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# Product Placement as an Effective Tool for the Brand Positioning

Hanna Górska-Warsewicz and Olena Kulykovets

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## Abstract

Brand is currently one of the most important tools in the battle for the consumer. Therefore, positioning of the brand nowadays is a priority element in the marketing strategy of the enterprises. Each of them strives to effectively reach the consumer through various sources of marketing communications. The alternative to traditional advertising in the press or television has become the nontraditional marketing communications such as product placement and branding. This tool is much more effective because of the ability to direct the relevant marketing message to selected audience group at the right time and place. The aim of this chapter is to present selected aspects of product and brand placement as an unconventional tool for brand positioning. The special attention was given to define product and brand placement as well as to present its role in the creation of brand value for customers. This chapter consists of four parts related to (1) "introduction"; (2) "brand positioning and its role in product and brand placement"; (3) "product placement as one of the unconventional promotional tools with special attention given to definition, advantages and disadvantages, effectiveness, as well as some examples related to movies, printed publications, and video games"; and (4) "conclusion."

**Keywords:** brand, product placement, brand positioning, consumer, marketing communication

## 1. Introduction

To create strong brand, the proper strategy should be involved, which provides a foundation for development of brand-building programs and typically includes brand objectives, consistent

brand name and identity systems, target audiences, positioning, key communications messages, and prioritization of brand touch points.

The aim of this chapter is to present selected aspects of product and brand placement as an unconventional tool for brand positioning. Unconventional marketing tools should create value for the customers by building strong brands. Brand is defined as a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, which is intended to identify the goods or services one seller or group of sellers do and to differentiate them from those of competitors.[1]

The special attention will be given to define product and brand placement as well as to present its role in creation of brand value for customers. The examples of successful brand positioning using product placement will be presented with selected results from secondary and primary consumer research.

## 2. Brand positioning and its role in product and brand placement

For the purpose of product placement description, it is important to underline the specific elements of brand definition. The brand is a simple identification idea like name, logo, symbol, or trademark in one hand, and on the other, it is a complex idea that contains many tangible and intangible components. The brand is a hallmark of quality, the promise or assurance for the buyer, the icon, and the image which makes consumers buy products bearing the brand. In such situation, the brand becomes the symbol that connects the company and its products with consumers creating a relationship and represents the personality of the product in a changing market environment [1, 2]. Brand can be also seen as a sum of associations caused by names and symbols or a set of attributes such as personality, values, associations, and quality, affecting the purchasing process of consumers, functioning in the consumer minds, and, although associated with the real world, reflecting the perceptions of consumers [3, 4]. A brand can also be analyzed as a strategic resource of the company, comprehended as an asset, which should be suitably protected. This asset should be analyzed as an intangible and legal, the value of which cannot be exactly determined until it is the subject of purchase transaction [5].

In the literature, the brand is seen as a promise of added value and a unique experience that stakeholders, including consumers, may experience for a long period of time [6, 7]. Furthermore, brands that have been successful are able to quickly establish the relationships (emotional and personal) with the consumer. When it is a long-time relationship, then it will generate a brand loyalty [8].

The brand from the definition is the product that adds the other dimensions that distinguish it in some ways from other products designed to meet the same needs. The brand is the essence above the physical and functional product [9].

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[1]American Marketing Association Dictionary. "Brand and branding" definition [Internet]. Available from https://www.ama.org/resources/pages/dictionary.aspx?dLetter=B [Accessed: 2017-04-12].

In recent years, there has been a shift of perception from the product (product focus) to the brand (brand focus). This approach expresses the brand as an image in consumer minds, a personality, and value [10]. In this aspect, the brand should be seen as a multidimensional design that integrates the physical and intangible attributes of the product and is composed of three elements: the brand image (the way which consumer perceive the brand), brand identity (the way the creator of the brand wants the brand being seen), and the brand positioning (brand positioning in the market) [11].

A comprehensive approach to the brand stems from the fact that consumers perceive products by associating the brand with all the attributes experienced by the purchase and the use of the product. Separating the two attributes (associated with the brand and the product) is difficult due to the occurrence of interaction. Brand as a "multi-faced notion" can be considered in the in the concept of Davidson through the branding iceberg (**Figure 1**). In this view, strong brand is a result of business strategy implemented with success. This concept implies the existence of elements of visible and invisible to the consumer or user, which should be analyzed as a point of view during the construction of a competitive advantage. In this aspect, important elements are visible reflecting undertaken by the company decisions regarding marketing and related investment processes and allocation of funds. The items below so-called water level are related to the competencies, assets, and capabilities of the company focused on a specific brand.

Adopted by Davidson, iceberg branding concept varies depending on the products or services offered. For example, external appearance means packaging for consumer products and the
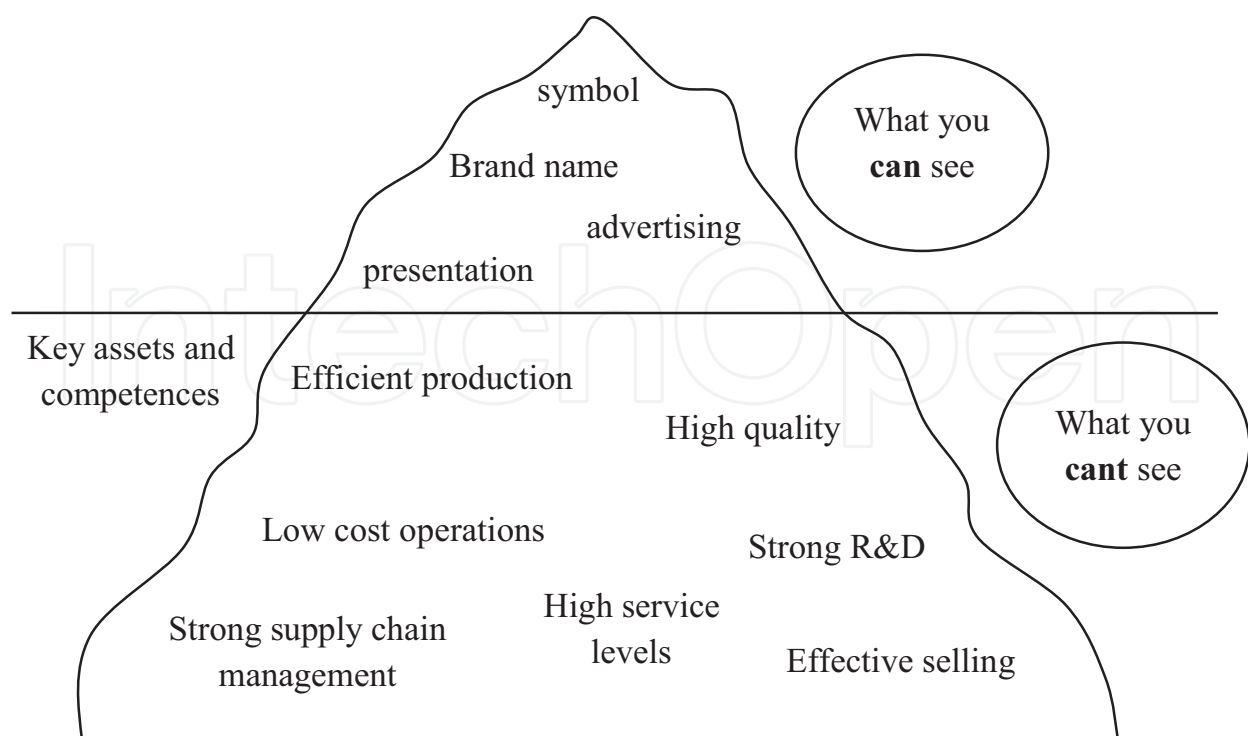


