansion of media formats and technologies in different cultural backgrounds, also, according to their study, product placement's strategical planning may need to incorporate a more accurate, genuine and representative view of the brand.

#### 4. Brand placement in music

As mentioned by Delattre and Colovic (2009), product placement in music includes a formal agreement between the advertiser and the artist, as well



as a monetary return, which is the complete opposite to a casual reference to a brand where the artist is free to compose what he desires.

According to Delattre and Colovic (2009), music holds a significant place in people's lives, particularly the young generation. Moreover, music can separate audiences in groups with the use of musical genres, and that is why placements in songs can be referred to as tribal marketing, due to the ability to segregate people into different brands' tribes or communities (Delattre and Colovic, 2009).

For Delattre and Colovic (2009), the appearance of brands in music is not new. In 1903, Budweiser was cited in a folk song in America, and from the 1980s brands have rewarded these references (Delattre and Colovic, 2009).

The turning point for brand placement in music occurred in 1985 in 'My Adidas' song from the hip-hop band Run-DMC, where the mention of Adidas was at first spontaneous, but a contract agreement of around \$1.5 million was rapidly prepared by the brand, henceforth, brand placement has expanded considerably (Delattre and Colovic, 2009).

Placements in music are predominantly incorporated into rap and hip-hop songs (Eagle and Dahl, 2018; Delattre and Colovic, 2009). According to Delattre and Colovic (2009), the presence of brand placement in folk songs has been a reality for some time, however, only recently the financial reward was integrated into the practice.

Also, placements can often be present in music videos, yet, no study evaluates the effect of product placement in songs and music videos (Eagle and Dahl, 2018).

#### 4. Motivations for brand placement in music

Brand placement in music is a strategy that can be highly beneficial since nowadays artists are seen as opinion influencers, and they might have a huge impact on their audiences' behaviour (Delattre and Colovic, 2009). Nevertheless, no studies are analysing the efficacy of brand placement in music (Delattre and Colovic, 2009).

A study conducted by Gloor (2014) examined the top thirty songs in Billboard Magazine for a period of 53 years and, from the results, he reported that brand name placement in songs is increasing greatly over the last years.

According to his study, the reasons why that might be occurring are: the necessity artists feel to place themselves as brands in the market, which may impact on their positive association with more brands; listeners may continue interacting with artists' songs due to the presence of the brand's name; organisations' observation that placements in songs lead to an increase in brand awareness and sales of placed products (Gloor, 2014).

Brand name placements in lyrics were found to impact in favour of brand awareness and brand reviews (Vaerenbergh, 2017; Delattre and Colovic, 2009).

For Gloor (2014), musicians and singers may reference brand names for two main reasons: because they highly appreciate the brand or because the

<https://assignbuster.com/product-placement-in-films-and-songs/>

placement may generate a financial return of some kind. As mentioned by Delattre and Colovic (2009), artists may gain some compensation for brand placement or another form of return, for instance, the sponsoring of a band's tour.

The media is often disclosing brand placements regularly, which leads to consumers' acknowledgement of these kinds of motivations. However, at the moment, there are not many studies available that analyse the effect of brand placement disclosures on brand placement efficacy (Vaerenbergh, 2017).

#### 4. 2Results of brand placement in music

According to Delattre and Colovic (2009) research, it is possible to increase the recall of a brand's name in a song by analysing the prominence of placement, which is evaluated by the amount of mentioning of the brand overall and in the chorus, and the velocity of the brand's mentioning. Moreover, it was found that listeners experienced higher recall of the brand when the brand's mentioning was part of the chorus and when it was vocalised at a slow pace (Delattre and Colovic, 2009).

Nevertheless, the circumstances in which brand placement occurs in lyrics' context were identified as unimportant, that is to say, marketers may not need to supervise contractual terms so tightly, such as the mentioning of the brand's name in a reasonable context and with rhyming words, since these practices have little effect on the brand's recall (Delattre and Colovic, 2009).

Therefore, as stated by Delattre and Colovic (2009), to enhance recall, marketers need only to arrange for no less than two citations of the brand in the song and for a slow flow of citation, which allows for more freedom of creation to the artist.

From listeners' opinions about music, Delattre and Colovic (2009) noticed that when listeners were previously acquainted with the artist, and fond of both the artist and the song, the recall was higher.

For Delattre and Colovic (2009), brand placement in music is a current approach to connect to audiences attracted to music, and it might have a more effective result when it reaches the fans of an artist, which leads to the assumption that brand placement in songs should prioritize the process of electing the artist. Rap music is an exception since it has presented notable placements results due to its influence outside the rap community, provided that listeners are familiarised with the artist.

