

Advertising is an expected part of consuming media nowadays ranging from commercials to celebrity endorsements. In traditional forms of advertising, whether it's on a digital screen or on a physical billboard, people generally presume that they are being marketed to and given a brief sales pitch. But product placement may not be as evident in comparison. It's also a huge part of the advertising industry. The Journal of Management and Marketing Research (JMMR) estimated about an annual rate of 27.9% over 2005-2010 to \$7.55 billion spent on such placements globally, expecting to significantly outpace traditional advertising and marketing (Williams, Petrosky, Hernandez and Page Jr., 2011). Product placement blurs the line between content and marketing by embedding brands and products into the very material viewers are intentionally consuming and may not think of as advertising. This is especially true in music videos where there is oftentimes blatant product placement. Music videos should be subject to the same or similar regulation as in movies and TV shows where considerations must be given and credited. However, both the U.S. Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and Federal Communications Commission (FCC) have been criticized of non-enforcement of these regulations when it comes to music videos. Despite the rules on these kinds of placements, many popular videos do not tend to disclose endorsements or placement of products and brands within content. As such, there may be comparatively more product placement in this form of media than other types. An attempt will be made to compare and contrast between product placement in popular movies versus product placement in popular music videos and to discover whether there is a variation and how much of a variation there is.

In today's world, most common forms of traditional advertising are fairly recognizable by consumers. Examples include ads in a newspaper or magazine that distinguish themselves from written articles via independent pages or clearly-marked sections, commercial breaks during TV shows where there is clear separation between content and advertisement, similar breaks in terrestrial radio in-between a succession of songs or news broadcasts, or giant billboards passing by while driving on a highway. The ratio of advertising vs editorial content in

magazines has remained fairly steady over the past 40 years with nearly half devoted to each; 54.8% advertising and 45.2% editorial in 2011 (Sims, 2014). It's said that "the average American is exposed to more than 1 hour of TV ads every day" (marketingcharts, 2014) and "an estimated 38 commercials air every minute across national TV" (Lake, 2015). Commercials take up about 20-25% of a sports radio or news/talk hour (Barrett, 2016). And the Arbitron National In-Car Study has said 71% of the US population aged 18 or older notice roadside billboard advertising messages (Arbitron National In-Car Study, 2009).

There have been varying degrees of opinion regarding how traditional advertising has survived and whether it will continue to survive in an age where digital and social media are growing immensely. Some say that traditional advertising is still relevant and is still effective. According to MediaPost and a study by MarketingSherpa: "...the top five most trusted ad formats are all what we would consider traditional: print, television, direct mail, radio, and out-of-home advertising. The survey also found that traditional ads have a very high engagement level, with over half of respondents saying they tend to watch TV ads from companies they like. Similar numbers were also reported for direct mail and in-store print ads" (Serbu, 2017). And, in general, TV is still seen as one of the most popular mediums: "Largely driven by big commercial events such as The Olympics, The Super Bowl, World Cups and regional championships, TV is still the single largest advertising investment by company today" (Afzal, 2017).

On the other side of the coin, there are those who say traditional advertising is dying since "unfortunately, traditional advertising doesn't permit a two-way relationship, because it's based on the premise of broadcast: the one-to-many paradigm" (Stanislaw, 2014). As many as 84% of Millennials have said that they mistrust traditional advertising (Chen, 2015). In effect, a decline of traditional forms of advertising has been seen. A few points marketingcharts makes, as reported by PwC: "The consumer magazine advertising market in the US...will remain

essentially flat through 2021”, “linear TV remains the primary medium to consume video in the US. While this will continue to be the case for the foreseeable future, linear TV’s dominance is in decline”, “terrestrial radio ad revenues are predicted to remain mostly stagnant between this year (\$16.4 billion) and 2021 (\$16.6 billion)”, and “newspaper advertising is the only market expected to see a decline in revenues between this year (\$16.8 billion) and 2021(\$12.2 billion)” (marketingcharts, 2017). This kind of pessimistic outlook does not bode well for platforms that have served the marketing industry well up until now.