**Figure 1.** The brand iceberg. *Source*: [12].

appearance of the store and trade stands—in the case of retail outlets. This aspect is important depending on the category of food product because of different perceptions of products and packaging and varying degrees of marking. This follows from the nature of services provided in a particular place (usually being seated, owned by the service provider, or rented by him) and time associated with the inability to storage services.

In product and brand placement idea, the Kapferer theory is adopted to point the relationship between product and brand [13]. The product represents the visible attributes, while the brand reflects the guarantee and provides consumers the benefits of its strength. There are different associations related to the brand such as vision; philosophy; the characteristics of typical buyer, like personality; etc. An important issue is the halo effect, which is the main source of value created by the brand (**Figure 2**). It should be regarded as a synergistic effect resulting from the interaction of the visible and invisible features of the product brand value. In this aspect, well-known brand influences the perception of consumers in terms to product attributes, multiplying the effect of receiving the message.

In product and brand placement, the main function of brand is very important. Brand allows the identification of the product, ensuring the attributes that differentiate the brand from the other brands. Brands make the interpretation and information-organizing processes concerning the product easier [14]. The simplification of the decision-making process by the brand can organize a lot of information about a particular product, which simplifies the daily choices [15]. The informational function of the brand is carried out in a direct way (the information is contained in the name and logo of the brand) or indirectly (information based on associations and suggestions relating to benefits) [16]. The other transformational function occurs when
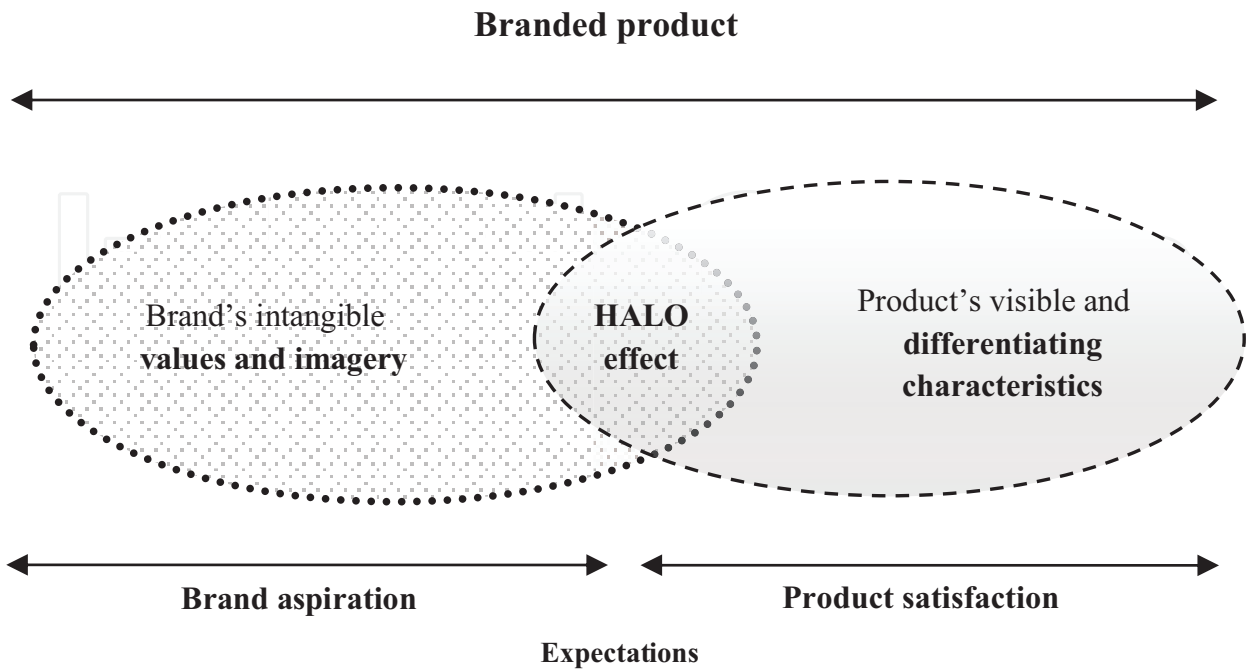
**Branded product**

Brand's intangible values and imagery    HALO effect    Product's visible and **differentiating characteristics**

Brand aspiration    Product satisfaction

**Expectations**

**Figure 2.** The product and the brand. *Source*: [13].

the brand awareness significantly enriches or even transforms experiences related to the consumption while consumer imagination about the brand can be significantly affect the perception of the physical side of the product perceived by consumers to the brand [17].

In product and brand placement, the purpose of brand positioning is to explain how the brand will create a sustainable competitive advantage in the minds of customers in order to gain loyal customers and to ensure revenue and profits.

