

Project in Lieu of Thesis

# Creating Prime-Time Product Placements

*NBC's Parks and Recreation, Parenthood, and Community*

*The use of product placement has grown considerably over the past few decades. This paper explores the evolution of the product placement industry in the United States. Past research is reviewed in an effort to aid in the assessment of possible placement opportunities for three prime-time NBC comedic programs, Community, Parenthood, and Parks and Recreation. Introducing the brands early in the programs and continuously showing the products throughout enhances the chance of the audience remembering the placements. For a greater understanding of what is already occurring on NBC in terms of placements, several additional programs were examined, each having been on the air for several seasons. These shows included: 30 Rock, The Office, and Chuck.*

**"If you notice it, it's bad. But if you don't notice, it's worthless" (Ephron, 2003).**

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Which popular restaurant chain sponsors NBC's program *Chuck*? What well-known soda brand has the *American Idol* judges sipping from their cups? And which restaurant chain benefitted from a challenge on the program *Top Chef*? Today, audiences could probably answer these questions more accurately than if asked to list the products squeezed into the commercial breaks of CBS's *The Mentalist* or ABC's *Grey's Anatomy*. This research seeks to record the use of product placements in prime-time television in order to document current practices, as well as to recommend future product placement opportunities for programmers and advertisers.

Advertisers have a long history of creating images that flatter their products (Galacian & Bourdeau, 2004). Every part of a television advertisement is meant to promote the product being sold. Product placement is one of the oldest forms of advertising and is receiving quite a bit of attention from not only media executives, but from audiences (Russell & Belch, 2005). For instance, the NBC program *Heroes* has been a program well known for product placements recently. One episode sets the stage for the product Guitar Hero in a rather descriptive way. There are crowds of college age students socializing and bonding, all crammed into rather small yet exciting quarters. At the forefront, the main character Claire and her newly introduced roommate discover the joys of Guitar Hero. A typical college experience is showcased to millions, prominently featuring the product at hand (NBC, 2009).

Having been present in the motion picture industry for decades (Turcotte, 1995), the practice of product placement is becoming more and more frequent in video games, music videos, songs and books (Chang, 2003; Karrh, 1998A; Shanahan, 2001). Product placement is common on the big screen, and has begun to make waves on the small screen (BusinessWorld, 2008). Today, the product placement industry is booming (Galacian, 2004C; Karrh, 1998A; Karrh, McKee, & Pardun, 2003; McKechnie & Zhou, 2003; Mortimer, 2002; Stanley, 2010; Turcotte, 1995).

In a day when programs are being prerecorded and commercials are being skipped (Lehu, 2007) advertisers have had to adapt to an ever changing market with oversaturation in conventional advertising space (BusinessWorld, 2008). Product placement has several advantages to traditional television advertising. The primary advantage is that an audience cannot easily evade exposure to placements.

An increase of placements can be tied to the likely associated increase in sales of the product being featured. This is particularly prominent in sitcoms, a type of program that supports product placement easily across various product categories. For instance, the apparel category found success in the program *Ally McBeal*. Nick & Nora night clothes experienced a 35% increase in the sales between 1995 and 1998 when the main character Ally utilized them on the show (Carter, 2000; Stanley, 1998).

Product placement allows for advertisers to strategically place their product or brand in a program or movie. With product placement, the advertised items can appear as part of the storyline (Campbell, Martin & Fabos, 2010) or as a prop. One of the most notable movie scenes took place in *E.T.: The Extra Terrestrial* (Reed, 1989; Buss, 1998). A young boy uses a bag of Reese's Pieces to lure E.T. out of hiding. The camera shot follows him as he tosses the candy onto the ground for more than a minute (Lehu, 2007). After this placement, the new candy was introduced to the market with an eager audience awaiting its arrival.

*"The father of modern product placement was a wrinkled alien...tempted out of hiding with a pack of little-known American sweets called Reese's Pieces."*

(Mortimer, 2002, pg. 22)

With this successful introduction, other marketers noticed the advantages of linking brands to popular content (Galacian, 2004B; Lehu, 2007; Reed, 1989; Russell, 1998, 2002). Striving for

similar benefits allowed for the presentation of prominent roles for branded products in movies (D'Orio, 1999), cable and broadcast programs (Fitzgerald, 2002; Vagnoni, 2001), music (*Macleans*, 2005), books (Nelson, 2004), video games (Nelson, Keum, & Yaros, 2004), and live shows (Elliott, 2005; Matthews, 2005).

Sometimes marketers pay to have their products incorporated into a program in the form of a sponsorship, for instance the Subway sponsorship and NBC's *Chuck*. Despite being one of the first series to be renewed for the 2008–2009 NBC television season, *Chuck* was considered to be standing on the thin line between renewal and cancellation. Avid viewers of the program heard of the possible cancellation and launched a "Save Chuck" campaign (TV Guide, 2009). One fan, inspired by one of the program's product placements, organized a promotion to buy Subway sandwiches on the day of the second season finale. This campaign along with other efforts proved to be successful. The show was renewed with a major sponsorship deal between NBC and Subway as a way to help cover costs of the program's third season.

Other times the products are given or loaned to programs in hopes of brand exposure. An important consideration to keep in mind is how the product is integrated into a program. Sometimes the brand might appear in the background subtly, other times it will pop right out of the forefront of the screen. How a product or brand is presented to the audience can vary. This research hopes to take note of the frequency of product placements and the ways in which placements are implemented. Possible placement opportunities for some newer NBC comedies will be recommended using both past literature and current examples of prime-time product placement.

With an ever-changing media environment, advertisers and producers need to be well versed in their placement options, including tactics for effectiveness and preferred modalities. Although the primary concern for producers is likely to be the price of the placement, it is beneficial

to understand possible techniques for including such placements into the content. Understanding the research that supports the practice of product placement is the first step in ensuring the most out of each placement opportunity. The next step is to identify what is currently being done within television programs, in an effort to improve upon current trends. This study goes beyond acknowledging past research and current trends by formulating recommendations for possible opportunities for programs recently added to NBC's prime-time line-up.



## LITERATURE REVIEW

In the early 1930s, product manufacturers began spending their money on the creation of radio programs that were aimed at their target demographics. One of the main genres known for this was soap operas. The term “soap opera” actually came from the intermingling of the program and soap products being advertised (Lavin, 1995). When such programs were moved to television, the close relationship between advertisements and programming remained strong (Head & Sterling, 1982; Rothenberg, 1999; Sterling & Kittross, 1990). Typically, the names of brands were featured in the title of the shows, e.g. the Texaco Star Theatre. At this time in history brands were seldom placed outside of the title and program commercial breaks.

The Federal Communication Commission disallowed product placements within content throughout the 1940 and 1950s. Standards were also implemented by the networks preventing in-program placements in the 1960 modification of the Communication Act (Balasubramanian, 1994). Thus, there was a rather inactive period of product placement during the 1940s and 1950s, but a revival of the practice surfaced by the late 1960s (Balasubramanian, 1994; Brett, 1995; Segrave, 2004). By the 1980s, the standards were mitigated (Avery & Ferraro, 2000; Sheenhan & Guo, 2005), and the number of placements greatly increased (Galacian 2004C; Karrh, et al., 2003). When advertisers realized that they could spread their advertisements across a number of programs instead of devoting their entire budget to one show, program sponsorship declined. This non-sponsorship way of advertising would allow them to reach more audiences (Savan, 1996).

With an escalation of advertising costs and what seems like an endless amount of clutter on television, along with innovative technological advances, the last decade has given more and more control over to the consumer. What is being watched and how it is being watched now lies in the hands of the audience. The original trend of sponsorship is slowly but surely finding its way back to prime-time. With sponsorship comes the possibility of product placement (Russell & Belch, 2005)

Many times, a sponsor will place advertisements within the commercial breaks, while also adding their products or brands into the script.