Despite these statistics, the one thing that all these forms of advertising have in common is that consumers are still typically well aware that these are marketing opportunities from brands and businesses trying to catch and retain their attention. There’s a distinction between what is purposefully sought-after content and what is promotional material. Since consumers are aware that they are being marketed to and may respond to such advertisements with that in mind, traditional advertising may be perceived as ineffective by advertisers. In fact, modern technologies and innovations have surpassed traditional advertising when it comes to reach and frequency. The widespread growth and adoption of web connectivity, and especially mobile usage, over the years has changed people’s viewing and even socializing habits. According to Internet World Stats, there are over 4.1 Billion Internet users worldwide as of December 31st, 2017 (Miniwatts Marketing Group, 2018) and according to a report by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), a United Nations agency, youths (aged 15-24) lead that number with 70% of the world’s youth online and broadband being increasingly mobile and more affordable than ever (ITU Facts & Figures, 2017). This means that newer methods of advertising have adapted to changing demographics and usage habits while traditional advertising has arguably been, as noted, on a decline.

Product placement, on the other hand, is not only a different promotional technique but is arguably growing and becoming standard when compared to traditional advertising. It is described as:

...a form of advertising in which brand-name products, packages, signs and corporate names are intentionally positioned in motion pictures and TV 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 TV commercials. (AdAge, 2003)

Nebenzahl and Jaffe describe the distinction between traditional advertising and product placement along two dimensions:

- (1) Disguise - the degree of source concealment, i.e., the extent to which the sponsor is identified and/or is able to cloud the fact that the message is a paid advertisement and
- (2) Obtrusiveness - the degree to which the message is secondary to more salient communication such as a sports contest or a scene in a movie (Nebenzahl and Jaffe, 1998).

John Dudovskiy cites Brennan et al. (1999) that "the whole idea of the product placement in movies was originated due to producer's effort to increase the reality of movies by adding to them real brands and products. However, once products started appearing in movies it was followed by increase in sales for that particular product and it caught marketers' attention as a new promotional channel" (Dudovskiy, (2012)). Such a concept isn't actually anything new. It has been around since as early as 1919 when Harrison's Reports, a film industry trade journal, first complained that commercial influence was destroying movies. They even criticized the prominent appearance of Corona typewriters, which Corona paid for placement, in 1925's *The Lost World*. (Vago, 2016). But since then, it has been used in all forms of media to push brand awareness and associate products with desired characteristics of the content they appear in,

whether it's particular actors or situational contexts with the kind of lifestyles and usages marketers wish to align themselves with. Some notable examples within the recent few decades:

- Reese's Pieces in E.T. The Extra Terrestrial (1982): Reese's Pieces were offered to be featured in the movie for zero dollars but spent \$1 million in promotion costs (Suggett, 2017). That was a bargain as they saw their profits increase by 65% during the run of the movie, the largest box office smash in history at the time (Nathanson, 2013). — <https://youtu.be/AfAzUAXWELU> (clip)
- Ray-Ban in Risky Business (1983): Wayfarer sunglasses were actually slated for cancellation by Ray-Ban but having Tom Cruise wear them in the movie saw 360,000 pairs attributed to placement in the movie (Nathanson, 2013).
- Ray-Ban in Top Gun (1986): This time, sales of Ray-Ban's Aviator sunglasses rose 40% as a result of Tom Cruise wearing them in the movie (Nathanson, 2013).
- Red Stripe in The Firm (1993): Sales of the beer went up 50% in the US in 30 days through placement (Nathanson, 2013).
- FedEx and Wilson Sporting Goods in Cast Away (2000): FedEx was featured heavily as part of the plot; Tom Hanks was a FedEx employee and relied on FedEx packages to survive his plight. Wilson Sporting Goods' volleyball essentially became a character in the movie with an emotional connection between Tom Hanks' character, and thus with the audience (Erik, 2011).
- Converse Shoes in I, Robot (2004): An entire scene dedicated to Will Smith opening a box of Converse shoes, even naming the exact model of the shoe in dialogue, and a different character later telling him, "Nice shoes." It helps that his character is shown to be phobic of anything new so that helps makes it work within the context of the film (Suggett, 2017). — <https://youtu.be/3HplZrOH4zc> (clip)