Brand positioning attempts to capture a place in the mind of the customer with its identity. It means that marketers try to put brands into the specific group of customers or into their minds in a very sophisticated way, to show them product with its differentiators and values. The result of positioning is called image. This is why the primary focus is placed on perceptions, and not on products. One of the definitions about brand positioning says that "product position refers to a brand's objective (functional) attributes in relation to other brands. It is a characteristic of the physical product and its functional features. The perceived image of the brand belongs not to the product but rather is the property of the consumer's mental perceptions and in some instances could differ widely from a brand's true physical characteristics" [18].

From the consumer perspective, symbolic function resulting from the social nature of brand consumption is very important [19]. It allows certain groups to emphasize their personality and find its place in society; it becomes a tool for self-determination and communicates their identity in the social environment. Brand as consumption symbols shows the ability to fill the symbolic and valuable function for the individuals [20–22]. The perception of a brand as a symbol determines the symbolic importance of it, the ability to reflect the emotional side of the consumer's identification with desired reference groups or social status. Construction conditions of symbolic significance of brands are associated with a group of consumers or users of the products offered under the brand, perception of the buying and consumption process of the brand, and the ability to reflect the average buyer of branded products [23].

Brands create some emotional benefits experienced during buying or using the brand [24]. At the same time, the consumption of certain brands is a mean to transfer some values even in the social sense [15]. For the experience entirety of consumer with the brand, it is desirable for coexistence of rational, physical, and emotional benefits [25].

A brand personality is an important element of strong brand, which means that a set of selected human characteristics should be associated with brand [26, 27]. Brand is an important part of the process of communicating the company with the market. It communicates to consumer, shareholders, communities, and the world the values that present a product or company [28]. The growing importance of the brand steams from growing information and product competition [29]. In this aspect, the brand is encoded in the form of sign communication to recipients of marketing activities of the company. A company is a broadcaster deciding on the assignment of the brand and the recipient—a potential or actual buyer [30]. This process should be considered also as a broader market communication, and the brand plays an important role in this bilateral process [31].

For enterprises, brand name and what the brand represents are the most important assets: the basis for a competitive advantage and the current and future profits [32]. This facilitates access to distribution channels, entering into a new product category and market segmentation [33–37]. This is done also due to a loyal consumers group and legal protection of the unique features of the product [37–40]. At the same time, strong brands contribute to create company's image and facilitate the introduction of a new product [37].

The competitive advantage of companies with high brand equity includes the ability to expand, flexibility in connection with promotional activities of competitors, and the creation of barriers to competitive inputs [41]. Competitiveness in the globalization era should be treated as a categorical imperative in the existence of enterprises [42]. In this aspect, one can speak about the strategies of competition: the cost leader, the diversification of the offer in relation to their competitors, and concentration [43]. Strong brand as a cost leader means reduction of promotion costs, an increase in bargaining power in the distribution channels, and the use of the strategy of strengthening its brand. The purchaser in relation to a strong brand accumulates a considerable amount of information, so that the product stands out and creates a picture of the uniqueness of the brand, which affects consumer confidence, reparability purchases, and building consumer loyalty to the brand. Concentration indicates distinction and better satisfying the needs of target segment [44].

The importance of brand placement must be analyzed due to brand equity. Brand placement is based on perceiving the brand in the context of its equity, backed by appropriate branding strategies.

One of the first definitions of brand equity was proposed by Farquhar, pointing out that brand equity is "an added value that the brand gives the product." This definition was the basis for subsequent inquiries and definitions [45, 46]. Many researchers have made definitions consistent with Farquhar one [47]. For example, it was mentioned that brand equity is an attitude toward a branded product and added value that reflects that attitude [1, 48, 49].

In the course of reflection, two groups of brand equity definitions were clarified: the financial perspective and the emphasis on business value, and the consumer perspective, which defines brand equity as a value for the consumer [50–52].

Aaker who opened an important group of theoretical considerations defines brand equity as "a set of brand assets and obligations, it's name and symbol that adds or subtracts a value from a product or service delivered to a business or consumer", in other words "which determines the value of a product or service marked by brand for the buyer" [53, 54]. The foundation for the definition of Aaker, one of the most famous in the field of marketing, puts Holbrook, pointing out that brand equity is created in the minds of consumer through a diverse set of presumptions and brand views [55].

An important contribution to the development of the brand equity theory was given by Keller that defines brand equity as "branding marketing effects" [9]. The assumptions for this definition concern situation, when certain results were achieved through marketing activities associated with branded product or service and did not occur when the same product or service was not branded. Author also pointed out that brand equity represents a varied effect

of brand awareness on the consumer's response to brand marketing [56]. It reflects the consumer's response to concrete brand marketing efforts compared to the response about marketing of fiction product or unnamed version of product or service. It introduced the notion of consumer brand equity (consumer-based brand equity) to label that occurs when a consumer knows the brand well and has positive, strong, and unique associations with the brand in his mind. These associations are referred to as primary, which contains brand and attitude views reflecting the perceived benefits to the brand.

In this aspect of consumer brand equity, consideration should be given to branding and product placement.

