

DLR van der Waldd

The role of product placement in feature films and broadcast television programmes: an IMC perspective

ABSTRACT

Emphasis on product placement as a variable in the marketing communication strategy of organisations seems to be a relatively new focus. However, evidence exists that as early as the 1940s product placement was used in feature films to brand products and services. The initial use of product placements in feature films received new opportunities through the introduction of new electronic media, such as video, DVD, mobile messaging, electronic billboards, Internet clips and websites. Product placement is not confined to cinema feature films. New electronic media offer unique opportunities for product placement, which necessitated the renewed focus on product placement as a vehicle of deliberate product exposure within the broader integrated marketing communication (IMC) context.

The use of product placement has increased rapidly over the last few years. Product names are increasingly being featured in films and television programmes. Companies are increasingly seeking to broaden their marketing campaigns to include product placement in broadcast media to confirm the product's brand identity or to reach different audiences effectively.

This article aims to describe the context in which product placement is categorised. It also explains the relevance of product placement as a vehicle of communication in the integrated marketing communication strategy.

In order to reach the set objectives of this article, a literature review of existing information was conducted. The article does not claim to be a comprehensive work on product placement in general - it rather attempts to provide a theoretical framework in which product placement could be studied.

Dr. De la Rey van der Waldd is a senior lecturer in the Department of Marketing and Communication Management at the University of Pretoria.

1. INTRODUCTION

Product placement evolved from successful publicity efforts during the 1940s directed at the film medium. Negotiations occurred between marketers and organisations that supplied props for the films or directly with the management of a film producer. However, product placement was neither a well-organised nor a high-profile growth area in marketing communication until the late 1970s. Marketers have progressively gained more control over product placement in exchange for considerable compensation (Balasubramanian, 1994:33; Nebenzahl & Secunda, 1993:2).

Renewed attention to product placements as a marketing communication vehicle focused on the perceptions of viewers, product recall and attitudes towards products placed in feature films and television programmes. The studies within a South African context by Du Preez and Williams (2004), Nunes and Stroebel (2004) and Van der Walddt, Du Toit and Redelinghuys (2005) are evidence of this recent focus. The technological developments during the past few years opened new possibilities for product placements in a number of non-traditional media. According to Dodd and Johnstone (2000:142) and McKechnie and Zhou (2003:350) it is noted that the arrival of digital television, the Internet and increased household penetration of internationally broadcast cable and satellite channels as well as video cassettes and DVD players has significantly increased the choice of where to place products in primarily the visual broadcast media. An average feature film that is distributed globally can reach more than a hundred million consumers as it moves from cinema theatre to video/DVD to television broadcasting. In order to reach this vast number of consumers and to secure a competitive advantage over them, marketers and advertisers seek to make the most of this previously undervalued vehicle of communication, such as product placement.

Berglund and Spets (2003:1) mention that research has established product placement as an effective marketing communication vehicle that has the ability to build awareness, generate recall and shape attitudes. In spite of the increasing significance of product placement as a marketing communication vehicle, there is a lack of research in this area.

The research problem can be addressed in the following research questions: Where does product placement fit into the broader integrated marketing communication (IMC) context? The communication vehicle for product placement is the broadcast media, but under which category of the promotional or communication mix can product placement be classified? And, how relevant is product placement as a communication vehicle in the IMC strategy?

The objectives of this article are twofold: To explain where product placement fits into the marketing or communication mixes as an element in IMC and to address the relevance of product placement as a communication vehicle in the IMC strategy.

A literature study was conducted to reach the above objectives. Bless and Higson-Smith (1995: 23) indicate that the literature review aims to sharpen and deepen the theoretical framework of the research, that is, to study the different theories related to the topic

by taking an interdisciplinary perspective where possible. It also familiarises the researcher with the latest developments in the area of research as well as related research areas. The results obtained by previous research are used as a starting point for new research.

De Vos, Strydom, Fouché and Delpont (2004: 267) explain that the literature review serves the function of identifying some gaps in previous research. The proposed article will fill a demonstrated need and will refine and redefine the research questions by embedding those questions in larger empirical traditions. Cooper and Schindler (2006:99) argue that the literature search/review may be the solution to the management dilemma. In such a case, no further research is necessary. Finally, in the words of Rubin, Rubin and Piele (2005:244) a literature review has two main purposes: to summarise and to evaluate the research.

2. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY OF PRODUCT PLACEMENT

A product is described as not only the physical object, but also a bundle of benefits or values that satisfy consumers, generally in exchange for money (Belch & Belch, 2001:58). These authors further contend that the product is everything that can be marketed. The concept of product symbolism refers to what the product or the brand means to customers and what they experience in purchasing and using it.

Various theorists define product placement within the chronological development of marketing. As the new broadcast media developed, the focus of the definitions also changed. Due to the fact that product placements were initially applied only to film, much of the focus was also within that context.

Balasueramian (1994:2) maintains that product placement can be seen as “hidden but paid” messages, including brand names, products or the name of an organisation, aimed at film audiences via the unobtrusive entry of brand identifiers through audio and/or visual means for promotional purposes. Product placement is a form of advertising in which marketers pay to have a product shown in the media. Gould, Gupta and Grabner-Kräuter (2000:45) compiled a list of similarities regarding advertising and product placement. Some countries may vary in the products for which they restrict advertising such as alcoholic beverages and tobacco. Both advertising and product placement may be seen as intrusive; both elements may have similar ethical challenges, such as their promotion of ethically charged products and the alleged use of deception. Finally, people may differ in their attitudes towards advertising and similarly towards product placement.

Product placement is the compensated inclusion of a branded product or brand identifiers, through audio and visual means within mass media programming (i.e. films) for promotional purposes (Badin & Carder, 1996:140; D’Astous & Chartier, 2000:31; Morton & Friedman, 2002:33). Belch and Belch (2001:458) regard product placements as a form of advertising without an advertising medium: “the audience doesn’t realize a product promotion is going on. Viewers tend to see brand names in feature films as lending realism to a story. Yet the impact on the buying public is real.” Product placement makes a significant contribution to the story line of a film, adding realism and credibility, thus facilitating memory (Russel, 2002:308).

For the purposes of this article, product placement is best defined by Cappo (2003) and Kitchen and De Pelsmacker (2004:102): the use of a product or a product's name within a programme, paid for by the marketer of the product, either by paying a television producer or film producer, or by providing the product itself.

Some regard product placement as part of sales promotion according to Fill (2002:724). For the purposes of this article, it is treated as a vehicle of communication (or an advertising medium) because in the words of Fill (2002:724) the advertiser pays for the opportunity to present its product.

2.1 Advantages of product placements

De Lorme and Reid (1999:2) have combined and recognised numerous key advantages and disadvantages for both marketers and film producers when using product placements. Film producers are people who direct and produce the actual feature film. The advantages include the potential to offset movie product costs, reach captive audiences, provide relatively greater reach than traditional advertising, demonstrate brand usage in naturalistic settings, create more realistic film settings, provide relatively cost-efficient communication and offer an alternative advertising media option for alcohol and tobacco products, which are restricted from broadcast television.

Belch and Belch (2001:459-460) and Fill (2002:724) put forward a number of advantages of product placements. The advantages of product placements include exposure to the product. Fill (2002:724) explains that the levels of impact can be high because cinema audiences are very attentive to large-screen presentations. On average, the lifespan of the film is estimated at three years. When this is combined by the video and DVD rental market and television broadcasting of the feature film, it is extended for a much longer period. The frequency of placement in the feature film relates to the manner in which the product is presented or used in the film. It could be repeatedly exposed during the duration of the film. Product placements could also be a support for other media. Source association is another advantage of product placements. When film attendees see their favourite film star using the product, the impact of this exposure could be high. The cost of placing products in feature films may range from free samples to millions of rands. The cost per minute of this form of advertising can be very low in comparison to other media, due to the high volume of exposure it generates. The average recall of products that were placed in feature films showed approximately 38% the next day (Gupta & Lord, 1998, in Belch & Belch, 2001: 459). Bypassing regulations is another advantage of product placements in a feature film. Product placements allow for cigarette and alcohol products to be exposed, circumventing these restrictions.