- Blackstone Winery in Sideways (2004): The movie caused a 150% increase in sales for Blackstone Winery's pinot noir and even a 2% drop in US sales of merlot, which Paul Giamatti's character bashes in the movie (Nathanson, 2013).
- Multiple brands in James Bond movie series: There has been heavy product placement throughout the years when it comes to the 007 series of films. For instance, "Heineken has a 15-year, multi-picture deal, one of the longest running and most expensive of its kind in movie history" (Nathanson, 2013).
  - Dr. No (1962): Sean Connery can be seen reaching for a Red Stripe beer (Nathanson, 2013).
  - The World is Not Enough (1999): MGM film studio broke records selling \$100 million worth of placements to BMW, Bollinger, Turnbull & Asset, Smirnoff, Omega, Motorola, Electronic Arts, Microsoft, Caterpillar, and Heineken (Nathanson, 2013).
  - Casino Royale (2006): Gordon's gin, among others, where Daniel Craig enunciates the brand name while ordering his drink (Nathanson, 2013).
  - Quantum of Solace (2008): As with The World is Not Enough, \$100 million was made in placement with the same or similar brands in addition to Ford, Virgin Atlantic, and Sony Vaio laptops saving the world (Nathanson, 2013).
  - Skyfall (2012): Heineken US division reportedly paid \$45 million for placement, including a 30-second commercial starring Daniel Craig as James Bond a branded web game, and a scene where Craig puts down his signature cocktail for a bottle of the Dutch beer (Nathanson, 2013).

When it comes to traditional advertising versus product placement, there are some drawbacks that make traditional advertising far less attractive. For instance, although advertisements are nearly ubiquitous, "when a commercial comes on the TV or radio, we often change the channel. When a pop up ad appears on a website, we just close it as quickly as possible..."

many people like to change the channel or go to the bathroom during commercials” (gsmoore1, 2011). So while encountering ads may be what’s inescapable, reacting by closing them or switching away can be an option in many instances when it comes to these kinds of traditional advertising methods. People also tend to have little patience for ads, especially online: “Traditional advertising formats FAIL on the web. By traditional advertising formats, I mean display ads, video ads, and any other ad whose format and value proposition approximates or imitates that of an offline advertising format” and that “this would seem self-evident, but it has not been the case with traditional advertising, which was developed for CAPTIVE audiences, and web users are increasingly anything but captive” (scottkarp, 2008). As Sweney, writing for The Guardian, says: “The explosion of catch-up and on-demand services such as Netflix, the rise in the recording of shows and the skipping of ads, and a decline in viewing on traditional TV sets by younger viewers has led advertisers to look beyond the 30-second commercial break” (Sweney, 2018).

The advantages that product placement provides can be very important in helping to pad production budgets or offer products and services to crew: “it can assist lower budget films or shows in developing a successful and entertaining product. The cost of movies is going up and product placement can help offset some of these costs” (gsmoore1, 2011). For instance, for the film *Up In The Air*, “Hilton...offered free lodging for the crew, sets and promotions of the film no everything from key cards to in-room televisions to toll-free hold messages. Hilton worked with the production company to make sure everything from staff uniforms to hotel shuttles was portrayed correctly” (Clifford, 2010). In addition, product placement can reach harder-to-get audiences: “brands are also featured in a clutter-free environment devoid of competitive messages. Films can be selected that target consumers who may be difficult to reach with more conventional advertising methods. Nearly three-fourths of the audience for theatrical films is between the ages of 16 and 39, a group highly prized by advertisers” (AdAge,

2003). To put it bluntly, “having Campbell’s Soup or Chrysler associated with your project can be nearly as important to your pitch as signing Tom Cruise” (Clifford, 2010).