Therefore, in order to achieve a successful brand placement in music, managers need to develop a marketing plan which combines their company's main objectives and the selection of the desirable consumers in the market (Ferguson and Burkhalter, 2015).

#### 4. Brand placement in the music community

De Gregorio and Sung (2010) discovered that brand name placements in hip-hop songs are evaluated by consumers as a suitable genre for placements. According to Ferguson and Burkhalter (2015), artists involved with hip-hop genre usually adopt certain brands to either elevate their status or to

diminish the status of their brand's competitor. An example of the latter is in the song "Run This Town" by Kanye West, where it is mentioned that he works arduously to be able to drive a car better than a Toyota RAV4 (Ferguson and Burkhalter, 2015).

As reported by Ferguson and Burkhalter (2015) study, marketers should try to concentrate on finding a fitting brand if they aspire to associate with consumers who possess a high hip-hop culture identity, also, the study showed that the placement of the brand in the lyrics is not important in this case.

On the other hand, marketers who are not aware of consumers' hip-hop culture identity degree should focus on introducing noticeable placements in the lyrics' chorus to improve awareness of the brand (Ferguson and Burkhalter, 2015).

It has been noticed a tendency amongst the rap community in North America to appropriate the use of alcohol and luxury items brands. In the case of no preview agreement between artist and brand, most of the time, the latter will willingly accept the placement episode (Delattre and Colovic, 2009).

This phenomenon was widely seen between cognac brands and American rappers, yet, companies such as Burberry, for example, appeared to act quite undesirably towards the usage of their brand's name by rappers, so, with the desire to remain in control of their brands philosophy, they have managed to distance themselves from the hip-hop culture (Delattre and Colovic, 2009).

## 5. Disclosures

According to Vaerenbergh (2017), disclosures are a way of enlightening consumers' impression of a product or brand placement persuasiveness, assisting them to detect this inducement more frequently.

In the study conducted Vaerenbergh (2017), in the attempt to analyse consumers' responses to brand placement disclosures in both paid and unpaid placements in song lyrics, it was observed that brand name placement disclosures induce optimistic results for brand awareness – when brand name placement is paid, and brand attitudes – when brand name placement is both paid and unpaid. Consequently, disclosures are not a threat, and organisations' decision to get involved with paid placement is not only favourable to them but should be employed with a combined marketing communications method in order to build more awareness of the placement (Vaerenbergh, 2017).

## 6. Conclusion

In essence, the implementation of product placement in different media formats is expected to continue growing substantially and the main reason for that is due to its advantages, such as: the association between the advertiser's message and the media context; affordability when compared to traditional medias and consumers' perception of product placement as more trustworthy and natural. Also, from the producers' point of view, product placement may benefit them by adding income or reducing production costs.

It was revealed that consumers often appreciate product placements in movies and music. In movies, product placement might be perceived as

undesirable if involving ethically charged products. However, product placement in movies was observed to improve brand recall.

According to research findings, brand placements in music are mostly occurring in hip-hop, rap and, more recently, folk songs and music videos. These placements might be paid or unpaid. When unpaid placements prevail, companies can either freely consent to the placement or neglect it, separating themselves from that association.

Increase in brand awareness and placed products' sales, artists' influence over audiences and listeners' affection with the song because of the association with the placed brand are some of the motivations for brand placement in lyrics.

Studies have shown that marketers should consider the number and flow of brands' citations to heighten brand recall in music. Familiarity with the artist and song is also important when analysing brand recall.

Disclosures were found to be favourable to organisations placing their brand in songs. Also, to achieve success with brand placement in music, marketers should try to associate their companies' goals to their target audience when developing their marketing plan.

Finally, additional studies might need to be developed to better understand the effectiveness of product placement on consumers' purchase behaviours and preferences and the execution of an appropriate marketing strategy might need to involve the evaluation of cultural differences and brand's accurate view.

