



In-Film Advertising: The Soft Link Between the Products and the Customers

KEYWORDS

Soft Advertising, In-Film Advertising, Brands, Product placement

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ABSTRACT *During a time when consumers are getting saturated with traditional media advertising, product placement via In-Film Advertising in movies, in television and other media are methods of advertising that reaches consumers in a seemingly indirect fashion. In – film advertising is a marketing practice designed to intentionally insert products into the content of Bollywood movies. In most cases the placement is subtle so as not to divert significant attention from the main content of the movie. This can be an inexpensive way to build national recognition for a company, product or service; this can be an asset in enhancing the corporate image as well as provide several different promotional opportunities in some of the most successful movies and television programs today.*

The company wants their products to be visible within a scene, but not the focus. The product needs to fit, almost seamlessly into the shot and context of the scene. When done correctly, product placement can add a sense of realism to a movie or television or other forms of media.

INTRODUCTION

While watching a movie we come across a scene when one of the main characters is holding a can of his favorite soft drink or working on a particular brand of computer. This is called product placement and it's as common in the movie industry as a cold is to humans. This is a form of advertising that is less meddling than a traditional advertisement and is weaved into the movie to appear seamless. Such type of product placement is known as Soft Advertising, and when particularly takes place within movie and television programs, it becomes In-Film Advertising. Hence, In-Film Advertising can be defined as "The form of product placement that deals with monitoring techniques for product placement within films and television programs".

Product placement occurs with the inclusion of a brand's logo in shot, or a favorable mention or appearance of a product in shot. This is done without disclosure, and under the premise that it is a natural part of the work. Most major movie releases today contain product placements. The most common form is movie and television placements and more recently books, video games and other media.

Since 1974 till date the value of overall soft advertising market has seen an increase owing to its huge success and hope it continues to remain the same.

In-film Advertising- A technique for product placement?

When is an ad not an ad? When it is a product placement. Once mainly found on the big screen, product placement has been making appearances on [television](#) following [video games](#) and even books, etc.

Product or brand placement is a form of advertising in which brand name products, packages, signs and corporate names are intentionally positioned in motion pictures and television programs. Placement can be in the form of verbal mentions in dialogue, actual use by a character, visual displays such as a corporate logo on a vehicle or billboard, brands used as set decoration, or even snatches of actual radio or television commercials.

The successful integration of product placement within the film's storyline has a long history - the first example being the yellow Rajdoot bike used in Raj Kapoor's film 'Bobby'

A worldwide trend in advertising, the In-Film advertising is

a vehicle for everything from foodstuffs to electronics to automobiles. The various ways in which a brand appears in a movie can be classified into:

- Passive placement
- Active placement
- Hyperactive placement

1) Passive placement – it is also known as Co-present mode. Sometimes product placement just happens. It is a visual imagery in which the product appears within the entertainment program. A producer, director, or even an actor might come across something he thinks will enhance the project. Usually this has to do with boosting the level of credibility or realism of the story being told. Passive placement is if there is just background or foreground presence of a brand within part of the overall frame. For e.g. the actor actually walks into McDonalds and there is lot of McDonalds branding right across that would typically be passive placement.

In the movie Baghban, love is the ulterior theme, which revolves around the 'social expression' feel of Archies. Paresh Rawal also informs Amitabh Bachchan about the significance of Valentine's Day.

2) Active placement - Active placement is also known as Implicit mode. It occurs when there is some storyline integration when the brand has a part to play. It is actual product used by an actor/actress in the program or television. For e.g. MOTOROLA as a cell phone is placed where the actor is shown using the MOTOROLA cell phone.

For example, in the movie Chalte Chalte, Shah Rukh Khan is seen asking his worker to fill Castrol in his truck.

3) Hyperactive placements - Hyper Active which is also known as the Imperative mode is when the brand is present with surprise element. There is some humor involved and there is very pure brand benefit which is being told as part of the overall story line integration that the brand has with the content. In other words it is a dialogue spoken by an actor that contains product information or in this type the star would ask his friend / co-worker to use the product.