The effectiveness of product placement has been harder to quantify. In general, looking at case studies, research, and evidence from experiences by industry professionals can serve as sources for measurement and analysis. As Paul Suggett explains, “there are no specific costs associated with product placement; this is usually something that is negotiated between the show and the brand, and it is becoming more expensive every year” (Suggett, 2017). However, “published research has shown only a marginal increase in brand recall as a result in product placement and little change in attitude toward the brand. While some new brands have been successfully launched via placement strategies, many brands featured in films are already familiar to viewers. In this case, placement may best serve as a means of maintaining visibility and top-of-mind awareness” (AdAge, 2003). An explanation for its influence on consumers lies in mental models and how information gets sent and processed by an individual for maximum efficiency. Dudovskiy cites a study by Sapolsky and Kinney (1994, pp.1-22) where they identified the most effective method of boosting product recall was “a combination of visual cues and verbal references to the brand in the scenes of a movie...although expensive at the same time...product recall was found to be high when product appeared jointly with a major character or the main character in the film which provided greater visibility for the product” (Dudovskiy, 2012). He also cites a study mentioned by Beckstead (1995, p.21) which found that:

- 32% of viewers recall the product if the item is visually placed;
- 53% of viewers recall the product if the item is actually used;
- 60% of viewers recall the product if the item is verbally mentioned;
- 71% of viewers recall the product if the item is verbally endorsed;
- 81% of viewers recall the product if the item is mentioned and used (Dudovskiy, 2012)



Research has shown that there is even a tie to a company's stock value. Michael Wiles of the W.P. Carey School of Business at Arizona State University looked at "126 product placements in 2002 films and found an average abnormal stock price jump of .89 percent for the related companies during the films' openings. Interestingly, the bumps up didn't reverse" (ASU, 2009). The monetary value speaks for itself: the movie, *Man of Steel*, "took in a staggering \$160 million in funding from the use of product placement...from over 100 global partners that all paid a healthy sum of money to have their brands featured in the Superman mega-hit" and "Ford paid around \$14 million to have James Bond drive the Ford Mondeo in *Casino Royale*...for barely three minutes, which equates to \$78,000 per second" (Suggett, 2017). In a study by Gupta and Lord, positive memory recall results were found and it was shown that "product placements elicited higher recall than did advertisements, which in turn, outperformed subtle placements. The explicit mention of a product in the audio script (without a visual depiction) led to better recall than a subtle visual placement (without audio reinforcement). However, the addition of a complementary audio message did not significantly enhance the recall of a product that already enjoyed prominent visual display" (Gupta and Lord, 1998). A study was even conducted on subliminal product placement in movies, where consumers may not even be actively aware of the advertising and they're perceived unconsciously. The results state that such techniques work and are said to be "criminally neglected in science as well as in practice" (Kurschner, 2014).

Despite the difficulty in mapping effectiveness to actual sales, a couple modern case studies from Branded Entertainment Network (BEN) may shed some light in practical terms:

- Baskin-Robbins and *Ant-Man* (2015): With a target audience of 15-25 year olds, a scene with Paul Rudd was revised by BEN to integrate Baskin-Robbins. The results were "three premium integrations, five verbal mentions, and social media support. "The audience liked the integration so much that they created their own viral memes

and apparel that touted the phrase, “Baskin-Robbins always finds out” which lead to 1.6K retweets and 2.6K favorites. Overall the integration generated 64.9M views resulting in \$6.5M in media value ROI for the client” (BEN, 2017).

- Honda and Ghost in the Shell (2017): Honda wanted to align with a young, male audience and collaborated with BEN to develop Major’s (Scarlett Johansson’s) motorcycle. The film grossed \$170 million worldwide, prominent branding and logo, press from multiple auto publications, and a debut at the international motor show (BEN, 2017).