Today's popularity of product placement has come about due to viewers' ability to avoid commercials, the enhancement of program content (DeLorme & Reid, 1999), and the financial benefits that accompany placements (de Gregorio & Sung, 2010). Recently, one study suggested that placements have the ability to cut production costs of entertainment content by approximately a quarter (Renner, 2003). Interest in the topic of product placement over the years has yielded a number of academic research studies exploring the concept (Auty & Lewis, 2004; Baerns, 2003; d'Astous & Chartier, 2000; DeLorme & Reid, 1999; Ferraro & Avery, 2000; Gould, Gupta, & Grabner-Krauter, 2000; Gupta, Balasubramanian, & Klassen, 2000; Karrh, Frith, & Callison, 2001; Karrh, et al., 2003; La Pastina, 2001; Law & Braun, 2000; McKechnie & Zhou, 2003; Pardun & McKee, 2000; Roehm, Roehm, & Boone, 2004; Russell, 2002; Samuel, 2004). Some of the most prevalent themes are documented and explored here.

### ***Product Placement Landscape***

The practice of product placement has grown and transformed significantly over the years ("As Seen on TV," 2005; Brennan, et al., 1999; Ebenkamp, 2001; "Lights, Camera, Brands," 2005; McCarty, 1994; McNatt & Oleck, 2000). The worldwide market for product placement in mass media content expanded in 2006 to approximately \$7.5 billion and is predicted to have almost doubled by the end of 2010 (Graser & Stanley, 2006). The practice of product placement is no longer regarded as a novel marketing tactic.

Product placement is a strategy employed by marketers in which characters within a movie, television program, book, or even interactive game make use of an existing commercial item (Lehu, 2007). The branded product or brand identifier is included in a program through audio or visual

means (Karrh, 1998). It is common for the logo of the item to be shown or to have the positive qualities of the product showcased. Advertisers want their products to be shown in the most flattering way possible. It is their hope that such treatment will cause viewers to associate the featured brands with prestige and happiness, eventually leading to product purchase (Morton & Friedman, 2002). The practice of product placement is viewed as a method of breaking through the clutter that makes up television. It has the ability to aid in the formation of positive brand attitudes (Ford, 2006). And brand attitudes have been found to be a key factor in purchase intentions (Mackenzie, Lutz, & Belch, 1986).

As a combination of publicity and advertising, product placement is meant to influence the audience by incorporating branded products into programming in a way that is typically meant to fly below the viewer's radar. The audience is not likely to be conscious of the swaying intent of the placement in most situations (Balasubramanian, 1994). In the most basic sense, placements are meant to produce beneficial associations towards the brand or the specific product being shown. This can lead to a positive change in brand attitude. The Cowley and Barron (2008) study examined whether prominent placements in television programs caused a harmful shift in brand attitude for audience members who truly take pleasure in the program. It was the thought of the researcher that a prominent placement would allow for the viewers to recognize the swaying intent of the placement, and therefore there would be a harmful shift in brand attitude (Cowley & Barron, 2008). The viewers would notice the placement and acknowledge the intent to influence and persuade, thereby disrupting the enjoyment of the program.

### ***Communicating Meaning & Placement Terminology***

Branded products play a distinct yet well-incorporated part in entertainment media. These brands are used by the creators of such content as a way of communicating meanings, whether it is about the program itself, a character, or even the product. Within a television program, branded

products often provide credibility to a show, aid in expressing personalities of key characters, and create a reality for the audience in which to indulge (Balasubramanian, Karrh, & Patwardhan, 2006).

Balasubramanian (1994) identified the practice of product placement as a combination of messages, with commercial intention disguised as a non-commercial entity. This limits the likelihood of viewer awareness of the advertisers' attempt to persuade. Therefore this minimizes the possibility of counter-arguing, where viewers fight with the concept of a placement due to its intrusive and persuasive nature. Product placement has also been described as a covert advertising tactic meant to broaden positive word of mouth (Kaikati & Kaikati, 2004).

Product placement has been defined in a number of ways through a variety of literature (Avery & Ferraro, 2000; Balasubramanian, 1994; d'Astous & Chartier, 2000; Elliot, 1992; Friedman, 1986; Gould, et al., 2000; Hampp, 2008; Hulin-Salkin, 1989; Kaikati & Kaikati, 2004; LaPastina, 2001; Law & Braun-LaTour, 2004; Nebenzahl & Jaffe, 1998; Nebenzahl & Secunda, 1993; Rosen, 1990; Russell & Belch, 2005;). Some deal directly with brand appearance in media; others deal with deliberate incorporations of brands into media vehicles (Russell & Belch, 2005). For the purposes of this paper, product placement is broadly defined as the inclusion of a product into a prime-time broadcast program in any form, visual, auditory or dual-modality, whether paid or unpaid.

Along with the various definitions of product placement come a variety of terms. Both "branded placement" and "product placement" have been frequently used within the literature, often stated interchangeably (Balasubramanian, et al., 2006). Other terms that have become more prevalent are: product assimilation, brand integration and product integration. For the purposes of this paper, the process will be referred to as product placement, as it can include a variety of modalities and levels of integration. Understanding audience perceptions of product placement and

how these perceptions can impact their behaviors is key for advertisers. It can help them formulate more successful targeting efforts as it relates to product placement.

### ***TV and the Lack of Attention***

Product placement has found its way onto the big screen, the television screen, and into songs and music videos. There has even been use of product placement for webisodes. The hike in popularity can be tied to the increased use of digital video recorders (Lehu, 2007). The bottom line is that commercials are easy to recognize. Unfortunately for advertisers, this recognition has recently been identified as causing a lack of attention. Whether audiences change the channel or leave the room, or merely use the commercial break as a bathroom break, audiences are not giving commercials as much attention as programs. In order to reach these audience members at their height of attention, advertisers have slipped their products into the plotline (Commercial Alert, 2009; Touliatos, 2007). The judges of *American Idol* are sipping from Coca Cola cups (Howard, 2008). Dr. Arizona Robbins on *Grey's Anatomy* is rushing around the hospital sporting a pair of Heely's, a cross between a running shoe and a skate (Grey's Anatomy, 2009).

The media environment is constantly changing, advancing in use and technology. Audiences have more alternatives to traditional viewing than ever before (ANA/Forrester Research Study, 2006; Ferguson & Perse, 2004; Friedman, 2006; Goetzl, 2006; Smith & Krugman, 2009; Solman, 2007; Story, 2007). Despite the bombardment of options, television viewing patterns have consistently abided by a few ruling patterns (Sharp, Beal, & Collins, 2009; Van Meurs, 1998; Wilbur, 2008).

The reach of television remains more than substantial and notable. Throughout the United States, the prime-time hours are television's busiest time, with approximately a third of the population viewing programs at any point through the evening hours. In fact, it appears that almost

everyone in the developed world indulges in a little television during a typical week (Sharp, et al., 2009).

However, not everyone watches the same amount of television. The best way to reach lighter television viewers is to advertise on higher rated programs. In reality, a large portion of the viewers indulging in higher rated shows are lighter viewers. Although the reach of television is still robust, the digital revolution and the increase in channel access have left a more difficult landscape for advertisers. Audiences have spread out across the abundance of channels. This fragmentation means advertisers have to think long and hard about where they are placing their advertising. They have to be clever with their television buying. The ability is still there for advertisers to reach over thirty percent of the general population with carefully placed spots (Sharp, Beal, & Collins, 2009).