From the company point of view, the importance of the brand should be analyzed also in relation to the creation of competitive advantage. Urbanek proposed three-element model to create a competitive advantage based on brand differentiation, leadership cost, and concentration (**Figure 3**) [57]. The first type relates to the competitive advantage of leadership cost, reflecting lower cost in relation to the primary activities, and supporting the value chains. The search for cost advantages among the primary measures concern of the internal and external
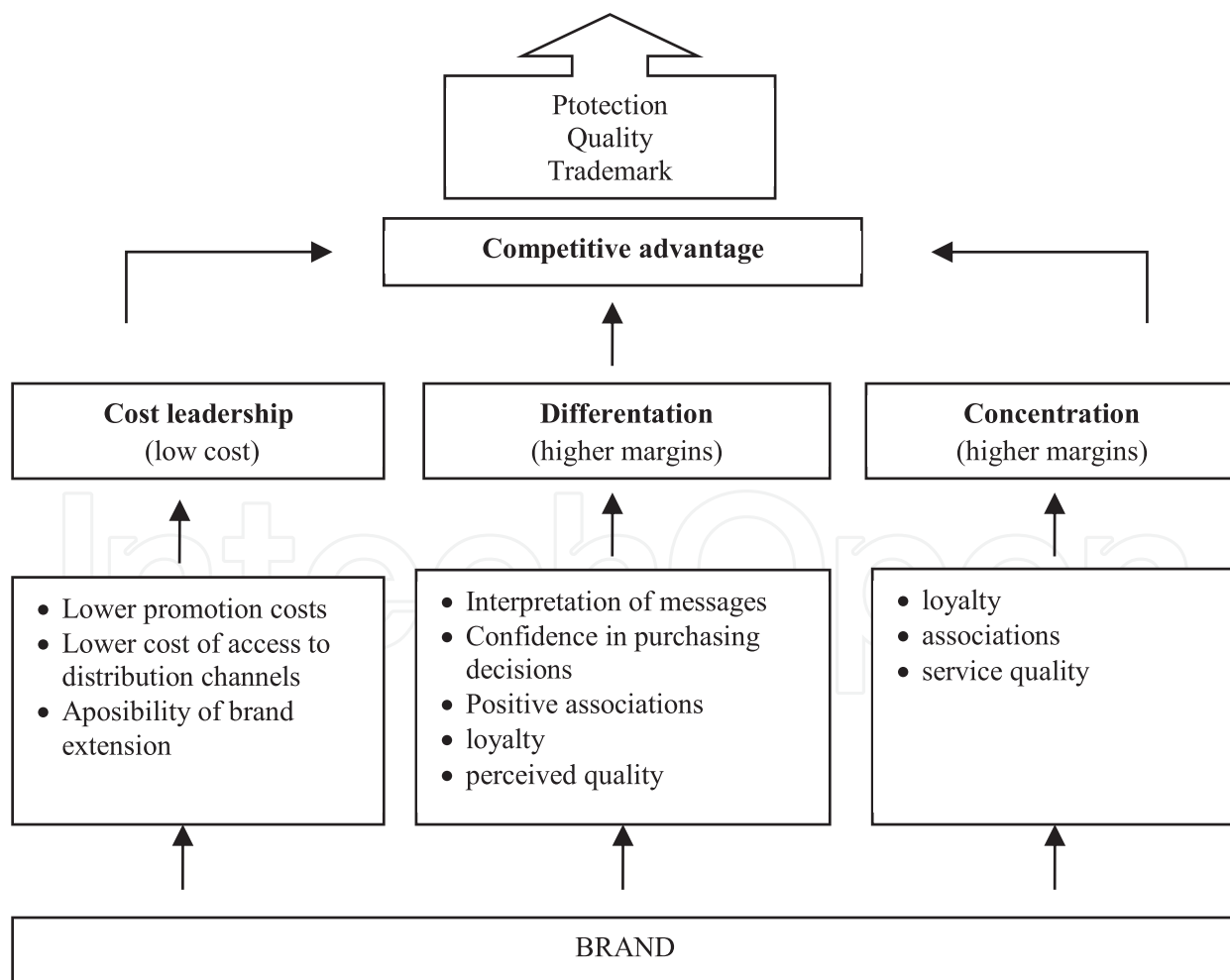


**Figure 3.** Participation of the brand in the creation of competitive advantage. *Source*: [57].

logistics, individual operations, marketing, sales, and service and within supporting activities: shopping, technology, human resources management, and company infrastructure. The second type of competitive advantage concerns the diversification treated as a way to gain a competitive success in relation to create a product which offers consumer more value. This takes place through innovative processes, ensuring better product characteristics, service, and support to customers and increased frequency of deliveries, or just in time, choosing the right distribution channels and product positioning in the context of brands. The third way of creating a competitive advantage refers to the concentration of activity in a specific market segment. This allows to better service segmentation and adaptation the products to their needs. Also determines consumer's loyalty toward brands.

Brand as a key success factor in the company can be analyzed in terms of revenues, profits, added value, and market shares [58]. A strong brand influences consumer behavior and consumer decision-making process, thus determining the reception of marketing activity [59].

Packaging is a part of the marketing activities in the field of brand building. Placing complete information on the package including logo and the manufacturer name increases the confidence in the producer and may be an important driving factor to make the repurchase. The attractiveness of the packaging also affects the assessment of the perceived quality of the product and brand. Consumers convey the impressions package made to assess the quality of a product [60].

Brand influences companies' decisions regarding prices. This stems from the perception of the price from the consumers' point of view through the prism of a quality and value of a product [61]. Consumers differ in terms of price they want to pay a brand relative to competing brands and the reaction to increase or decrease prices. Empirical research confirms that brand leaders gain higher price differences [62–64].

The main task of brand positioning is to find a key to the customer's mind, which is full of different brand names and slogans, and stay there for a longer period of time. One of the sectors that intensively used positioning is food market. Positioning strategies become more important among all others for manufacturers in the food market. Their goal is the correct positioning of a product designated by the brand in the market space [65]. This applies to determine the reference group, choosing the method of informing consumers about the brand, its strengths, and finally its benefits. There are range of brand positioning strategies in literature which include:

- positioning because of the consumer—directing the brand using selection of the appropriate elements of the product for well-defined target group;

- position because of the brand attributes—is based on a particular attribute emphasizing the brand;

- positioning based on consumer benefits—related to certain benefits which are rational reflection characteristics of the product;

- intangible positioning—associated with the reference to quality, leadership, and healthiness;

- positioning based on the use of the brand—the identification of new brand applications;

- positioning based on the relation price to quality—associated with several price levels;

- positioning because of the relation class to a category of the product;

- positioning in relation to well-known personalities/celebrities;

- positioning because of the country of origin [66].

Frequently used strategies of brand positioning in the food market are positioning because of the consumer, brand attributes, benefits for the consumer, and the price to quality relationship. Positioning that used brand attributes and highlights the benefits for consumers' innovative, functional, and newly introduced products to the market. This also applies to products and brands with long market exposure. Positioning strategy connected with price-quality relates to products of the premium or super-premium category and the economic ones. The use of the relation price to quality in premium category can be found in the coffee category. The factor that increases the efficiency of transmission in the brand positioning using the image of a celebrity  is a person. A celebrity is presented with the name but also with a specific identity and way of being. The transmission of advertising is used for transfer of image, which means that certain values of the name are transferred on the product, service, and brand. This strategy was used on the Polish market of food products from the second half of the 1990s.