For e.g. in the movie Yaadein, Hrithik Roshan is seen recommending 'Pass-Pass' to Kareena Kapoor.

In case of co-present mode, the movie carries the 'feel' of the brand throughout the film. Passive placement may help keep a brand salient through repeated exposure but communication through placement is purely associative and implicit. The implicit mode has the central character using the brand, while the imperative mode has the protagonist recommending the brand.

In - film advertising & Bollywood

Whilst most casual observers view the Indian film industry as being represented by Bollywood, India has developed many cinemas each with its own film style under the umbrella of the Indian film. We have separate language cinemas from South India: Telugu, Tamil, Kannada and Malayalam. It is Hindi commercial cinema (Bollywood), which is widely considered to be the national cinema of India.

Indian cinema has strongly mirrored the economic and political changes India has undergone over the last fifty years since achieving Independence and has thus achieved a culturally prominent status in the country. Significantly, Bollywood movies, as a significant strand of Indian cinema, have also mirrored these changes, but have been more successful in exploiting the associated marketing opportunities. Bollywood films come with their own narrative, which informs a range of products and practices and is in fact a 'culture industry' of which Indian cinema is only a part.

The Bollywood film industry as a segment of Indian cinema is worth 160 billion and produces over 900 movies per year which are watched by millions of people across the globe. The industry represents a significant opportunity for strategically planned product placements. Churning out nearly 1,000 films a year, the Indian film industry is the largest in the world. At the moment 25-30 percent of the Bollywood movies employ branded entertainment. Film is quite possibly the most powerful medium for communication in the world today. One reason for this is its importance as a cultural force.

This looks at the relatively new practice of in-film advertising in popular Hindi films. Acknowledging the impact of popular films and iconic stars since the 1940s and 50s on styles, trends and ideology, this project report explores how this powerful medium is now being used for product placement in India. Appealing to the rising affluence of Indian audiences, branded goods are most likely to appear in films such as high-end luxury consumer goods like mobile phones, cars and motorcycles. Realizing the potential of celebrity endorsements and the advantages of in-film placements, the advertising industry views movies as the optimum medium for building brands. Equally, the film industry is happy to accommodate in-film advertising as it serves to defray production costs, as well as the costs of marketing and promoting films.

While watching a movie, one should try to keep an eye out for products or brand-names he/she can recognize. It's likely that a person may see one of the major soft drink companies represented. It can be [Coke](#), [Pepsi](#) or any other brand name. When spotted once something like this, one should keep a track of how many other scenes include that product. A person may start to see a trend. "How," he/she'll wonder, "can the actor hold the Coke can just the right way every time so that the logo is perfectly visible?" Well, this is in - film advertising.

The phenomenon of in-film advertising is helping to build brands and proving to be a revenue-spinner for several ad agencies. Film placements are currently raking in anything between Rs 5, 00,000 to Rs 50 million for the producers.

However, there is evidence of shortened attention spans and a greater effort to break through the clutter of brands and media vehicles. The best way to deliver the message is to catch the customer off-guard when the rational lines are down. The best way to do so is to use the emotional gate

rather than the rational gate. The rational gate examines the advantages, benefits, features and seeks value for money; the emotional gate is all about trust, love, identification and belief. It has been noticed that films operate at the emotional level. These aspects have been leveraged by brands such as Coke, Pepsi, Lux, Airtel, Hyundai, wherein movies and brands flash identical messages at their target audiences.

The variety of films and their content can impact brand placement possibilities. For example, films depicting earlier historical periods will offer less placement potential than films depicting contemporary times. One area of product placement research has focused on the frequency with which branded products are featured in films. Frequently observed product categories include automobiles, fast foods and other snack items, alcoholic beverages and soft drinks. Tobacco brands are also found to appear regularly in feature films.

Examples of in film advertising

One of the clear cases of effective placement in recent times was BR Films' family drama *Baghban*, which addressed issues of Indian middle class families — the demographic segment most brand custodians revere.