In an interview with Brendan Gaul, Chief Content Officer of Universal McCann, he makes the case that organic use of the product and its integration with advancing the storyline are vital to effectiveness. And that it’s about reach and frequency more than anything else when it comes to measuring success. In particular, frequency can mean that someone may not consider a brand or product the first time around but after they’ve encountered it multiple times, their feelings may change: “a commercial may not move you but if you see it three times maybe you start to pay attention. It’s kind of like how radio works when a new song comes out you might say, ‘I don’t like that song,’ but it plays in rotation every hour and after the 20th time you [might] say you like that song.” Still, he says, the most effective way to promote is a mixture of product placement plus other forms of advertising as a multi-channel media plan “where you pair a commercial with content in support of a brand idea” in order to make the most impact. For instance, he says that “when I see an iPhone in a movie, that’s not going to make me go buy an iPhone but if you see an iPhone in an AT&T commercial and it makes a great offer and you happen to be in [the] market to buy a new phone and then you see it in a movie, that might push it over the top. They work harder together.” But how do you figure out if any of this translates to actual sales? He says it’s difficult to gather: “it’s really hard, it’s category by category and it’s also the customer journey within a category. A car is not necessarily an impulse buy so its hard to do that.” Interestingly enough, he says that verbal mentions should

be avoided unless combined with a visual component: “I would say don’t treat film like radio. Film and TV are visual mediums, and it should be seen. Generally speaking, [however] if you have a ‘see/say’ it’ll stand out more strongly.”

A few points of caution, however. Since these kinds of placements are embedded in content and therefore unavoidable, there is a balancing act to not diminish value by having too many brands competing with each other. Genre and context also matter. For instance, movies that show very violent scenes may possibly connote a negative association with a brand. And in recent years, some companies have even ended the practice in some cases: “Coca-Cola has pulled its signature red cups from the judges’ table on ‘American Idol.’ Hyundai took its kiwi-green Tuscon vehicle and drove it out of AMC’s ‘The Walking Dead’” (Steinberg, 2015). One negative issue regarding product placement is that brand integrations can feel disingenuous or jammed into content. This can happen when a sponsor may be asking for too much, resulting in forceful-feeling integrations. Some have gone even further with advertiser-funded dialogue such as “a groundbreaking attempt to blend advertising and editorial in an episode of the hit US sitcom Black-ish, which involved consumer goods firm Procter & Gamble paying for a plot line...Advertisers are now frequently heavily involved in all aspects of a TV show, from providing funding and doing product-placement deals to having products digitally inserted into scenes using special effects” (Sweeney, 2018).

This isn’t to say that each and every product placement is over-the-top. There are varying levels and degrees. Brendan describes the idea of passive and active placement where “passive placement is like a digital version of a billboard, you see it and you move on. That might be ‘get out of a car’ or ‘certain hand bag in a scene’ or [a character] may spray a fragrance. Active placement is where they are interacting with the product and generally you see this sort of product benefit. Maybe it’s a new camera phone capability or highlighting the way the messenger works on the phone...that is certainly more valuable from a persuasion

standpoint because it advances the storyline.” There’s also the notion of fitting it in where it’s most appropriate. He describes a recent Black Panther campaign with Lexus where “they [production] knew they needed a car and Lexus auditioned the car. They brought the test model to the director’s house and they said, ‘yeah, this will be great.’ But creative people aren’t just going to jam anything in there if they have integrity. It has to be the right thing and the right fit...There’s artistic and creative integrity there because it’s advancing the storyline...she’s [Letitia Wright as Shuri] driving the car [in the movie] and it moves the story forward.”

