

PRODUCT PLACEMENTS

Mentioned that product placement goes way back (diamonds example in documentary). But also that things have changed. How?

Back then, there were scattered informal arrangements. Now, a whole industry has strung up to broker these deals.

What elements (other than story) are necessary to make a box office hit?

Tie-ins

Merchandise

Celebrities, type of characters (cute, cuddly animals make nice toys)

Ability to cross-market among a company's properties

What audiences are tie-ins and merchandising most geared towards?

Young

Why do companies use product placements over other forms of advg?

Popular with advertisers because:

- They can sneak ad by when people aren't paying attention;
 - a) Therefore less intrusive;
 - b) Audience recall of product placements is greater than commercials because people actively watch movies but not commercials
 - c) audiences can't avoid the ad
- People want to be like favorite actors
- Placements have longer shelf lives than commercials since movies --> video ---> tv viewing etc.

Popular with filmmakers because:

- Offset costs (which have been increasing)
- Add "realism"

What do you think of product placements?

Do you think placements can make a film more "realistic?" Less realistic? How?

Are product placements ethical?

Define ethical: Rules of conduct accepted by a certain population; it's the right thing to do. Standard practice, a rule that everyone should follow for the benefit of whole group

Ethical does not = pleasant, artistic, effective, unobtrusive

Something can be ethical and be annoying, ugly, boring, etc.

- * lawyer to disclose to details of a case to friends/collaegues while it's still going on.
- * a judge to take bribes
- * lying is unethical

Code of Ethics = Code of Conduct

* whether someone paid to do something doesn't make it ethical or not. You can pay to do something that harms people (unethical) or doesn't (ethical).

Ethical

Doesn't break the rules; everything has product placement now

Honest, not deceptive

Or an innocent deception, like acting (everyone knows it's an ad; you're not fooling anyone)

Fair

Unethical

Breaks the rules; not supposed to have advertising in movies

Deceptive/misleading

<--- Not true. Some people don't know they're ads; that's why they're more effective than advertising

Unfair

(Students will probably all say that product placements are ethical) It makes a lot of sense that you all consider product placements ethical because this has become an accepted practice in your lifetime. All the movies now have product placements in them. But 30, 40 years ago this was not the case; for people who grew up w/ movies made before the 80s—product placements were rare and would be widely frowned upon.

Why do some people consider product placements unethical?

(Students do not need to agree with this argument but should be able to prove they understand it.)

Two arguments:

a) Product placements are misleading

Why do you pay for movies and not for television?

Traditionally, because television is supported by advertising and movies aren't. For people who went to movies were in the 1970s, the movie experience meant not having to watch advertising—that was part of the deal. If you're paying for it, the thinking goes, you shouldn't have to watch commercials.

So people who got used to how movies used to be often consider product placement unethical—because it breaks an unwritten rule. They consider it a deceptive form of advertising—advertising presenting itself as content.

Devil's advocate: If someone is trying to advertise to me, I want to know. Why not be honest and upfront about selling? There's nothing wrong with selling products; we all like clothes and cars and nice things. Only advertisers with inferior products should need to be sneaky about it.

b) Product placements rob the viewer of free choice.

With traditional advertising, viewers can generally choose to avoid it: they can turn the TV channel, hit "mute" button, page past magazine advertisements, etc. But with product placements, audiences can't choose to avoid commercials.

What if your math teacher starting using a textbook that had product placements in it? Would that be unethical? Why or why not?

If you had to watch a commercial, which would you choose: a 30-second commercial before the film; or in middle of film, as a product placement (indistinguishable from the content)? Why?

Other choices: watch a lower budget film; pay higher prices.