An interesting strategy of brand positioning in the food market is positioning due to the use of the product in particular in the context of the search for new ways of its use. Often in such cases, the educational and promotional campaigns are conducted.

## 3. Product placement as one of the unconventional promotional tools

What does traditional brand promotion mean nowadays? Why does an ordinary advertising do not work? Consumer today is more conscious and demanding; that is why conventional way of product brand promotion is not enough. Nowadays, marketers try to reach for unconventional marketing tools. To such kind forms of marketing communication include:

- Ambient media (advertising, marketing)—alternative and innovative solutions in the public space and generate consumer astonishment by engaging them.

- Guerilla marketing—unconventional, most often controversial actions connecting different media based on low cost, prepared specially for a specific client, and are implemented in the short term, often on the edge of the law.

- Word-of-mouth marketing—marketing activities aiming to get messages across the consumers via direct "spontaneous" verbal communication; the phenomenon of rumors is being used in this kind of marketing for spreading the information in the specific target group.

- Buzz marketing—global madness, euphoria, and hysteria, encompassing informal discussion about the particular product, service, and company as well as giving people a reason to talk about the brand, goods and services, and the possibility of the establishment of this conversation.

- Viral marketing—encouraging clients to provide marketing content to others, which causes a geometric increase the number of recipients.

- Tryvertising—incorporation of goods or services in the daily lives of consumers in so natural manner that his subsequent purchasing decisions are based not only on advertising messages but also above all on their own experience.

- Product placement (blended promotion)—placement in films, theater performances, radio and television programs, and other communication media of a brand, product, or situation that presents a certain pattern of behavior, which is promoted by the sponsor.

- Ambush marketing—marketing strategy involving the promotion of private label during major sport events without charging a license fee to the event organizer; for this reason, it is frequently on the edge of the law.

- Unconventional measures at the sales point, which include scent marketing, audio marketing, visual merchandising, and unconventional indoor advertising.

- Unconventional advertising forms on the Internet—screensavers, desktop marketing, and podcasting.

- Mobile marketing—marketing activities conducted with the use of mobile devices that consumers are used to and most often takes the form of mobile message or mms but also a permission communication.

- Advertorial—a form of press advertising such as editorial, like a sponsored or promotional article.

- Infomercials—are the equivalent of sponsored articles on television, like a paid advertisement [67].

Unconventional and new forms of promotion are different from traditional, primarily in an innovative and unusual character, which increases the chances of drawing attention as well as a greater emotional involvement of the viewer. These tools form a new solution to fastly and more effectively to reach the consumer.

### 3.1. Product and brand placement: definition

One of the customs and rapidly growing forms of promotion is product placement. This is a relatively new form of promotion, especially on the European market. There are lot of definitions of a given phenomenon. Commonly the term "product placement" began to be used in the early 1980s. First, it was used to the practice of placing products in movies and then in the scientific community [68]. **Table 1** shows some of them.

In literature, one can find product placement under other conceptions like brand placement, tie-in placement, or plug-in placement. There are several forms of product placement depending on which emphasis is placed:

- Generic placement attempts to draw attention of the viewer on the product, ignoring informations about brand and manufacturer.

- Utility placement in this case, is the demonstration of the possibility of using the product.

- Brand placement includes the demonstration of the product and information about the brand and producer.

- Corporate placement—the company name (like a neon sign or advertisement on the street) appears during the transmission.

- Organization placement—the promotion object is mentioned by the name of organization or institution [76].

| Author (year) | Definition |
|---|---|
| S.K. Balasubramanian (1994) | Paid information about the brand product in a movie or TV show, the aim of which is the impact on the cinema (television) audience in a planned unobtrusive manner |
| S.M. Vollmers (1995) | Paid product placement is a planned incorporation of a branded product or service (brand, logo, packaging, mark, or brand advertising) in entertainment mass communication in exchange for money or bilateral promotional exposure. Unpaid product placement is a planned incorporation of a branded product or service in the entertainment mass communication in order to add realism or to provide the information about the character or situation |
| J.A. Karrh (1997) | The inclusion on the principles of payment branded products or brand identifiers, by means of audio and visual programs of the mass media |
| A. d'Astous, N. Seguin (1999) | The incorporation of the brand or company in to the movie or TV show for promotional purposes and by different means |
| E. Nowińska (2001) | Conscious placement in certain transfers for a fee strictly selected props to induce advertising effect |
| A. Czarnecki (2003) | The method of promotion by placing on the commercial basis in the movie, play, or television or any other audiovisual or printed mass media a product or situation that presents a certain pattern of behavior |
| Directive of European Parliament and Council 2010/13/EU of 10 March 2010 | Any form of audiovisual commercial communication consisting of the inclusion of or reference to a product, a service, or the trademark thereof so that it is featured within a program, *in return for payment* or for similar consideration |

*Source*: own study based on a literature query [69–75].