The movie creatively integrated five brands in the entire movie. The brands included were ICICI Bank, Tata Tea, Archies, Ford and Tide. The movie showed actor Amitabh Bachhan as a retired bank employee of ICICI Bank and Salman Khan owning a Ford showroom.

Employing Archies Cards' proposition of social expression and Valentine's Day revelry, *Baghban* effectively depicted the craft of product placement. The script also had enough space to accommodate household brands like Tide and Tata Tea.

Some more examples of in – film advertising would be:

- o Castrol in the movie *Chalte Chalte*, *Kyon Ho Gaya Na*, the latest movie being *Tara Rum Pum*.
- o Bournvita, Tide in *Krrish*
- o Motorola, Tag Heuer, Louis Philippe in the movie *Don*.
- o Cola cola in movies like *Taal*, *Kuch Na Kaho* and *Dhoom 2*.
- o Swift in *Bunti aur Babli*
- o Tata Safari in the movie *Road*
- o Eros jewellery, Taj mahal tea, Nerolac paints in *Baabul*
- o Tata Starbus in *Honeymoon Travels Pvt Ltd*.
- o Mountain Dew in *Mission Istanbul*

While cars, scooters and beverages make regular appearances in films as seen in the above examples, with this movie *Honeymoon Travels Pvt. Ltd*; *Tata Starbus*, the city bus from Tata motors made an unlikely sight. The film is about six newly married couples on a package honeymoon tour from Mumbai to Goa on a bus. And much of the action in the movie happens in the *Tata Starbus*. From several points of view, in - film advertising proved to be a better advertising medium for this movie. The *Starbus* range launched in March 2005 and it is sold to tour operators, while there was a need to communicate with the *Starbus* primary consumer, the company wanted to influence the end traveler as well. Along with this, *Starbus* also wanted to convey that the company offers a complete product giving the travelers a more comfortable mode of transport.

Realizing the potential of in-film placements, the advertising industry views movies as the optimum medium for building brands. Equally, the film industry is happy to accommodate in-film advertising as it serves to defray production costs, as well as the costs of marketing and promoting films.

Leo Entertainment bagged films such as Pooja Bhatt's *Jism*, BR Chopra's *Baghban*. Leo Entertainment is already an independent profit-centre due to the revenues obtained from films such as *Kaante*, *Raju Chacha* and *Yeh Kya Ho Raha Hai* where it leveraged brands such as Coke, Thums Up, Maaza,

Provogue, Castrol, Tata Tea, etc. For their movie Jism, Leo Entertainment had developed an innovative association with Zingaro, a liquor brand. In fact, Leo brokered a Thumps Up - Taste the Thunder deal for the film Kaante and won an award for being one of the Top 10 product placements of 2002.

Conclusion

Product placement activities in Bollywood movies are being more extensively used because of their mass-market reach through a popular and influential medium. The power of celebrities, many with iconic and idol status, give greater credibility to brands and reinforce or establish positive associations. More importantly, product placements last longer than traditional advertising and have a greater opportunity for reinforcing their 'message' as consumers repeat their viewing of films. Bollywood has grown in a multidimensional manner, through its own brand of art, communication and stars. Films are seen in over 13,000 cinema halls and by nearly 100 million filmgoers every week all over the world. As the Indian economy develops a global perspective, the Bollywood

film industry needs to follow suit. More importantly, as Indian audiences become fragmented into class specific segments, marketers are faced with the more difficult task of communicating their brand messages; effective and well thought out product placement strategies appear to offer some solutions.

Product placement is really a nice way to advertise brands in front of the people. But the important aspect is how to place the product in movies, television or other media, it has to be done in such a way that it looks absolutely natural on screen then be it TV, video games, films or cricket matches. There should be not an overdose of product placement otherwise the result will not be good. Also Indians are not really influenced to use the product which their favorite actor is using. So the brand companies and the film makers should come up with more creative ways so that product placement leaves an effective impact on the audience.

Though the product placement market is growing, it still needs better ways to communicate with the consumers.

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