This brings up the main point regarding product placement in music videos. With a typical length that’s about three to five minutes long (McKinney, 2015), popular hit songs are only a small fraction of the length of a typical movie running time. So when it comes to the ratio of product placement to non-product placement, music videos seem like they would be chock-full of promotional material to the point where it’s overrun. After all, products and brands need to be shown clearly enough and at a duration of screen time noticeable enough to the viewer. And depending on negotiations with the company and video producers, it’s possible to have an artist wear clothing brands for the entire video or to even showcase the artist directly interacting with products for much of the time. In fact, Brendan says that this can be a positive thing for the artist even from the viewer’s perspective: “for an up-and-coming artist, if a brand supports their music video, then the audience is [saying], ‘They made it!’” and found commercial success. But that’s not to say that there isn’t overexposure and fatigue, as he notes that “there’s a way higher tolerance of a bullshit meter but at the same time consumers are way more savvy than they were in the past; so there’s also a tolerance around product placement in music videos in particular.” In this vein, he also adds that the risk is on the artist: “the ownership is with the music video so if Britney [Spears] does some bad product placement they’ll say, ‘Britney, why did you do that?’ They won’t blame the brand. It might be less cool than before but they know the artist is the one letting the brand in there.”

It's important to understand how music videos are important to artists and Nielsen describes it this way:

Music videos help artists in two big ways: exposure and revenue. Typically music videos are produced and released in the early stage of a song's release cycle, intended to drive exposure through additional channels for fans to consume whether they're shown on TV, streamed or played in a public area. For some artists who have videos with viral appeal (artists like Gotye and Ylvis are great examples), they can be a huge driver for music sales and help to build the story to radio. Meanwhile, when brands enter the picture and strategically place products in music videos, it can produce a new revenue stream for the artist while also building exposure for the brand. In a time where music consumption is shifting across various mediums, these partnerships, if chosen well, can be effective for both sides (Bakula, 2014).

In a nutshell, music videos are naturally meant for publicity and promotion; they're more or less created for media interest. As Brendan conveys, if the brand gets associated with an artist and if they think the artist is great, they'll regard the brand as great for helping that artist do great things: "The only reason you would do this kind of thing is around audience. Here's an artist who speaks to this particular audience, so this brand also wants to speak to the audience."

As for effectiveness, Nielsen's Music Video Brand Impact study discovered people do notice brands and "these videos can contribute to a lift of 8 percentage points, on average, in intent and improved perception...even in the cases where brand product placements weren't as noticeable, overall awareness increased" (Bakula, 2014). It's found that how a brand is positioned can even be more important than screen time; as little as five seconds can create the same or higher brand lift than something shown for 35-60 seconds. As Nielsen states, "plainly stated, music video product placements work" (Bakula, 2014). Due to their relatively short length, these videos can be streamed hundreds of millions of times with only a second or so of onscreen placement and still have massive reach, especially if it happens to go viral.

Their reach can even extend to billions of eyeballs around the world. Psy's Gangnam Style may have set the world ablaze in 2012 with a current count of 3.12 billion views, but since then Luis Fonsi's Despacito released in 2017, has had nearly 4.92 billion views and Wiz Khalifa's See You Again, released in 2015, has 3.45 billion views as of March 2018 (Fitz-Gerald, 2018). With YouTube being a popular and free destination for playing videos, it's no wonder that music videos can be viewed so much; 47 of the top 50 most-viewed videos on YouTube being music videos and the average Super Bowl has only 113 million viewers (Schickner, 2017). In fact, effectiveness can increase when movies and music videos partner together: "What made [Wiz Khalifa's] See You Again particularly powerful was its integration with the 'Furious 7' movie. The movie and music video drove views to each other by combining disparate fans of the artists and the movie franchise...Developing synergy between your music video and entertainment integrations proves a powerful combination. Both Corona and Ford were featured in both Wiz Khalifa's video and the Fate of the Furious movie" (Schickner, 2017). Brendan Gaul adds that "if you marry a commercial with a piece of content, it generally makes that ROI perform six to ten times better when it's attached to a piece of content."