**Table 1.** Selected list of definitions of product placement.
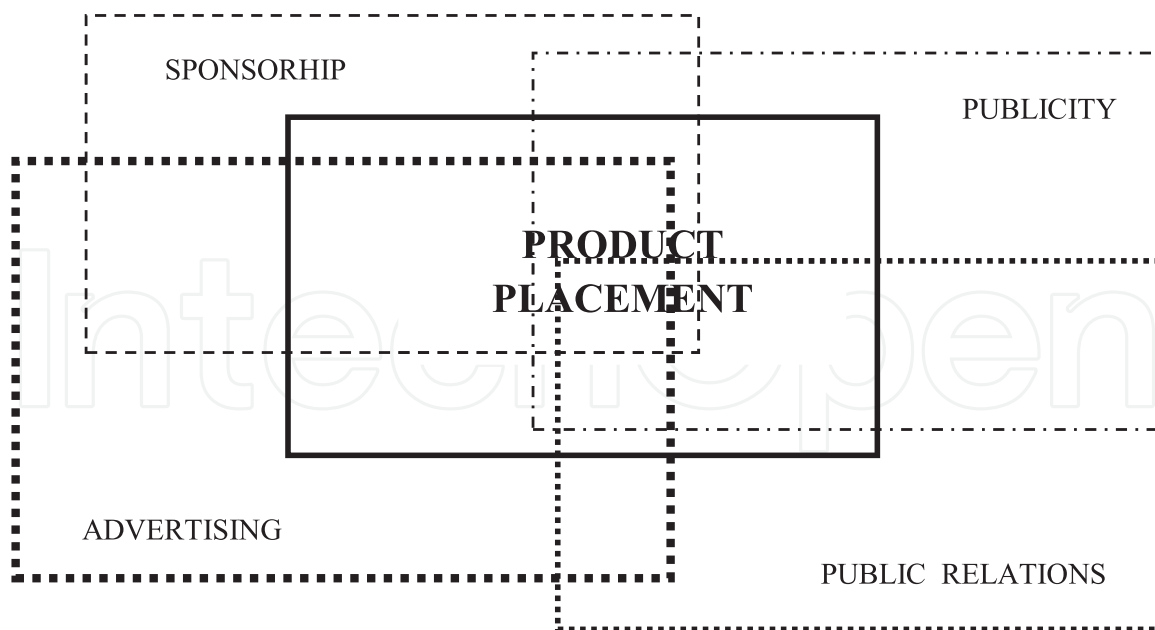
**Figure 4.** Product placement as a mixed form of promotion. *Source*: [78].

Selected types of these forms have different impacts on the effectiveness of the recipient. The product, which is directly exposed, observes approx. 30% viewers; if the product is used by the actor, observation increases to more than 50%, and if the main character is using the product, visibility increases to 80%. If there is a verbal mention of the product, approx. 60% of recipients will notice it [77].

Product placement as a process combines several elements of promotion like sponsorship, advertising, public relations, and publicity (**Figure 4**). Frequently, it is difficult to set clear boundaries between the product placement and publicity or sponsorship. According to Choliński, a product placement should be considered as brand or product appeared in the programs according to the predetermined script (such as movies, TV serials, video games, plays, paintings, sculptures, etc.). Live stream advertising is just a sponsorship, and brands appearing in live programs should be treated like publicity but not a product placement [79].

### 3.2. Advantages and disadvantages of product placement

Although, the product placement is an effective tool of marketing communication, it is not without drawbacks. However, numerous advantages which affect the effectiveness of product placement cause that these negative elements become less visible. Summary of positive and negative aspects of product placement presented below.

The most important advantages are:

- An alternative to the traditional forms of advertising—product placement in contrast to television communication does not affect the interruption of the broadcast. The advertising blocks cause viewers annoyance.

- Credibility of the message—brands presented in film or TV series introduce an atmosphere of authenticity. The recipient, seeing on the screen the products that they know from the real world, is gaining confidence in the presented content.

- Ennoblement of the product—brand in the audiovisual transmission occurs in the company of celebrities who are using them. According to the viewer, they are attractive, so they become an object of desire.

- Low cost and high efficiency—the cost of placing the product is much lower than the one the advertiser incurs in the case of television advertising. Often companies have the possibility of placing the brand in exchange for providing props for the film, which is a minimal cost to them.

- Unlimited range—product placement in film provides a viability of reaching out to a wider audience, because the film can be seen in any place of the world. It is an attractive offer for companies operating globally, because they have a chance to get to an international customer base.

- The ability to promote products prohibited in classic advertising—product placement creates a space where producers can present their goods prohibited by law in the advertising. These include such product as an alcohol and tobacco products. Movies are extremely attractive for manufacturers of such kind of products, because in the classic promotion way, they have fewer opportunities than, for example, food.

- Unlimited access—each audiovisual work appears in several mass media; in the case of films, the first is movie theater, then the Internet, DVD, and television. The viewer therefore has unlimited access to the image, and thus located product can be seen many times.

Among the drawbacks of this promotion tool may be mentioned:

- Unpredictable number of customers—it is difficult for manufacturers to predict whether the film or any other works will succeed or not. Careful selection of the cast and a good idea for a film script do not guarantee a success. It may happen that using of brand placement will incur costs, but the investment will not return.

- Bad placement—the receipt of product placement depends on the scriptwriters who bring a brand to the film. If done ineptly, the manufacturers and sponsors of the video project may expose the negative reviews from the audience. In the era of the Internet, bad opinion spreads very quickly. For example, let us take a car as a product for placement. Let us put the car into scenes where in the first one after a large crash, the car will still look like after small collision in the consumer's mind; this car brand will look like a product of a high quality. Let us take another scene with the same car crashing but where the car after all will look like a pile of metal; the car brand can be received having low quality and not worth of trust.

- Keep ahead of the time—the introduction of product placement takes place on the stage of the scenario in the case of feature films which may even be a few years before filming. At this time, product can change the visual identification and some external characteristics (logo, package, etc.) so the image of this product will be out of date.

- Limited opportunity for differentiation of communication—the situation applies to brands operating globally. Sometimes a product comes in different countries under a different name or not present at all, which is some kind of limitation that does not allow to fully exploit the potential of this kind of promotion tool. Ignorance of the placement brand leads to uselessness of product placement as a tool for marketing communication.

- Low sales effect—product placement carries out the functions of branding. Therefore, this tool requires a support of other forms of promotion that will make the consumer decide to purchase.

- Lack of control over the life of product in the film—once located the product is located in the film forever. It may happen that the product will be withdrawn or start to be positioned in a different way, thus making its presence in the film out of date.

### 3.3. The effectiveness of product placement

One of the main issues concerning product placement is to investigate its effectiveness. Russell and Belch created a model for assessing the impact of product placement (**Figure 5**). According to this model, assessing the value of product placement should take into account three variables: characteristics of the placement, characteristics of the context, and characteristics of the recipient. In addition, there are two types of placement: single placement and integrated placement. Types of placement can also be mixed with each other [80].

The research carried out so far regarding the product and brand placement showed a positive relationship between placement exposing and memory variables such as reminder and recognition. Significant differences between explicit and concealed placement are also found [81]. In concealed placement, only attributes such as appearance of the product without enhanced integration and convergence of high plot or content are used [82].