2.2 Disadvantages of product placements

There are also some disadvantages associated with product placements in film. Belch and Belch (2001:461) highlight the following aspects: high absolute cost – while the cost per minute may be low, the absolute cost of placing a product may be high, pricing some advertisers out of the market. The time of exposure does not guarantee viewers will

notice the product. If the product is not featured prominently, the advertiser runs the risk of not being seen. The appeals are limited to source association, use and enjoyment. Unfortunately, advertisers have little control over when and how often the product will be shown (Fill 2002:724). If product placements are too intrusive, film attendees may develop negative attitudes towards the brand. The appeal of product placements has led to increased competition to have one's product placed. The result of this competition is higher prices and there is no guarantee that one's product will be placed. Lastly, some products may appear in film scenes that are disliked by the audience or create a less than favourable mood, e.g. drinking Castle Lager beer after a murder.

Regardless of the above criticism against the use of product placements as a communication vehicle, there are various reasons why marketers may prefer product placement to traditional advertising or a combination thereof. Some of the reasons include the relation between product placement and product usage by the actors. Another reason is the trustworthiness and credibility of actors who use the placed products in a feature film or broadcast television programme.

Balasubramanian (1994:37-38) used the attribution theory to indicate the relevance of actor credibility and trustworthiness while using the placed product in a broadcast television programme and feature film. This theory predicts that the persuasiveness of an endorsement advertisement for a product may be adversely affected if the recipient believes that the endorser was economically motivated as this decreases message persuasiveness and is accompanied by insincerity and manipulativeness. Actors are employed by film producers and not by the sponsors of the product being placed in the film. Therefore, they apparently have nothing to gain financially by using the product in the film or broadcast television programme context. This allows the actor to be viewed as a credible and trustworthy source. Film falls into the category of mass communication and this article has therefore concentrated more specifically on products placed in film as a media vehicle with the intention of conveying a specific message, and how film attendees react to these placements. D'Astous and Chartier (2000:31) explain that the aim of product placement in film is to increase consumer awareness and impact on consumer awareness, preference and intention to buy. Product placement appears as an increasing alternative to traditional marketing communication tools.

Research by Du Plessis and Rousseau (1999:92-93 & 244-245) indicates a relation between product placement and the observation of product usage by actors in a broadcast television programme or film. The classical conditioning theory suggests that a desired consumer response may occur when a product (conditional stimulus) is repeatedly associated with a highly regarded principal actor (unconditional stimulus). Product placement permits repetition/reinforcement of the paired association between the product and the principal actor, in a natural fashion.

The modelling paradigm is relevant to persuading media audiences, and it is supported by the social learning theory. This theory maintains that individuals learn by observing others. Consumers identify with the principal actor and "model" their behaviour accordingly in order to obtain the same satisfaction the principal actor received from using the

product in the film. This experience allows the consumer to understand the “meaning” of the actor’s role and relate it to the placed product while watching the film and when the product is consumed at a later stage (Gupta et al., 2000:43). When the behaviour makes sense, it goes through the people’s minds and then they try it themselves. This process of learning combines watching, thinking and trying. When an actor shows satisfaction from the consumption of a specific product in a film, the audience encounter “model” behaviours that may lead to desirable consequences, as seen from the marketer’s perspective. For example, a film attendee observes an actor in a film quenching his thirst by drinking a specific cool-drink brand. The next time the individual is thirsty, he/she will remember this and purchase that specific brand name to quench his/her thirst too.

3. OBJECTIVE ONE: PRODUCT PLACEMENT AS A COMMUNICATION VEHICLE IN IMC

The American Marketing Association defines marketing as: “an organizational function and a set of processes for creating, communicating, and delivering value to customers and for managing customer relationships in ways that benefit the organization and its stakeholders” (Cooper & Schindler, 2006:5).

Marketing communication is defined by Burnett and Moriarty (1998:3) as the process of effectively communicating product information or ideas to target audiences. Du Plessis, Bothma, Jordaan and Van Heerden (2003:1) state that marketing communication is also the most visible element of the marketing mix. Mulder (2004:226) explains that marketing communication is seen as a holistic approach that includes the promotional mix. Where does marketing communication fit into the organisational context?