Another aspect of effectiveness is trust and purchase intention. In research looking at how people identify and relate with brands in music videos, it's discovered that the interrelationship between the viewer, the brand, and the artist all matter: the degree to which the viewer perceives the characteristics of a brand that can influence consumer decision-making is impactful. The more a viewer identifies with a brand's personality, the more likely they hold a favorable attitude toward the brand than those who do not. Additionally, it's of interest that a study by Delattre and Colvic (2009) showed "recall of brands varied from 0 to 36.1 percent, and recognition from 9.2 to 68.9 percent — rates significantly lower than placements in movies" (Krishen and Sirgy, 2016). For how brand influences purchase intention, Omarjee and Chhiliya ran a study using a six minute music video for a sample of 420 randomly chosen respondents aged 18-27. They found that:

...brand recall, brand recognition, and brand choice influence the consumer's purchase intentions. The strongest linear relationship existed between brand choice and purchase intention. Placement strategies are equally effective for consumers in the Y generation of differing genders, income brackets and age groups. The research reveals that music videos are an effective platform to reach the targeted Y generation population and the model adapted for placements in music videos shows the stages of the processing in the consumer's mind from exposure to placements to the final purchase intention (Omarjee and Chaliya, 2014).

Perhaps its effectiveness is one reason why product placement in music videos has been repeatedly said to be particularly egregious. Another is the very obvious and practical benefit of money. As with movies, budget plays a factor here where Brendan says "[an artist or producer] will have an idea for a music video and they need X amount of money in the budget. The label gives only so much money but they want to make a video that costs more than that so they need to get a brand in there. and make their production budget whole." And now that record sales are no longer providing the same kind of revenue as they used to, artists are charging more for concert tickets and merchandise than ever before. Music labels fund endeavors like touring and music videos but revenue from product placement helps to make up for that profit gap. Brendan agrees by saying:

The thing that's interesting about music videos is the labels used to have all this money to pay for music videos, for the marketing of the songs. With streaming services like Apple Music and Pandora, it's much harder to monetize album sales. Most of the money is coming through touring and the way that labels are funding music videos and tours are through product placements and sponsorships. Often there's a car or a need for a piece of clothing or a location or something in a music video and if you can get a brand to contribute that either 'in kind,' where they give you what you need...that's one

way to do it. The brand will often give money behind pushing the music video out because they want to get more eyeballs on the content because it has their brand in it. For example, Beats by Dre is a brand that has been especially enthusiastic in their marketing by pushing their headphones and speakers into as many celebrities' hands as they could, including music artists and their videos. And other brands like Absolut Vodka, Nokia, Ice watches, Swarovski, and many more have been shameless in allowing obvious shots of their products and close-ups of logos "handled in a way that's gross, underhanded, and exploitative", as if the viewer may not notice the insincerity (Pardee, 2017). But is there a possibility that products shown in videos aren't actually sponsored but rather genuinely used by the artist? Brendan Gaul has expressed that he simply doesn't find it very typical at all: "It is more unusual. Most of all this stuff is all paid. Kanye West and Adidas — you can't find a picture of Kanye wearing Adidas before he did his deal. Now he's done so much for that brand. Same with thing with Rihanna and Puma. The halo of Rihanna on that brand has been remarkable." This conclusion from KQED Arts puts it best as to why such blatant product placement can be detrimental: "In the internet age, marketing has become a stealth, around-the-clock endeavor, and it stands to reason that a less lucrative music industry would join forces with corporate entities for extra funds. A major problem arises, however, when the product placement overshadows the music. If the current trends continue, it's going to become ever more difficult to engage with music visuals at all without a sense of cynicism creeping in. Surely that should be more important to artists than collecting money from a ride sharing app or speaker company" (Alexandra, 2017).

A couple more case studies from BEN, this time for music videos:

- Dentsu and Pitbull: For the launch of their X39 Speed Cruiser, Dentsu had the suitable opportunity to integrate with Pitbull's music video based on a Miami Vice themed storyline, where the X39 Cruiser fit right in as a hint of espionage. The script was even rewritten to boost its visibility. As a result, major press publications



(Billboard, Noisey by Vice, Vibe, etc) picked up on the video, was posted by Chris Brown to his 10.6 million Instagram followers, and it garnered 142 million views on Vevo with release in 230 regions across the globe. (BEN, 2017).