This project focuses on programming aired on NBC, a large network channel. Patterns indicate that the larger broadcast networks supported by advertising will remain popular formats for advertisers, despite the fact that continued fragmentation may further limit their possible audience share. These networks will maintain their first-class ranking, because they will continue to achieve greater reach than their smaller competitors. The larger networks are also watched for much longer by a wider variety of viewers, including both light and heavy viewers. And, in many cases, those light viewers can be more attractive to advertisers. When they indulge in programming, it is more likely that they will be watching the larger networks (Sharp, et al., 2009).

### ***The Act of Avoidance***

Production teams welcome the realism that product placement affords and the added income the practice generates. The growing concern advertisers have had regarding channel surfing and the use of new technologies like digital video recorders (DVRs) to skip through commercial breaks has allowed the practice of product placement to blossom. The television

content of today constantly features various brand-name products, whether embellishing the set or interacting with program characters (Sheehan & Guo, 2005). Some wonder if the audiences are truly avoiding the commercials more than before.

There has been a lot of hype over the effect the digital video recorder has over the television industry – the advertising field in particular (Friedman, 2006; Goetzl, 2006; Smith & Krugman, 2009; Solman, 2007). The digital video recorder has the ability to infringe upon the old advertising model, forcing advertisers to intrude on content in the form of product placements (Krugman, 1985; Krugman & Johnson, 1991; Levy, 1987; Lin, 1994; Morrison & Krugman, 2001; Van den Bulck, 1999). The idea of the digital video recorder is more of a threat in the mind than in reality.

Prior to the digital video recorder, consumers found a way to avoid commercial breaks. They typically participated in either complete or partial avoidance techniques (Ephron, 1995; Ephron, 2003; Krugman & Johnson, 1991; Siddarth & Chattopadhyay, 1998; Smith & Krugman, 2009; Tse & Lee, 2001; Woltman Elpers, Wedel, & Pieters, 2003). Complete avoidance takes place when viewers change the channel or leave the room in order to skip the commercials. Partial avoidance takes place when viewers multi-task with other activities such as surfing the internet, making phone calls, or even reading (Sharp, et al., 2009). However, even when audiences are engaging in other activities, the attention given to the program remains relatively high (Smith & Krugman, 2009).

Several decades of research has shown a pattern of viewing behavior (Krugman, Cameron, & White, 1995; Moriarty & Everett, 1994; Siddarth & Chattopadhyay, 1998; Speck & Elliott, 1997; Tse & Lee, 2001; van Meurs, 1998; Zufryden, Pedrick, & Sankaralingam, 1993). Approximately a third of audiences are active viewers, with a third participating in partial viewing and the final third participating in complete avoidance (Paech, Riebe, & Sharp, 2003). Digital video recorders and

other such technologies are just likely to take the place of previous avoidance techniques, leaving the viewing of commercials at the same basic levels (Sharp, et al., 2009). There is also the possibility viewers forget they have the capability to fast-forward through the commercials. Even in the case of immense changes in the media environment, television remains a paramount advertising medium, even if it has become more complicated and expensive over time (Sharp, et al., 2009).

A number of researchers have taken a look at time-compressed advertisements (Gilmore & Secunda, 1993; LaBarbera & MacLachlan, 1979; MacLachlan & Siegel, 1980; Shapiro, MacInnis, & Heckler, 1997; Stout & Burda, 1989). Although some viewers do use their digital video recorders to fast-forward through commercials, there are at least two reasons to believe those “compressed advertisements” are somewhat effective. Viewers may focus attentively on the screen while fast-forwarding through commercials. This is the only way to ensure that they do not in fact miss the start of the next block of programming (Mandese, 2004C; Zufryden, et al., 1993).

### ***Plugs vs. Placements***

Product placement is a form of within program exposure. Typically a marketer negotiates to have a brand name product placed within the content of a program in one capacity or another. Although placement is a popular marketing tactic today, there is another kind of within-program exposure contrasting placement. Plugs are typically shown or discussed on camera in unscripted, segmented programming, like talk shows. An example of a possible plug would be if Starbucks Coffee sent samples of a new flavored drink to *The Today Show*. In this situation, the new product would most likely be seen on air and also mentioned by the hosts, even as off-the-cuff comments.



A celebrity endorsement is another common type of plug. A celebrity is paid to positively speak of a product or be seen with it during interviews. Although both placements and plug can be helpful marketing tactics, they have slightly different cognitive effects (Roehm, et al., 2004).

Clearly plugs and placements appear in different kinds of programs, with plugs being well matched for segmented formats. These formats allow a host personality to speak in an impromptu manner, like what would be seen in a news program or talk show. Although these formats are wonderful for plugs, placements are built to exist in programs built around a storyline such as situational comedies, dramas, and even reality shows (Roehm, et al., 2004).

Segmented programs are typically broken down into topical blocks, such as Headlines or Weather. It is suggested by Roehm, Roehm, and Boone (2004) that viewers actually develop separate categories cognitively to store the separate segment information, and therefore the products that might be associated with that segment. In this line of reasoning, if Gene Shalit plugged Starbucks Coffee during *The Today Show* entertainment segment, that information should be linked in memory with the entertainment segment category. Likewise, any product mentioned by Al Roker during the weather segment would be stored within that specific category (Roehm, et al., 2004; Waxman and Markow, 1995).

In scripted, plot-based programs, the scenes are not cognitively considered stand-alone segments. Each part of the program is associated with another, creating a flow of story. Just as there is a method of information storage for segmented programs, there is a different method for plot-based programs. Placement information along with program information is stored as cognitive bundles for plot-based programming (Roehm, et al., 2004). Actions performed within the storyline are stored in conjunction with relational details, including the causes and effects that link events of the story (Cowen & Lebel, 1998; Trabasso & Van den Broek, 1985; Wyer, Shoben, Fuhrman, & Bodenhausen, 1985). This leads to the notion that viewers will retain an assortment of story-

related events that are linked in memory by causal ties. Along with the details of these story-related events, the viewer will retain the placements that occurred within them (Roehm, et al., 2004).

Although sometimes confused, plugs and placements can have different impacts on cognitive storage, especially in terms of organization (Roehm, et al., 2004). It would be beneficial for programs to consider both plugs and placements as part of their marketing strategies. For instance, the actor shown in relation to the placed product in the program may appear to promote the show itself on a talk show. This segment-based talk show format would allow for a plug of the product to complement the placements being completed in the plot-based format.

### ***Likely Suspects***

It has been said that product placement is finding its way into a variety of media content. With so many television programs participating in this marketing tactic, consumer products are popping up all over the screen. A variety of products' marketers have begun to use product placement as a method of reaching target audiences (Soloman, 1992). Vehicles, alcohol and soft drinks have topped the list of popular placement products in the past (Galacian & Bourdeau, 2004). Specifically, in 2008, the top product categories featured in placements included apparel, soft drinks, fitness centers, sports teams, and universities (Saini, 2008).

Such items have been marketed in the form of placement because of the possible implied endorsement of popular program characters, the ability to reach audiences that may not have been exposed to the product previously, and as a means of setting one product apart from the competition (Lindstrom, 2003). The difficulty viewers have when trying to avoid the placements is another benefit (Tse & Lee, 2001). Although, no exact numbers were found to indicate the frequency of this occurrence, the possibility that the placement will be viewed over and over again

in program syndication is yet another advantage. For example, the re-runs of *Seinfeld* still contain the Junior Mints placement. Some placements are even less expensive than some traditional advertising spots (d'Astous & Chartier, 2000).

### ***Financial Forms of Placements***

Product placement is under the umbrella of the marketing service known as branded entertainment. Branded entertainment can also include event sponsorship, licensing and a number of other services (PQ Media, 2005). The strategy of product placement has become a part of the marketing plan for more than a thousand American brands (Marshall & Ayers, 1998). Some of the most well-known companies in the United States, like Procter & Gamble, are placing their products in television programs and movies (Vranica, 2004).