The explanation by Van Riel (1995:2-14) of corporate communication highlights three elements of communication in organisations. These types of communication contribute towards the total communication in the organisation. For an enhanced impact, all three types of communication should be co-ordinated and integrated.

The first element of corporate communication is managerial communication. This refers to managers’ communication with internal and external target groups, not only to transmit authority. Management’s use of communication aims to the achieve desired results where the following aspects are addressed: developing a shared vision of the company within the organisation, establishing trust in the organisational leadership, initiating and managing the change process, and empowering and motivating employees.

The second element is referred to as organisational communication. This term is used as a collective noun, including the following sub-disciplines of communication: public relations, environmental communication, investor relations, internal communication, corporate advertising, labour market communication and public affairs.

The last element of corporate communication is marketing communication. The emphasis is placed on the communication role in the promotional elements within the marketing mix. It is under the promotional element of the marketing mix that the role of communication is evident. The elements of the promotional mix consist of advertising,

sales promotion, public relations, personal selling, direct marketing and sponsorships. It is also often referred to as the “communication mix of marketing”. Fill (2002:11) discusses promotion as one of the elements of the marketing mix and it is responsible for the communication of the marketing offer to the target market.

In order to function properly and more effectively, corporate communication needs to pursue the integration of marketing communication. This means that the communication mix needs to be integrated and co-ordinated with the organisational objectives. Central to the pursuit is the need to operate in a customer-oriented fashion. In short, this means that each function in the whole organisation makes its contribution, which will inevitably lead to the integration of all the marketing elements, price, place, product and promotion.

IMC is seen as the practice of unifying all the marketing communication vehicles to send target audiences a consistent, persuasive message that promotes organisational goals. The term IMC is best described in realigning marketing communication. IMC is essentially the tactical and strategic co-ordination of all communication functions that assist in the promotion of the organisation, its products, and its service to the stakeholder (Ehlers, 2002:129). Furthermore, IMC can be defined as the ability to select the best means of delivering the marketing communication as a consistent, unified message to the marketplace, and communicates a common theme and positioning (Du Plessis, et al., 2003:10).

Mulder (2004:227-228) contends that IMC is a comprehensive approach to both internal and external communication: “It combines the power of all the marketing and marketing communication techniques to deliver consistent communications messages to an organisation’s different stakeholders”. Mulder (2004:223) explains the evolution of IMC in-depth. The focus in the 1960s was more on production. Du Plessis, et al. (2003:8-9) mention that media expenditure or marketing communication became evident during the 1960s. Sales-oriented marketing was the focus in the 1970s, a pure marketing focus occurred in the 1980s, and a more relationship marketing focus occurred from the 1990s to the present. IMC has been the focus since the late 1990s.

The main objective of product placement is to increase consumer awareness, resulting in a positive consumer preference and a higher probability of a purchase being made (Fill, 1995:327 and D’Astous & Chartier, 2000:31). Product placement is one of the many communication vehicles available for marketers and advertisers to utilise.

In the broader IMC context all the elements of the marketing mix need to be integrated and co-ordinated to achieve both the marketing and the organisational objectives. Likewise, marketers use different promotional elements of marketing communication to create awareness of products and brand names. According to Du Plessis, et al., (2003: 5-8) there are eight promotional elements in marketing communication from which marketers can select to increase the awareness and sales of their products and brands, namely advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, publicity, public relations, sponsorships, direct marketing and new media marketing.

Fill (2002: 655-656) contends that product placement is a valuable asset for programme sponsorships. It allows the sponsor's product to be seen with the sponsor's name in bumper credits. Sponsors require broadcasters to ensure that the sponsored credit is depicted in such a way that it cannot be mistaken as a spot advertisement. Kitchen and De Pelsmacker (2004:102) classify product placement under the promotional element of "broadcast sponsorships" in the communication mix of the marketer. The present author contextualised product placement as a communication vehicle within the IMC domain. It is visualised in Figure 1.