- Dentsu's FijiFilm, Takahashi Shuzo and Avril Lavigne: Both the FujiFilm install Mini 90 and Takahashi Shuzo premium sake brand were featured in a video by Avril Lavigne. BEN recognized that not only did Avril have a huge fan base in Asia but that her "Hello Kitty" music video was a love letter and ode to Japan so everything fit together in context. The video was posted to her website, Facebook page (52 million Likes) with a mention of the sake brand (20K Likes, 1K comments, 200 shares in first 24 hours), and Twitter (15.6 million followers). When posted to her YouTube channel (3.6 million subscribers), it accumulated 119 million views. (BEN, 2017).

The FTC regulates matters concerning consumer protection and they require disclosure when it comes to product placement in all types of media from movies to TV shows to promotion on social media. And the FCC also enacts rules in a similar vein. However, these rules become a bit muddy when looking at exactly how it's described by the FTC's own endorsement guides. It's stated in their introduction that there they clearly understand and agree that consumers want to know whether a potentially trusted source is being paid to tout a product, giving more than one example of such cases. However, the following is later specifically stated for product placement:

[Q.] What does the FTC have to say about product placements on television shows?

[A.] Federal Communications Commission law (FCC, not FTC) requires TV stations to include disclosures of product placement in TV shows. The FTC has expressed the opinion that under the FTC Act, product placement (that is, merely showing products or brands in third-party entertainment content – as distinguished from sponsored content or disguised commercials) doesn't require a disclosure that the advertiser paid for the placement. (FTC, 2017)

This seems to not only fly in the face of what they describe in their own introduction to the guide, but also goes against standard procedure for other forms of media like TV shows which have similar kind of placements. Although this may be the conclusion the FTC has come to, it's plainly stated here that the FCC does indeed require product placement disclosure. Still though, it says nothing specifically about music videos. It can possibly be interpreted that if a music video airs on a TV station, disclosure is then required.

But unlike TV shows, music videos don't typically have an end-credits sequence where cast, crew, and other considerations are given. So a TV show like *Modern Family* can not only feature Apple's iPad but base the entire episode's plot on it and only putting a note in the end credits with, "products provided by Apple," but not, "promotional consideration given," which would be more accurate as exchange of compensation (Flint, 2010). Meanwhile, music videos can heavily feature a product like Beats Pill speakers with artist interaction and close-ups and not disclose any placement whatsoever. Then there's even more blatant marketing as in Avril Lavigne's Rock and Roll music video where she demonstrates the Sony Xperia's waterproof design by picking up the submerged device out of a glass of water announcing, "Oh, my new Sony phone is ringing." Oftentimes there are alcohol and tobacco (including vape pens, e-cigarettes) product placements which require even more stringent health disclaimers but no artists or brands seem to follow any procedures for informing their viewership. As Meiselman states after talking with Mary Engle, Associate Director of FTC's division of Advertising Practices, "Engle's characterization of music videos—as more television programming than digital content—also reflects an outdated reality of music videos. Today, videos are shared across social media and are closer in length and purpose to other digital content like comedy shorts, which typically include disclosure of paid placements (in accordance with Youtube's guidelines)" (Meiselman, 2017). Furthermore, "while sophisticated consumers may not be influenced by product placements made without disclaimers or warnings, many younger

viewers could see them as endorsements of the brand and the behavior. (After all, if they didn't, product placements would not be effective)" (Meiselman, 2017).

Traditional advertising may present clear enough of a distinction between content and promotion but product placement makes that distinction much less clear and at varying levels of obviousness. Furthermore, disclosure of such practices presents a problem since some forms of media are regulated while others are either not supervised or left up to interpretation and therefore have a less clear stance. Either way, it's a problem when movies at least disclose their placements while products embedded in music videos aren't disclosed yet are viewed and shared so much. Fortunately, this may be changing with the FTC reportedly cracking down on being more transparent about sponsored content (Frier and Townsend, 2016). Music videos may be next to be scrutinized.