The integration of a product into the storyline can take on three main forms: paid, barter, or gratis. Paid product placement, as the name implies, occurs when the placement is arranged for financial compensation. Bartered placements are arranged; however the product itself serves as the compensation to the program producers or studio. Finally, gratis placements take place when real products are used to strengthen a character's profile or add to the plotline. In other words, the products are used to make the program or movie feel more realistic to the audience. There is no compensation awarded in gratis placements (PQ Media, 2005).

Over the years, there has been a trend towards more paid placements and less gratis placements. The cost of a product placement can vary. It usually depends on the exposure rate of the product, the duration of the exposure, and the degree of inclusion into the plot. Products can be actively used by a character, or just placed in the foreground of a shot (Segrave, 2004). Another form of placement is the advertisement placement. These are slightly different from typical product placements. Instead of the product being shown, an advertisement for the product is

shown. For instance, a billboard sign for Camel Cigarettes is seen in the background of the program as the characters drive down the highway.

### ***Program Profitability***

The question on business minds is whether product placement is actually profitable. Although it has shown some success in movies, the research on its effectiveness for television is limited. However, past research has shown that product placement can have a greater impact on audiences than the typical advertising commercial break (Karrh, 1998). One limitation that has been shown for movies is the amount of product placement (Mindlin, 2009). There is a limit to the amount that can be used in order to show results. Too much placement in one film will limit the effectiveness of the products being featured. This may be the case for television programs as well. Because programs are shorter in length than films, fewer placements should be used in order to receive the highest return.

Product placement is a great way to obtain increased funding for a program (Howard-Williams, 1993; Lubbers & Adams, 2004; Steorz, 1987; Vollmers & Mizerski, 1994). Due to the fact that the technology now exists to allow consumers to fast forward and skip the commercial breaks, advertisers are looking for ways to get their brands in front of audiences. Product placement allows advertisers to reach consumers and for consumers to be made aware of new products they might have otherwise missed. It causes more money to go into the programming which can lead to higher show quality. The consumers do not have to deal with commercial breaks, and they still get to see new products. The advertisers are reaching people, and there is more funding going into programming.

When it comes down to it, there is more to product placement than just displaying the brand (Romaniuk, 2009). A number of things come into play when placing products successfully. The length and prominence of the placements should be considered (Van Reijmersdal, Neijens &

Smith, 2009). Some strategies for placements are more effective than others, such as visual brand frequency, early brand presence, and dual mode branding (Romaniuk, 2009). The trend needs to move away from the idea of “more branding” towards the concept of “better branding” (Romaniuk, 2009).

### ***Characteristics of Placements***

A large amount of past research on product placement describes several characteristics key to understanding a placement. These characteristics include but are not limited to modality (Law & Braun, 2000; Russell, 2002), compatibility with the plot (Russell, 2002) and whether the placement is prominent. The concept of prominence has been defined in a number of ways including the size of the product being shown, the level of incorporation into the plot, the number of times the brand/product is mentioned, the amount of time spent on screen, and even the mode of the placement (Auty & Lewis, 2004; Babin & Carder 1996B; Gupta & Lord, 1998; Law & Braun, 2000). All of these things can play into how much a marketer will be inclined to pay for the placement (Bhatnagar, Aksoy, & Malkoc, 2004).

No matter the manner in which a researcher chooses to operationalize prominence, there has been shown to be a proven link between the concept of prominence and memory performance. More prominent placements are more easily called to memory than those that are subtle (Babin & Carder, 1996; Gupta & Lord, 1998; Law & Braun, 2000). However an improvement in memory recall does not necessarily mean there will be a positive development in brand attitude.

### ***Modality of Placement: Visual, Auditory, or Dual-Mode***

The majority of earlier product placement research based its knowledge on one main concept: in order for a placement to have any effect on the audience, the audience needs to know what is being advertised. It is important for the audience to register the brand in their memory as

part of their exposure to the placement. The timing, mode, and structure of the placement can help the product break through some of the clutter surrounding it (Babin & Carder, 1996B; d'Astous & Seguin, 1999; Gupta & Lord, 1998; Romaniuk, 2009). The effectiveness of product placement is based on a number of variables, such as how the audience perceives the placement's flow with its surroundings, the prior experiences the audience has had with the product, the level of compassion for the characters, and the audience's connection with storyline (Karrh, et al., 2003).

Research on the mode in which placements exist suggests that different modes result in different amounts of meaning to the viewer. Visual aspects form the environment in which the story is positioned. An example of this would be when brand-name products are placed in the background of a program set in an effort to make the televised world more realistic (Solomon & Englis, 1994; Solomon & Greenberg, 1993). The program script is carried on the auditory level. Information presented through the auditory level is essentially more meaningful to audiences than visual details, because auditory information can reach audiences whether they are focusing on the screen or not (Rolandelli, Wright, Huston, & Eakins, 1991). Indeed auditory information is often exemplified by its increased degree of intrusiveness and inherent attentive assets (Posner, Nissen, & Klein, 1976). Both modalities are crucial to furthering the storyline, each contributes to meaningfulness. Modality characteristics are significant because meaningful stimuli incorporates deeply into the audience's memory (Lehnert, 1981), and therefore can allow for increased recall (Craik & Lockhart, 1972).

Previous research has shown that a visual-plus-verbal placement (dual-modality) was more easily brought to memory than that of a lone-visual placement (Law & Braun-LaTour, 2004; Sabherwal, Pokrywczynski & Griffin, 1994). An audio mention of a product's brand name without any corresponding visual placement was more easily called to memory than that of a visual placement without any audio mention to support it (Gupta & Lord, 1998).

There are several different kinds of placements – using the above modalities - that can be used to further a product or brand. When products are visually positioned as part of the set of a program, the placements are known as screen placements. Script placements are when products are verbally mentioned. When a placement is closely tied to the storyline, it is known as a plot placement (Karrh, et al., 2003). Many believe that plot placements are the most effective. A closer link to a character or a story can build brand image. This can further the level of brand-relevant thinking. Coupling a product or brand well with a character of a popular program can focus the audience's attention, while triggering more thinking about the pairing (Karrh, 1998).

Placements that are more editorial in nature yield more positive effects on the brand than those that are more commercial. In addition to this, it has been found that the more prominent the placement, the higher the chance that the audience will remember the product. In some cases, although audiences did not recall viewing the placement, they did show a more positive evaluation of the product's brand than those that did not view the placement (Van Reijmersdal, et al., 2009).

When it comes to product placement in prime-time, the placement and the program's content can compete for the audience's attention. Though high levels of involvement with the program are beneficial for the brand because involvement with the program means involvement with the placement, at the same time, there is the chance that audiences will not be able to focus on the placement and the storyline simultaneously (Thorson & Reeves, 1986). The effect on the audience seems to depend on the type of placement and how well it is integrated into the program (Grigorovici & Constantin, 2004).

Because memory for brand placements increases when they are audio-visually presented, placements that would suit programs well in this respect were explored. To create brand placements that are positively evaluated, they will need to be placed within the program while the audience is actively involved in the storyline. The placements will need to be prominently placed

and be accompanied by a character that speaks to the brand image. Placements will also need to be repeated, and easily recognizable.