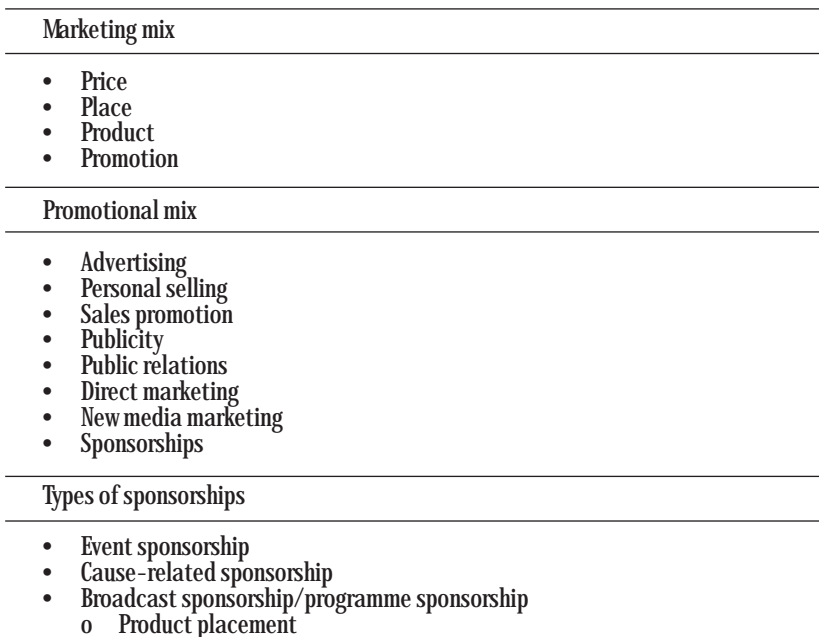


Figure 1: Product placement as a communication vehicle in IMC
Adapted: Fill (2002: 656) and Kitchen & De Pelsmacker (2004:102).

A general understanding of sponsorships will help marketers and advertisers to make an informed choice in selecting product placement as a communication vehicle. Sponsorship is, according to Kitchen and De Pelsmacker (2004:102), a powerful awareness and image builder with both potential customers and various other stakeholders. It also provides ample opportunities for a marketing communications spin-off: "Sponsorship is probably one of the marketing communication vehicles that require most support from other tools to be effective".

Van Heerden (in Du Plessis, et al., 2003:281) defines sponsorship as the provision of resources by an organisation directly to a sponsored property to enable the sponsored property to pursue some activity in return for certain sponsorship rights.

The above discussion contextualised product placement in the IMC domain. This article advocates that it should be done in a deliberate fashion that forms part of the marketing communication strategy.

Van Riel (1995:15-17) contends that any marketing communication strategy has co-ordination and integration as the two prerequisites for success. All the elements of the marketing and communication mixes should adhere to these prerequisites. A deliberate attempt should be made to include product placement in the strategy as part of the marketing communication plan. Ad hoc placement is not as successful. Smith (1985:85) maintains that there are three ways in which products are placed in films: the product itself is shown, a logo is displayed or an advertisement is placed as a background prop. The way in which a product is placed contributes towards the realism portrayed in the film.

4. OBJECTIVE TWO: PRODUCT PLACEMENT AS AN ELEMENT IN THE IMC STRATEGY

Fill (1995:66) regards the marketing strategy as the cornerstone of the development of planned marketing communications. Steyn and Puth (2000: 29) describe strategy as an approach, a design, a scheme or a system that directs the course of action in a specific situation. A strategy therefore specifies direction. Cooper and Schindler (2006:12) see the marketing strategy as the general approach an organisation will follow to achieve its marketing goals. In principle, the marketing strategy identifies the target market, positions the product and optimise the application of the product, price, placement and promotional decisions.

As an element of the IMC's broadcast sponsorship, product placement (as a communication vehicle) should be integrated and co-ordinated in the strategy. To ensure the best impact, it is recommended that product placement as an element in broadcast sponsorships should complement the other seven promotional elements in marketing communication to increase the awareness and sales of products and brands, namely advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, publicity, public relations, direct marketing and new media marketing.

Furthermore, attention should also be drawn to the strategic variables that influence product placement in broadcast media and ultimately the communication strategy: the type of product placement, the captive audience, the portrayal of real or everyday life, the film genre, product usage, product credibility and the shelf or message life of the film.