## 7. References

- Balasubramanian, S. K. (1994) ' Beyond Advertising and Publicity: Hybrid Messages and Public Policy Issues', *Journal of Advertising* , 23(4), pp. 29–46. doi: 10. 1080/00913367. 1943. 10673457.
- Balasubramanian, S. K., Karrh, J. A. and Patwardhan, H. (2006) ' Audience response to product placements: an integrative framework and future research agenda', *Journal of Advertising* , 35(3), pp. 115–141. doi: 10. 2753/JOA0091-3367350308.
- de Gregorio, F. and Sung, Y. (2010) ' Understanding attitudes toward and behaviors in response to product placement', *Journal of Advertising* , 39(1), pp. 83–96. doi: 10. 2753/JOA0091-3367390106.
- Delattre, E. and Colovic, A. (2009) ' Memory and perception of brand mentions and placement of brands in songs', *International Journal of Advertising* , 28(5), pp. 807–842. doi: 10. 2501/S0265048709200916.
- DeLorme, D. E. and Reid, L. N. (1999) ' Moviegoers' Experiences and Interpretations of Brands in Films Revisited', *Journal of Advertising* , 28(2), pp. 71–95. doi: 10. 1080/00913367. 1999. 10673584.
- Eagle, L. and Dahl, S. (2018) ' Product Placement in Old and New Media: Examining the Evidence for Concern', *Journal of Business Ethics* , 147(3), pp. 605–618. doi: 10. 1007/s10551-015-2955-z.
- Ferguson, N. S. and Burkhalter, J. N. (2015) ' Yo, DJ, That's My Brand: An Examination of Consumer Response to Brand Placements in Hip-Hop Music', *Journal of Advertising* , 44(1), pp. 47–57. doi: 10. 1080/00913367. 2014. 935897.



- Gloor, S. (2014) ' Songs as Branding Platforms? A Historical Analysis of People, Places, and Products in Pop Music Lyrics', *Journal of the Music and Entertainment Industry Educators Association* , 14(1), pp. 39-60. doi: 10. 25101/14. 2.
- Gould, S. J., Gupta, P. B. and Grabner-Kräuter, S. (2000) ' Product Placements in Movies: A Cross-Cultural Analysis of Austrian, French and American Consumers' Attitudes Toward This Emerging, International Promotional Medium', *Journal of Advertising* , 29(4), pp. 41-58. doi: 10. 1080/00913367. 2000. 10673623.
- Guo, F., Ye, G., Hudders, L., Lv, W., Li, M., and Duffy, V. G. (2019) ' Product Placement in Mass Media: A Review and Bibliometric Analysis', *Journal of Advertising* , 48(2), pp. 215-231. doi: 10. 1080/00913367. 2019. 1567409.
- Gupta, P. B. and Gould, S. J. (1997) ' Consumers' Perceptions of the Ethics and Acceptability of Product Placements in Movies: Product Category and Individual Differences', *Journal of Current Issues & Research in Advertising (CTC Press)* , 19(1), p. 37. doi: 10. 1080/10641734. 1997. 10505056.
- Gupta, P. B. and Lord, K. R. (1998) ' Product Placement in Movies: The Effect of Prominence and Mode on Audience Recall', *Journal of Current Issues & Research in Advertising (CTC Press)* , 20(1), p. 47. doi: 10. 1080/10641734. 1998. 10505076.
- Jusufović Karışık, V. (2014) ' 20 Years of Research on Product Placement in Movie, Television and Video Game Media', *Journal of Economic & Social Studies (JECOSS)*, 4(2), pp. 253-283. doi: 10. 14706/JECOSS114210.

- Lee, D. T., Sung, Y. and Choi, S. M. (2011) ' Young adults' responses to product placement in movies and television shows', *International Journal of Advertising* , 30(3), pp. 479–507. doi: 10. 2501/IJA-30-3-479-507.
- Mckechnie, S. A. and Thou, J. (2003) ' Product Placement in Movies: A Comparison of Chinese and American Consumers' Attitudes', *International Journal of Advertising* , 22(3), pp. 349–374. doi: 10. 1080/02650487. 2003. 11072858.
- Meyer J., Song R., and Ha, K. (2016) ' The effect of product placements on the evaluation of movies', *European Journal of Marketing* , (3/4), p. 530–549. doi: 10. 1108/EJM-12-2014-0758.
- Russell, C. A. (2019) ' Expanding the Agenda of Research on Product Placement: A Commercial Intertext', *Journal of Advertising* , 48(1), pp. 38–48. doi: 10. 1080/00913367. 2019. 1579690.
- Sung, Y., de Gregorio, F., Jung, J. H. (2009) ' Non-student consumer attitudes towards product placement: implications for public policy and advertisers', *International Journal of Advertising* , 28(2), pp. 257-285. doi: 10. 2501/S0265048709200564.
- Vaerenbergh, Y. V. (2017) ' Consumer reactions to paid versus unpaid brand name placement in song lyrics', *Journal of Product & Brand Management* , 26(2), pp. 151–158. doi: 10. 1108/JPBM-05-2016-1167.
- Wilson, R. T. and Till, B. D. (2011) ' Product placement in movies and on Broadway', *International Journal of Advertising* , 30(3), pp. 373–398. doi: 10. 2501/IJA-30-3-373-398.