Past research has explored the impact of product placement on audience attitudes (Babin & Carder, 1996B; d'Astous & Seguin, 1999; Gupta, et al., 2000; Karrh, 2995; Russell, 2002), brand recall (Babin and Carder, 1996B; d'Astous & Chartier, 2000; Gupta & Lord, 1998; Nelson, 2002; Russell, Norman, & Heckler, 2004), and consumer experiences towards placements (Auty & Lewis, 2004; DeLorme & Reid 1999; Gupta & Gould, 1997; Karrh, et al., 2001; Russell & Puto, 1999). The results of these studies show that viewers do not mind seeing placements in movies, and they can typically recognize the brands placed in the films. The findings of these studies are not the only important part of the research. The methods used to examine the placements were extremely detailed. These studies coded placements as prominent or subtle, also differentiating between verbal and visual placements. The aspects coded in these studies aided in the creation of the coding guide for this project. A goal of this project is to investigate the product placements being used in television serial comedies on NBC. For the purposes of this study, placements are broadly defined as the inclusion of identifiable brands through audio and/or visual means within the comedic programs being examined. Such placements can sometimes be “accidental,” having only been included as props to fill the set. With no way to determine while watching the program which placements were paid for and which were not, any time a placements was recognized it was coded.

### ***Prominence, Modality and Linking***

Many academic articles and industry trade journals have recognized the value of having the visual image of a product featured on screen, having the brand name mentioned in the scripted dialog, and even having the product interwoven into the plot (Russell, 1998, 2002). On top of all of these possible methods of presenting a placement, several studies have shown that recall of a brand



or product is higher when the presented product is coupled with a character who exhibits one or more covetable traits (Karrh, 1998B).

The benefit of placements that correlate to a character or set of characters is that the products receive an indirect endorsement. The branded product that the character is using becomes an extension of the character. When a sassy, attractive woman drives a car, the positive characteristics are generally transferred from the character to the product. The car is then seen in the same light as the character (Ong, 2004; Puto & Wells, 1984; Russell, 1998; Saini, 2008).

These endorsements can allow for a number of advantages. They can strengthen positive feelings of purchasers toward the product. The endorsement may also persuade those who have yet to purchase the product to consider doing so (DeLorme, Reid, & Zimmer, 1994). However, not every endorsement is successful. One main reason an endorsement can fail is discussed within the context of the Match Up Hypothesis. It explains that the link between a character and the endorsed product, or the lack of congruence between the two can impact attitudes toward the placement (Cronin, 2004; Kamins, 1994; McCracken, 1989; Misra & Beatty, 1990). In essence, a marketer employing an endorsement tactic should ensure that the image of the character and the image of the product are well suited. An example of this would be Carrie from *Sex and the City*. Her stylist persona correlates well with high end clothing products such as Jimmy Choo high heels. There is a level of congruence between her character and the product and the female audience who may also view themselves as fashion trendsetters (Gregov, 2008).

The opportunity for a viewer to process a placement is made up of the level of prominence and the length of exposure. Past research makes note of the importance of both aspects when rating the effectiveness of the placements. The researchers differentiated between prominent placements and subtle ones when analyzing their data. Prominence was determined by the location of the featured product, whether it was in foreground or the background, and if it shared the scene

with other branded products (Gupta & Lord, 1998). The studies showed that prominent placements allowed for higher memory recall of the brand or product. Law and Braun-LaTour (2004) suggested that prominence is likely to augment the positive impacts of the product placement.

Another set of researchers differentiated between two types of prominence, on-set and creative (Brennan, Dubas, & Babin, 1999). On-set placements were actively paired with a well-known character, whereas creative placements were not associated with characters. This study found that brand recognition and recall was greater with on-set placements. In addition to this, the researchers for this study found that the increased length of exposure time only favorably altered brand recall and recognition for on-set prominent placements (Brennan, et al., 1999). Another researcher, Russell (2002), defined prominence by breaking it down into three categories: visual, auditory, and correlation to plot.

Whichever way a researcher chooses to define prominence, it is clear that it has several dimensions that should be considered when conducting research. However, prominence is not the only aspect that researchers should bear in mind. The mode of a placement should also be noted. In some cases, researchers have included the mode of the placement as part of its level of prominence. Whether it is deemed an aspect of prominence or just another category of product placement, it must be considered. Studies have found that dual-mode placements have more effect on brand memory and recall than placements presented in only one mode. This means that for a placement to have the most impact, it should not rely on only a verbal mention or only a visual shot. A combination of the two has more effect on the audience. There appears to be a hierarchy of sorts when it comes to brand recall and its connection to placement modality. The hierarchy of effectiveness is as follows: dual-mode, verbal only, and then visual only (Gupta & Lord, 1998; Karrh, et al., 2003; Sabherwal, et al., 1994).

The concept of linking a product to a character is not a new one. There are various possible factors that allow for a viewer to more positively link a brand to a specific character or group of characters. These factors include how closely the brand/product relates to that character, whether the brand is mentioned by name in that character's dialogue, and whether the product is being actively used by the character (Karrh, et al., 2003). Distinctions have been made between screen placements, script placements, and plot placements, with the latter being the most effective in brand memory (Russell, 1998). This closer link that many practitioners are hoping to achieve with placements may allow for more brand-related thoughts on the part of the viewer (Deighton, Romer, & McQueen, 1989; DeLorme & Reid, 1999). Linking has a dual purpose, a character providing support for a brand while at the same time the placement can act as a character endorsement (Karrh, 1998).

Integrated placements have high plot connection in that the placement significantly contributes to the program's storyline (Russell, 2002). Studies have found that the connection between the brand/product and the plot can hold a great deal of impact on the viewer's attention to and attitude toward the brand being featured (d'Astous & Seguin, 1999; Russell, 2002). The level of plot connection can determine the level of meaningfulness of a placement in a storyline (Russell, 2002). A plot-connected placement, along with auditory mentions, would be beneficial for a marketer if done in addition to a cross-promotional campaign. The cross-promotional campaign would allow for the connection between the brand and the program to be clear through other forms of advertising. One example would be the campaign linking Subway and the NBC program *Chuck*. However, if such a cross-promotional campaign is not possible, a simple placement can still have an impact (Russell, 2002).

Later studies have shown that the relationship between the character and audience is yet another source of great influence that can be tapped for the purposes of product placement

(Russell, et al., 2004). This is particularly the case when the placement is embedded within the emotional context of the program (Law & Braun-La-Tour, 2004).

### ***Audience Perception of Product Placement***

One possible issue when dealing with integrating a product into a storyline is the chance that it will be an unnatural fit for both the show and the brand (Friestad & Wright, 1995B). When this occurs, research has shown that it can be detrimental to the persuasion that could occur as part of the placement (Russell, 2002). Though product placement can be a way to increase the level of realism for the program, there is a chance that too many placements can be used or the use of such placements can be obtrusive in nature (Russell & Belch, 2005). For programs, product placement must be a balancing act of sorts. An abundance of placements can become irritating or seen as a blatant attempt to force sales.

For some viewers, such constant placements can be viewed as an agitation. Others find entertainment in trying to identify them all. There are even those who do not realize that such placements exist. When it comes to films, placements are used and even identified in the credits. Audiences are made increasingly aware of the products due to linked advertisements and the associated credits list. However, there has not been as much research done on television product placements. Whether loved or despised, the fact remains that product placements are present in many forms of media today.

Product placement has been referred to as the “prostitution of the movie industry” due to the number of scripts controlled by such placements (Segrave, 2004). The act of creating such scripts can be viewed as artistic expression, and such expressions are potentially violated if the artist is forced to comply with the changes. In the case of product placement, many of its uses are determined via negotiations (Lehu, 2007). For example, which brand of vehicle featured can

initiate a large set of negotiations, with the car company wanting only positive portrayals and the script-writers only needing vehicles for a high speed collision. Some companies choose not to be associated with violent films, or films with messages that do not match their company's brand image. Either way, the use of product placements in television, as is the case in film, is based largely on the negotiating process.