The argument is that product placement in feature films is part of an all-embracing integrated marketing communication strategy. As one of the most visible elements in the integrated marketing communication strategy, it should be co-ordinated and integrated with the above elements in the promotional mix to enhance the branding of the product or service.

Various factors influence the marketer and advertising specialists' decisions when applying product placement as a communication vehicle in broadcast television programmes and feature films, such as: the type of placement, the portrayal of reality and every day life, product usage by actors, perceived product credibility and the shelf or product life. These aspects play an important role in the application of product placements as an element in broadcast sponsorships.

4.1 Type of product placement

To increase consumer awareness and hopefully have a positive impact on the consumer preference and intention to buy, advertisers and marketers include product placement in their strategies. Due to the increased usage of advertisements and the consequent difficulty in getting advertising messages to reach and influence customers, product placement appears to be a viable alternative to the traditional marketing communication media.

However, according to De Lorme and Reid (1999:2) the risks are that advertisers and marketers have limited control over the brand placement process. They include the inability to guarantee the release date or the success of a particular film, the possibility of a brand being edited from the film, the risk of negative or unclear brand portrayal in the film setting, difficulty in measuring effectiveness and the lack of audience selectivity in the film medium. From the risks mentioned above management can easily identify the obstacles that they may be faced with when working with product placement.

Three types of product placement exist, namely visual, verbal and hands-on placement. Visual placement occurs when a product, service or logo can simply be observed within the setting of the film (Monkey Junction, 2003:1). This visual placement is an example of a subtle descriptor. Verbal placement occurs when an actor mentions a product or service by name in the film. This is also an example of a subtle descriptor. An audio placement is, however, less subtle than a visual placement.

4.2 Real or everyday life portrayal

Another element that needs attention when looking at product placement in films is whether the placing of products adds at all to the realism of the films or whether they can be seen as advertisements in disguise. This will be discussed in the following section.

Film producers argue that placing branded products in films enhances realism by providing a realistic element of everyday life (Gupta, Balasubramanian & Klassen, 2000:43). However, some dispute that products give films an indelible imprint of realism. In real life, consumers eat, drink, wear and drive brand name products. It is part of consumers' topography.

Film producers argue that the use of a brand name in a feature film enhances the realism, due to the fact that it lends a natural "everyday" touch to its settings. To depict a film character entering a restaurant, a store or petrol station with no names attached to them would be meaningless (Gupta, Balasubramanian & Klassen, 2000:43).

According to Monkey Junction (2003:2), product placement strengthens a film's link to real life. Product placement therefore adds realism and authenticity to scenes in feature films. It is further argued that the use of products that consumers are already familiar with increases the credibility and power of the film as something the audience can identify with (Xroads, 2004:2).

4.3 Product usage

The usage of the product is closely related to the product placement in the film. The most effective type of placement is a prominent product placement. This type of placement comes in the form of a hands-on placement. A hands-on placement occurs when an actor actually handles or interacts with the product (Monkey Junction, 2003:1).

Due to the fact that the audience eats, drinks, wears and drives brand name products, the use of these items can assist the film by invoking a certain time period or creating the feel of a specific location (Moster, Bryant & Sylvester, 2002:4). Another reason product placement is useful is that it often reinforces a film character's personality or history.

Unlike traditional advertising messages, product placement also provides a venue where products can be realistically portrayed, and possibly demonstrated in the context of a film scene (Curtis in Morton & Friedman, 2000:34). The naturalistic environment is not only important to film producers, but also to marketers, "With ordinary advertising you can only say so much. With placements you can hint at what kind of product it is far more effectively" (Murdock, 1992:19). Tom Hanks in *Forrest Gump's* opening scene with his Nike training shoes is an excellent example of a humorous clip in a given time and space.

4.4 Product credibility

Products placed in feature films have a higher credibility than paid advertisements due to their perceived realism. Placing a brand name product within a film gives products an intensified sense of realism (Monkey Junction, 2003:2). Most of the James Bond films portray the character 007 where he drinks Martini as part of the story line. In these scenes the brand name and product are featured within a real-life environment, which enhances the credibility of the product.