### 3.4. Product and brand placement: movie

The main carriers for product placement are mass media and entertainment such as movies, serials, TV shows, video games, books, or theater [83]. The modern consumer of the entertainment mass media in everyday life rarely focuses all its attention on the content transmitted in the mass media [84]. Some studies suggest that more than 50% of consumers while watching TV also perform other tasks [85]. The source of destruction can be cooking, babysitting, phone call, and multitasking with other mass media such as an electronic book or some smart devices [86].

This powerful marketing tool takes beginnings of filmmaking in the 1890s. The forerunners of product placement were such manufacturers as Admiral Cigarettes, Pabst's Milwaukee Beer, and Nestle in the early 1900s. Of course, product placement in those days differs the current one but still represents the first steps in the mass film production [87]. A good example of brand placement was a movie "She wanted a Ford" created in 1916. A brand placement is not just a commercial of a product. It is a subtle way to integrate brand with the plot. While movies and TV shows are at the forefront of using placement techniques, the practice gains its popularity in the other media such as radio, music, books, or video games. There can be a lot of factors that stimulate the growth of popularity of brand placement—Internet growth, appearance of new

| Variables for Placement Value Assessment | Role in Marketing/ Communications Mix | Measures of Effectiveness |
|---|---|---|
| Placement Characteristics:<br>• Amount of time on screen<br>• Size and visibility (foreground or background)<br>• Modality of presentation (visual versus audio)<br>• Level of plot connection:<br>  – Interaction between product and actors<br>  – Product usage by character/star<br>  – Implied or direct endorsement<br>• Creative quality | Stand Alone Placement:<br><br>• Brand exposure<br><br>• Source association<br><br>• Branding/brand image<br><br>• Stimulating interest<br><br>• Bypassing regulations | Stand Alone Placement:<br>• Memory (explicit or implicit)<br>• Perception of fit<br>• Attitude toward brand |
| Context Characteristics:<br>• Competitive images on screen<br>• Distraction/lack of distraction factors<br>• Match with entertainment image | Integrated Placement:<br><br>• Publicity<br><br>• Public Relations<br><br>• (Internal or External)<br><br>• Cross-Promotions<br><br>• Sales Promotions<br><br>• Interactive Television<br><br>• New-Product Launch | Integrated Placement:<br>• Publicity generated<br>• Standard PR measures (internal and external)<br>• Positioning studies<br>• Sales<br>• Promotion redemption<br>• Trial measures<br>• Number of consumers who purchased or showed interest (on internet or at point of purchase)<br>• Tracking studies (internal and external) |
| Audience Characteristics:<br>• Demographic profile of the viewing audience<br>• Audience size (potential exposures)<br>• Rating for exact minute of placement occurrence<br>• Audience size based on syndication and reruns<br>• Media equivalencies<br>• CPM<br>• Sponsorship equivalencies | | |

**Figure 5.** Model assessing the impact of product placement. *Source*: [80].

media like video games, or demission of traditional media like newspapers [88]. The process of product and brand placement was participated basically by three groups of interest: client, studios, and agencies [80].

Brand placement is gaining its popularity. On one hand, this tool is less expensive than a 30-s TV spot, and sometimes even more effective and on the other hand provides an access to the wide audience [89]. Nielsen Media Research published a study showing that 58% of viewers recognized a brand when viewing a product placement in combination with commercial, while

47% of viewers recognized a brand exposed only to commercial. Of course, this study does not show an overall view of the impact of brand placement that brand awareness increases with product placement [90]. But the fact that a brand appears every 3 min in primetime television shows and media forecasting data suggests a yearly increase above 10% of the  8 US$ billion spent in global scale on movie and television product brand placement (for 2012–2016) [83, 91]. Research showed that brand placement can be a good alternative to a traditional advertising especially when consumers nowadays try to avoid commercials. But the program image played an important role in the changes in brand image [92]. However, there are some objections to the brand placement because not every brand is suited for placement in all contexts. If the brand does not fit to the story or plot, the placement can actually be detrimental.

### 3.5. Product and brand placement: printed publications

Research conducted in 2015 shows that consumer preferences can be created partly under the influence of brand placement in the text. Brands, located in fictional stories, were assessed in summary as more reliable, and the consumer was willing to buy them rather than the brand, which was not listed in the text. Moreover, the test results show not only the fact that the brand located in text is seen as more desirable, but also after a certain time (1 week), the effect of brand placement was still noticeable in consumer behavior, which means that consumers still have in mind placement products [93].

Bookstore shelves are filling up with different novels. They encourage customers not only with colorful and fancy cover but also interesting storyline. Each of the stories has its own main plot, but one common element increasingly appears—product placement. **Table 2** shows selected examples of product and brand placement in the text.

Product placement nowadays includes not only as fiction for children and adults but also as school textbooks. In France, children can learn the techniques of brushing teeth with the images of the Colgate materials. The school materials sponsored by Revlon can teach children about "good and bad hair days." Nike sponsored school kits, which show that the shoes of that company are manufactured responsibly in accordance to environmental protection. On the other hand, KFC co-branded with Hasbro produced educational materials about "how the body works." The aim of this campaign was to promote KFC's November new, improved meals to take away, as well as increasing brand awareness with the game "Operations" sponsored by Hasbro [94].

At present, consumer seeing shoes, cars, cell phones, and other products of specific brands in TV shows or serials is not surprised and even is convinced that such kind of advertising has been paid by the corporation that wants to promote its own brand. But product placement in the printed press, especially in books, is relatively new and rare way of promotion. Multiple positioning of the brand in the text can be an effective marketing technique that allows consumers to familiar with the brand placed in text and then become a brand preferred by consumers from other brands' selected product category. Changing preferences may be aware of the phenomenon carried out by the consumer or the consumer may be unaware that his preferences have been changed and subconsciously can choose brand pieced in text [93].

| Title | Author (year) | Quote contain product/brand placement |
|---|---|---|
| "99 francs" | Frederic Beigbeder (2000) | "…My name is Octave and I'm dressed from top of my head to foot in Tom Ford. I'm an advertising executive…" |
| "American psycho" | Bret Easton Ellis (1991) | "…his Versace tie ready to face whoever. Courtney opens the door and she's wearing a Krizia cream silk blouse, a Krizia rust tweed skirt and silk-satin d'Orsay pumps from Manolo Blahnik. I shiver and hand her my black wool Giorgio Armani overcoat…" |
| "50 Shades of Grey" | E.L. James (2011) | "Fortunately Kate's lent me her sporty Mercedes CLK. I'm not sure Wanda, my old VW Beetle, would make the journey in time. Oh, the Merc is fun drive, and the miles slip away as I floor the pedal to the metal…" |
| "The Oreo Cookie Counting Book" | Catherine Lukas (2000) | "Children will love to count down as ten little OREOs are dunked, nibbled, and stacked one by one…until there are none!." |
| "The Nanny Diaries" | Emma McLaughlin (2003) | "Max pulls an Estee Lauder Brazen Berry lip gloss from her bag and tosses it to Bridget. The gold cap says glamor and sophistication." |

*Source*: own study based on literature query.