Product placement has not come under too harsh of an outcry. Although there are some who have voiced their concern for stricter regulations, or just regulations in general, there do not seem to be any breaking news stories regarding the tremendous concern of the public as a whole (Galician, 2004B). The opposite has actually been shown with the use of research in the field. It seems that most audience members do not mind placements if they are not overdone (Wenner, 2004).

Past examinations of feelings toward the practice of product placement uncovered positive overall attitudes (Arbitron, 2002; DeLorme & Reid, 1999). However, there were some qualms relating to the use of specific ethically-challenging items. These items include guns, tobacco products, and alcohol (Brennan, Rosenberg, & Hementera, 2004; Gupta & Gould, 1997; McKechnie & Zhou, 2003). Attempts to deepen the pool of knowledge regarding product placement perceptions revealed slightly more concern among young female adults; this concern is even more pronounced for the ethically-challenged placements. This concern is somewhat muted in the aggregate (Brennan, et al., 2004; Gupta & Gould, 1997).

DeLorme and Reid (1999) completed research uncovering a trend of older viewers' concern. However, the concern of this demographic related to the overall manipulative influence of placements, yielding a level of distrust of the practice. Morton and Friedman (2002) found a positive correlation between attitudes and behaviors as it related to product placement.

Gupta and Gould (1997), along with McKechnie and Zhou (2003) have shown a sense of concern towards ethically-charged placements. It is important for practitioners to fully consider each placement they make. Random placements have the ability to quickly corrode the positive attitudes the general public has towards the overall practice and with this comes the increase possibility of regulation. Not only do practitioners need to consider each placement option, but they need to understand the possible audiences of these placements – including their potential vulnerabilities (de Gregorio & Sung, 2010).

### ***Liking and Persuasion***

Viewers formulate their preferences due to factors such as liking, feelings, and emotions generated by the program or the product. Familiarity can even be elicited by mere exposure to the placement, instead of the product details (Batra & Ray, 1986A, 1986B; Gardner, 1985; Holbrook & Batra, 1987; Janiszewski & Warlop, 1993; Mitchell & Olson, 1981; Shimp, 1981; Stuart, Shimp, & Engel, 1987; Vakratsas & Ambler, 1999; Zajonc, 1980; Zajonc & Markus, 1982). Viewers that are highly invested in a program, and truly enjoy being entertained by it are more cognizant of possible interruptions (Edwards, Li, & Lee, 2002). Placements can be more easily noticed when the viewer is invested in the program. This is particularly the case when the product is being shown as something more than just a background prop item. Audience members who are highly invested in a program, who truly enjoy watching it in hopes of fulfilling their entertainment needs, are more attentive while watching the program. This increase in attention may also allow for an increase in memory recall. However, this increase level of attention may also be associated with the awareness that a branded product has been purposely placed in the program for the purposes of persuasion. This realization may separate the audience from their engagement in the program (Cowley & Barron, 2008).

Viewers who choose to watch a program for a reason other than because they truly enjoy the program are considered to be “lower in program liking” (Cowley & Barron, 2008). These viewers may watch the show in an effort to pass time. They may watch the program because they feel there is not anything better on television at that time, and therefore they must settle for that program. It is even possible that the person is watching the program with someone who is truly invested in the show. Whatever the reason, some viewers do watch programs that they do not enjoy fully, also known as least objectionable programming. These individuals would be less dependent on the show to meet their entertainment needs. The lower level of attention to the program means that the viewer will be less likely to identify the placement as disruptive. They will be less likely to view the placement as an interruption of the program. However, the overall experience of the show is also less likely to be recalled, and therefore the placement is less likely to be recalled. So they may not respond negatively to the placements, but they may also not remember them at all (Cowley & Barron, 2008).

Viewers with “high program liking” describe decreased brand attitudes after experiencing prominent placed products in their beloved shows (Cowley & Barron, 2008). It may seem somewhat questionable at first that less interested viewers are positively affected by prominent placements when viewers who are really invested in the show are not. This may especially counterintuitive if the reasoning behind making the placement is the idea that consumers promptly create correlations between beloved characters and the brands featured alongside them. However the results of the Cowley and Barron study were based merely on exposure effects. Therefore, the brand attitude after a placement is determined to be higher only in circumstances where overt memory recall for the product placement is particularly low. Essentially, the viewers with “low program liking” do not tend to remember seeing the placement, and because of this, they do not have any negative attitudes towards the brand. With those who enjoy the program, the negative thoughts are likely linked to the interruption that the placement causes, the disruption of the

immersion within the storyline (Cowley & Barron, 2008). With this in mind, advertisers should work hard to ensure that their placements, if prominent, do not detract from the storyline of the program, but merely add to it.

### ***Attitude***

A number of studies have explored a possible correlation between viewer attitudes towards programming and their attitudes towards the commercial breaks within them (Clany & Kweskin, 1971; Krugman, 1966, 1983; Lloyd & Clancy, 1991; Schwerin, 1960). Research has suggested that there is uniformity between program attitudes and the attitude toward the commercial breaks (Kennedy, 19781; Singh & Churchill, 1987; TAA Inc., 1984). Following this line of thought, if a product is placed in a well-liked program, a corresponding commercial should create the same attitude for the viewer, as long as the viewer does not feel bombarded by the advertisements.

Other studies have revealed that attitude does impact brand and/or product recognition and purchase intention (Babin & Thompspon-Carder, 1996B; Baker & Crawford, 1995; Bass & Wilkie, 1973; DeLorme, Leonard, & Zimmer, 1994; Fishbein, 1967; Gibson & Maurer, 2000; Gould, et al., 2000; Gupta & Lord, 1998; Karrh, et al., 2001; Lutz, 1977, 1991; Ong & Meri, 1994; Smith & Swinyard, 1983). It has been suggested that brand attitude diminishes when obviously prominent placements are repetitively shown, but when the placements are considered to be subtle attitudes towards the brand are typically positive, and increased repetition does not have much of an affect. Furthermore, obvious placements tend to be viewed as more distracting and less realistic. This reaction to the obvious placements seems to only increase with repetition (Atkinson, 2003).

Placement repetition has the ability to enhance or undermine the level of persuasion. As with so many other things, it is balancing act of sorts. Research has found that attitudes are affected negatively when product placements are blatantly obvious, and the negative attitudes only seem to



grow as the obvious placements are repeated. While there are a few studies that argue that product placements have little effect on brand attitudes, a large number of practitioners uphold the idea that product placements can be invaluable when some specific strategies are in place. The connection of the product with the plot is an example of one of those strategies (Homer, 2009; McClellan, 2003).

In many cases, the idea of recall is understood to be the required precondition for any effects on attitude (Law & Braun-LaTour, 2004). Others have argued that the impact on attitudes takes place merely because placements are more acceptable and more easily endured by the audience (Karrh, 1998A; Tiwsakul, Hackley, & Szmigin, 2005). Still, enduring placements does not unquestionably denote that placements influence attitudes and evaluations of brands. Lately, a number of researchers furthered the concept that mere exposure effects may be at work when an audience is encountering placements (McCarty, 2004; Russell, 2002). In line with this, a product placement can have an effect on attitudes, even if audiences are unable to recall the brand or the product featured (Matthes, Schemer, & Wirth, 2007).

### ***Brand Salience***

When examining attitudes and effectiveness as it relates to product placement, brand salience is an important term to keep in mind. It does not refer to what viewers think but focuses on which items are thought about (Miller & Berry, 1998). Brand salience is often thought to be similar to high level of awareness. Salience is measured by using a ranking of products or brands (Alba & Chattopadhyay, 1986; Johnstone & Dodd, 2000; Miller & Berry, 1998).