4.5 Shelf and message life

Gupta, Balasubramanian and Klassen (2000:42) emphasise that product placement is seen as a unique way of popularising and immortalising brands because films provide excellent message reach and have a long message life. From the initial teaser, the feature film is on circuit for an average of at least two months. After four months, it is re-released on video and DVD and then on the retail shelf it is also re-released. Lastly, about twelve months later, the feature film can be shown on national television. Product placement offers marketers several advantages over other advertising media, especially regarding cost-efficient communication. Over the shelf life of the film, including its theatrical run, television appearances and home video rental, the cost per viewer expenditure continues to decrease (Kinney & Sapolsky, 2000:4).

4.6 Film or programme genre

It would be best if a product could suit a particular film genre. The fast-moving new look Mini Cooper in *The Italian Job* with Oscar winner Charlize Theron has enhanced the total re-launch of the brand globally. A local television series on SABC2, 7de Laan, is an excellent genre to place consumer products for everyday usage.

4.7 Captive or selective audience

One of the mediums in which product placement enjoys prominence is the feature film. Film attendees select a particular film. They book a seat at a particular cinema at a specific time. Efforts to view the film are in most cases planned and motivated. This audience is captured for a given time, where their sight senses perceive almost all the information, due to the darkened cinema. All other senses align with the visual incoming messages. Constant exposure to well-placed products will eventually impact on the cinema attendees.

Selective audiences rent DVDs and videos to suit their particular needs. It is argued that certain themes or genres will ultimately suit particular selected audiences. Deliberate product placements to suit these needs will impact on the desired outcomes. In order for a brand to be recognised effectively in a feature film, it should have a reasonable length of exposure and a well-integrated placement.

Communication integration brings all the elements of the communication mix together in a master strategy. Product placement should be applied as an integral part of this master strategy for optimal brand exposure, in relation to the other seven promotional elements. The integration of product placements into the marketing communication strategy of the organisation could enhance the general impact of product branding. Consistent exposure to a deliberate placement will ultimately influence the perception thereof, since nothing gets into any scene of a feature film, broadcast television programme, video clips, music video, website and other electronic media clips by accident. Every product placement is there for a purpose.

Mulder (2004:231) explains that integrated communication and integrated branding go hand in hand. Since product placement is an effective communication vehicle for product branding, it is evident that coordination and integration should be a given. A brand can be explained as a name, term, phrase, design, symbol or any combination of these, chosen by an individual or company to distinguish a product from competing products (BovÉE, Houston & Thill, 1995:247, and Klopper 2002:20). However, marketers in the broadcast industry refer to a brand as being more than that, because it also creates a certain amount of awareness, association, reputation and prominence in the eyes of the average film attendee (Weitz & Wensley, 2002:7). A good brand, according to Hoffman (2003:261), should therefore attract attention, be memorable and help communicate the positioning of the product. The power of a brand lies in what resides in the mind of customers (Keller, 2003:59). Advertisers and marketers should strive to maintain a positive brand image, as Russell and Lane (2002:161) warn that the credibility of a brand name is important.

For the purposes of this article, branding is defined as the process of giving a product or service a personality. Branding fulfils various roles. Burnett and Moriarty (1998:306) list the following functions of branding: "It identifies the product, it anchors a position, and it establishes an image or personality for the product that makes it distinctive, liked and valued. Once established clearly in the mind of the consumer, the brand serves as a cognitive shortcut. It may connote quality, convenience, strong values, and excellent service to name but a few."

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the secondary research conducted, it is clear that product placement is situated under the eight promotional elements in IMC. As an element of broadcast sponsorships, the use of a product or a product's name within a programme is paid for by the marketer of the product or by providing the product itself. Consequently, product placement should be viewed as a communication vehicle to complement the traditional media of marketing and advertising.

As part of broadcast sponsorships, product placement must be co-ordinated and integrated with the other seven promotional elements: advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, publicity, public relations, direct marketing and new media marketing. The renewed interest in and growing attention on, product placement in feature films and broadcast television programmes within an IMC context necessitate further investigation.

Future primary research should also focus on empirically testing the effects of product placement in the film or broadcast media within the developing consumer context in South Africa. Specific focus on viewer recognition of the placed product, the recall of product placements, and attitudes towards ethically charged product placements, such as weapons, alcohol and cigarettes, could prove useful.

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