**Table 2.** Selected examples of product and brand placement in text.

Comics are one of the best kinds of printed media for product placement. There is a possibility of visual characterization of the brand here. This kind of promotion is characterized by the originality and ability to refer to a particular segment of customers.

### 3.6. Product and brand placement: video games

Progressiveness of mass media expands its scope for marketing activities not only for television or books but also video games. For example, Americans spend more time playing video games than watching television [95]. This trend is especially noticeable among children, which means that 88% American's children from 8 to 18 years play video games 13.2 h/week, and spent 10.5 h/week on watching television. This fact became a new challenge for companies in the conduct of marketing campaigns [96]. This kind of placement is relatively new; that is why in literature review, one can find just a few academic researches. Nevertheless, it is an area that researchers are interested in, which may indicate that product placement in video games can be an effective marketing tool for corporations, bringing the expected results especially

among the youngest. Video games attract marketers its possibility of product or brand placement in animated interactive imagery in the imaginary scenery. Research conducted in 2010 shows that interactive brand placement has a positive effect on mind awareness, brand image, and behavioral intention, which means that brand placement in virtual game can influence the process of information assimilation. That is why interactive brand placement influences especially children and hence improves sales [97]. **Figure 6** shows the main factors encouraging the placement of brands in digital games.
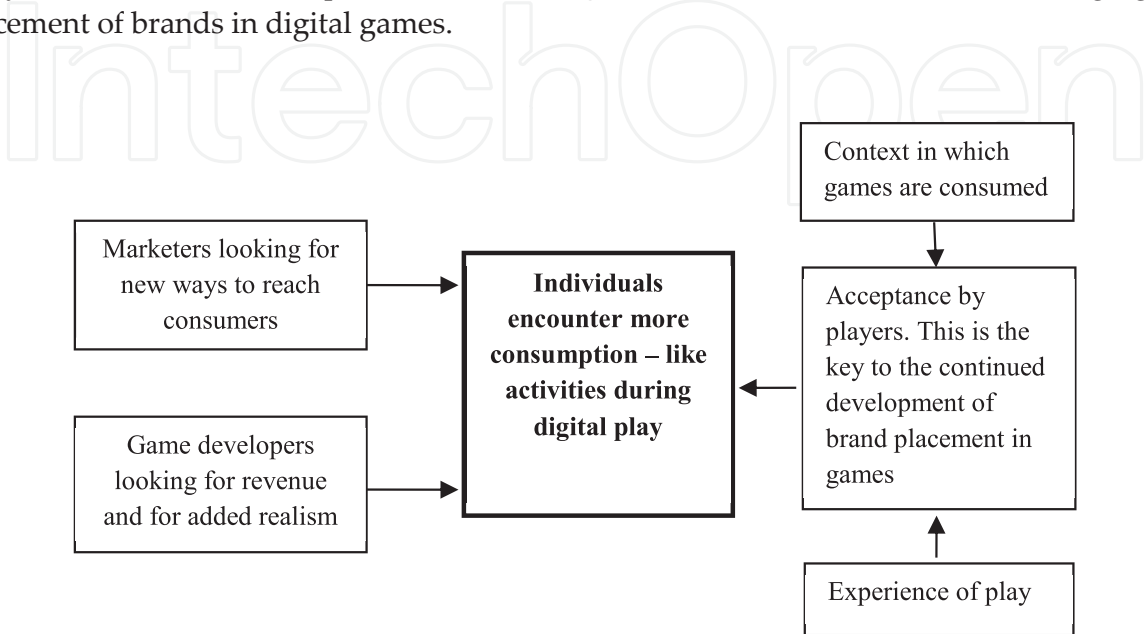


**Figure 6.** Factors encouraging the placement of brands in digital games. *Source*: [98].

## 4. Conclusion

The increased competition about quality and price forces the company to take planned actions, ensuring their distinction and originality of the offering services. A tool for achieving a competitive advantage is the brand, reflecting on one hand the essence of the business and focusing on associations around the name and logo and on the other hand representing the axis of activities within marketing communications.

Functioning of the business is associated with making appropriate strategic decisions in terms of brand positioning associated with custom tools, such as product and brand placement. This is a consequence of the differentiation of the product offer as a result of the needs of consumers in terms of quantity, requirements, and preferences of consumers.

Product and brand placement refers to both the visible and invisible parts of the brand, referring to the social nature of the consumption of products with a well-known brand. Brand positioning uses the product and brand placement in movies, entertainment programs, and books and other printed materials and video games. The growing popularity of this tool is the result of its efficiency on the one hand and on the other a consequence of the intensification competitive activities and the desire to ensure the proper brand's market position.

In summary, the product and brand placement will thrive in the described media while introducing new media guarantee reaching to wider group of consumers. That is why, it is so important to understand how the system of product placement works. In the near future, some research actions will be taken which will help to understand the mechanism of brand placement and how it works from the inside. Knowledge is very important not only for researchers but also for marketers and consumers, because on the one hand marketers can use it for successful selling process, and on the other hand, it will be possible for consumers to control the amount and frequency of advertisements.

## Author details

Hanna Górska-Warsewicz* and Olena Kulykovets

*Address all correspondence to: hanna_gorska_warsewicz@sggw.pl

Faculty of Human Nutrition and Consumer Sciences, Warsaw University of Life Sciences—SGGW, Warsaw, Poland

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