Although some use a measure of attitude as a means to determining effectiveness, there are several reasons as to why brand salience should be preferred over attitude as a method of gauging success. First, brand salience can be deemed less likely to be biased regarding prior attitudes

toward the brand and product. Second, there is a chance that viewers, who have yet to formulate any attitude toward the brand, may have a tendency to concoct responses instantaneously in an effort to have their responses measured. Assessing brand salience limits this possibility. Third, there is a chance that due to social pressures, viewers may respond in a less than truthful manner in order to be viewed by others in a favorable light (Hong, Wang, & De los Santos, 2008).

Brand salience may also have a sales-enhancing impact. Although attitudes have been linked to purchase intention (Ko, Cho, & Roberts, 2005; Sinclair & Irani, 2005), brand salience may have a more direct connection. Purchase intention does directly lead to purchase behavior, and therefore an increase in sales. Though a positive attitude will likely lead to increased purchase intention, viewers will still be forced to deal with a number of similar brands during the purchasing situation, and unless their attitude corresponds to brand salience, this situation may not end desirably for the marketer (Hong, et al., 2008).

Salient brands that are easily recalled to memory are more likely to be thought of at the time of purchase and therefore bought (Miller & Georgiou, 1996; Sutherland & Galloway, 1981). This is why brand salience is considered to be more closely connected to purchase behavior. High brand salience ties to high popularity of a brand, which can also influence purchase behavior (Sutherland & Galloway, 1981; Sutherland & Sylvester, 2000). Another benefit of brand salience is that it has the ability to deter the recall of other competing brands (Alba & Chattopadhyay, 1986).

Demonstrative product placements are described by the way the product is conveyed. Superior aspects of the product are showcased, such as durability and performance. On the other hand, non-demonstrative product placements act in opposition; they do not show the superiority of the product. Program scenes containing demonstrative product messages should present a variety of potential benefits of the product to the viewers (Hong, et al., 2008). An example of a demonstrative placement would be a new state of the art cell phone. It may be shown getting

service in an area that rarely can receive cell service. Features like high-resolution video may be highlighted. The character does not have to speak directly about the product's sophisticated features. Instead, the product is just shown in use, in the context of the program. Demonstrative product placements are likely to aid in the cognitive information processing of the viewer, allowing for higher brand salience (Hong, et al., 2008).

### ***Assessing Effectiveness***

Product placement is one of today's most popular advertising strategies, with growing attention from advertisers, media planners, and measurement firms trying to gauge value and effectiveness (Russell & Belch, 2005). Though there have been recent academic studies discussing the effects of placements on viewers (Auty & Lewis, 2004; d'Astous & Seguin, 1999; Gupta & Gould, 1997; Nebenzahl & Secunda, 1993; Ong & Meri, 1994; Russell, 2002; Tiwsakul, et al., 2005), industry practitioners have only begun to formulate tools to methodically evaluate placement effectiveness.

Many times practitioners assess placements as successful when a brand is simply mentioned, shown, or paired with a desirable character (Karrh, 1995; Karrh, et al., 2003; Pardun & McKee, 1999). There are several companies rivaling to create essential measurement formulas in hopes of launching an industry standard. Several of these (The Nielsen Company, for example) concentrate on the financial value of the placement. Other groups focus on reaction based measurements such as recall and association (Madese, 2004B; Schiller, 2004; Schmuckler, 2005). However, there seems to be little agreement on how to gauge their value (Kaplan, 2005; Russell & Belch, 2005). As the placement sector of the media industry grows and advances, value measurement systems will be necessary. For now, though, value assessment, mirroring effectiveness assessment, is fundamentally regarded as a judgment subjective in nature (Balasubramanian, et al., 2006; Russell & Belch, 2005).

The industry's notion of what constitutes value in placements may be slightly skewed, particularly in reference to the pricing of placements. The pricing arrangements excessively focus on recall and explicit recognition. Findings from research such as Law and Braun (2000), Nedungadi (1990), and Shapiro, MacInnis and Heckler (1997) link unconscious exposure to desirable outcomes. Therefore, practitioners should continue to consider the possibility of reassessing how their placements are valued.

A necessary distinction must be made between value and effectiveness when considering placement efforts. In reality, the two terms are often used interchangeably by agencies and clients. Clients want to be made aware of their return on investment when dealing with placements. In an effort to meet the demand, various companies have started offering valuation services. These companies have suggested a number of features that need to be acknowledged when determining the value of a product placement (Steinberg, 2004). Such features include but are not limited to placement characteristics, such as screen time and character relation. Even though these proposed factors may aid in gauging value, they are typically not the basis of effectiveness measures (Russell & Belch, 2005).

When considering effectiveness, the factors proposed range from awareness and recall to resulting purchase behaviors. Frequently in the past, recall has used as the main metric for determining the effectiveness of a placement, despite research providing a number of limitations to this method (Babin & Carder, 1996B; Gupta & Lord, 1998; Karrh, 1994; Mackie & Asuncion, 1990; Ong & Meri, 1994; Russell, 2002; Sabherwal, Pokrywczynski, & Griffin, 1994; Steertz, 1987; Tiwsakul, et al., 2005). In Russell and Belch's (2005) study, participants established that value measures are necessary in order to reach marketing goals. However, such measures are not considered to be an adequate measure of effectiveness.

Interviewees acknowledged the difference between two audiences. The identification of the two distinct audiences should impact how effectiveness is measured and how value is gauged. Reasonably so, past research has focused on the impact of placements on the consumer audience. However, the effect on internal audiences should also be recognized (Russell & Belch, 2005).

When it comes to purchase behavior, practitioners are hesitant to state that placement can augment sales in any remarkable way. However, retailers disclosed a higher level of awareness of products on the part of consumers, and with this awareness is increased interest (Pompper & Choo, 2008). It is also well understood by practitioners and retailers alike that placements do not typically work in a vacuum. In other words, allowing for a product to be placed in one scene of a popular program without any other marketing strategies is not recommended (Brennan & Babin, 2004). Without a doubt, product placement can be a useful tool, as long as a variety of aspects are considered when formulating the marketing plan.

### ***Recall and Recognition***

Unaided recall and brand recognition are the most popular forms of measuring effectiveness of placements. Tracking sales after a placement is another way of measuring a product placement's effectiveness. This method is growing in use, along with tracking general press coverage. Developing highly advanced methods of rating placement effectiveness is difficult (Karrh, et al., 2003). Practitioners tend to believe that unaided recall is the best measure of effectiveness for product placement (Karrh, 1995). They also held steady to the idea that the most important factor in a placement was a positive portrayal. This visual execution was deemed to be more important to practitioners, most of which were placement agents, than a mention in the program dialogue or merely showing a character using the product (Karrh, 1995). Recall depends on whether the placement was presented verbally, visually, or both, in addition to product familiarity (Brennan, et al., 1999; Karrh, 1994; Sabherwal, et al., 1994).

For a placement to be deemed effective the audience must be able to know which product or brand is being featured. This means that it is essential for the audience to record the brand in their memory. In order for this to take place, the placement must be executed properly. Romaniuk argues that there are three factors that lead to successful execution: mode, timing, and structure (Romaniuk, 2009). The opportunity for a viewer to act on an advertisement is rarely immediate. Typically, the viewer will have to wait before that opportunity presents itself. In a buying situation, the viewer should be able to recall the featured brand. Therefore, the advertisement needs to record a kind of brand identity in the mind of the viewer that can be recalled upon in the buying situation (Romaniuk, 2009). Almost sixty percent of audience members who recall viewing an advertisement are unable to remember the brand name. This means that a substantial amount of advertising exposures are ineffective due to a lack of branding execution (Franzen, 1994; Rossiter & Bellman, 2005). In order to ensure that product placements do not follow this trend, it is important that practitioners take note of these crucial factors.

There is a great amount of research calling attention to the ways placements can influence brand recall (Brennan & Babin, 2004; Gupta & Lord, 1998; Karrh, et al., 2003; Law & Braun, 2000; Law & Braun-LaTour, 2004; Roehm, et al., 2004; Russell, 2002). Many advertisers work on the concept that a well placed product placement will activate already existing images, or will enhance brand awareness in the case that the viewer is not familiar with the brand. Therefore, it is easy to see how researchers took on the stance that placements must be recognized in order for any effect to take place, and this recognition would lead to recall. However past studies generally seem to identify a low level of recall (Babin & Carder, 1996B; Law & Braun, 2000; Tiwsakul, et al., 2005).

Recall does appear to increase as the placements appear more obtrusively (Brennan, Dubas, & Babin, 1999B; d'Astous & Chartier, 2000). So with this in mind, it can be concluded that plain, unobtrusive product placements are only slightly effective in terms of recall (Law & Braun-LaTour,

2004). Two opposing concepts present themselves in this case. One, the subtlety of placements makes them appealing to practitioners because the audience does not recognize the attempt to persuade. And two, the non-obtrusive, non-persuasive way of placing products runs the high chance of being unnoticed by the audience (Matthes, et al., 2007).

### ***Mere Exposure***

Despite study after study exploring levels of recall, there is a growing amount of literature suggesting that placements do not actually need to be able to be recalled in order to be deemed effective – impacting brand attitudes. One study in particular identifies the concept of mere exposure as it relates to placement effectiveness in that sense. The Matthes, Schemer, and Wirth (2007) study found that a positive effect on brand attitude can occur if placements are viewed frequently despite the inability of recall. The one caveat is that high involvement with the show must be present while high persuasive knowledge is not. When involvement is low and persuasive knowledge is high, a deterioration of brand attitude can occur (Matthes, et al., 2007).

In a number of research studies, effectiveness is measured by recall and recognition. It was somewhat assumed that placements must be recognized and recalled in order for viewers to be effected by them (Karrh, 2003; Russell, 1998). Some hints were made in more recent studies that brand attitudes can be impacted even if the placements were not recalled. Law and Braun-LaTour (2004) acknowledge the more subtle effects made possible by product placement. The more recent trend of placement research suggests the separation of recall and evaluation (Law & Braun-LaTour, 2004; Russell, 2002).

The field of cognitive psychology recognizes the concept of mere exposure (Kunst-Wilson & Zajonc, 1980; Zajonc, 1968). The study of mere exposure effect has taken on a following of advertising and marketing researchers (Baker, 1999; Fang, Singh, & Ahluwalia, 2007; Grimes &

Kitchen, 2007; Lee & Labroo, 2004; Tom, Nelson, Srzentic, & King, 2007; Zajonc, 2004). Janiszewski (1993) found that the sheer appearance of a brand in a print advertisement yielded a positive effect on attitudes and evaluations of that brand, despite the inability of the viewers to recall their exposure to it. In Russell's (2002) intriguing study, there was an examination into the degree of impact of modality (whether a placement was presented in a visual or auditory manner) and the level of connection between storyline and featured placements on audience recall and attitudes. The results of the study confirmed that placements that could not be recalled did impact audience attitudes towards the brand. In addition to this, product placements that were more easily recalled had no effect on audience attitudes. Just as Russell (2002) describes, placements that are the center of attention can be viewed as obtrusive, leaving viewers to respond with a counter-arguing mind set.

There are some slight differences in the mere exposure effect examined by psychologists than that explored by advertising and marketing researchers. In cognitive psychology, mere exposure effect is studied by presenting stimuli directly to the viewer. Placements are not presented in this way; they are persistently popping up in daily programming, forced to compete with the variety of other activities taking over the screen (Matthes, et al., 2007).

The mere exposure effect has been eloquently stated as occurring "entirely outside of conscious awareness, involving implicit rather than explicit knowledge" (Bornstein & D'Agostino, 1992, p. 545). An abundance of research in cognitive psychology has revealed that the frequent exposure to a formerly unknown stimulus yields a boost in liking for that stimulus (Fang, et al., 2007; Grimes & Kitchen, 2007; Lee & Labroo, 2004; Reber, Schwarz, & Winkielman, 2004; Schacter, 1987; Shapiro, 1999; Winkielman, Schwarz, Fazendeiro, & Reber, 2003; Zajonc, 2004).



### ***Ethically-Charged***

The placement of brands into programming for commercial purposes is a common marketing practice. Although the increase in placement popularity can be tied to the financial benefit of the practice (Motion Picture Association, 2006A) or to the potential for reaching extended audiences (Krugman, et al., 1995; Mandese, 2004A; Wasko, Phillips, & Purdie, 1993), there has been some question as to what ethical concerns, if any, are present in the practice. Nebenzahl and Jaffe (1998) perceived product placement as the “least ethical form of advertising” (p. 810). Advertisers work on the hope that if they are able to seamlessly interlace products into programs, they should be able to persuade viewers to like their products and, in turn, influence purchase behavior, without making an identifiable pitch. This has begun to raise some ethical questions (Atkinson, 2003C; Davidson, 1996).

Product placement has come under some fire as a form of concealed advertising. It attempts to blend in with content without any warnings or clear distinctions to indicate its persuasive message (Edwards, 2005). Although the criticisms do exist, there has not been an overwhelming set of concern from regulators. This could stem from the lack of serious outcry from the general public, which would be necessary for policy to be created (Hastek, Mazis, & Morris, 2001). Some reservations have been found regarding specific ethically charged categories (Gupta & Gould, 1997; Karrh, et al., 2001; Nebenzahl & Secunda, 1993; Redondo & Holbrook, 2008).

Studies have found that the perceptions of young adults are rather consistent across time. Placements are not identified as unethical, even if they are thought to be camouflaged advertisements (Gupta, et al., 2000; Karrh, et al., 2001; Nebenzahl & Secunda, 1993; Sung & de Gregorio, 2008). They do not, however, maintain the positive attitudes towards the practice in the case of ethically-charged products like firearms and tobacco (Gupta & Gould, 1997; Karrh, et al., 2003; McKechnie & Zhou, 2003). As for older adults, viewers have a rather positive view of

placements. In addition to some positive feelings, they did not agree with the concept of general government regulation of the practice. They were not in agreement with banning product placement (Sheehan & Guo, 2005). They, in turn, valued the realism that such placements bring to entertainment content. Moreover, the older adults did not find the practice to be unethical and were very aware that placements appearances within content were a form of advertising. Furthermore, a study found the only circumstances when viewers would be tolerant of government regulation would be regarding the use of ethically-charged products (Sung, de Gregorio, & Jung, 2009).

Despite some voiced concerns from consumer groups, the results of the Sung, de Gregorio, and Jung (2009) study very well may indicate to policy makers the lack of need for regulation of placements. Consumers are incredibly aware that placements within content are generally paid forms of advertising seeking to persuade. They acknowledge the motives and also the benefits, such as the realism, that it allows. There is generally a favorable attitude toward product placement (Schmoll, Hafer, Hilt, & Reilly, 2006). Placements are acceptable means of reaching audiences, so long as ethically-charged products are not being placed. Placing items such as tobacco, guns, gambling and alcohol can be very risky for marketers (Sung, et al., 2009).

## **METHODS**

A content analysis of prime time broadcast network programming was undertaken in an effort to best identify current placement trends for NBC prime-time comedies, and to use this information to better understand product placement techniques and possible placement opportunities for similar NBC comedies. The program selection process will be described here, followed by a description of the coding sheet development, the coding process, and the data analysis procedures. Television programs were selected as a means of formulating a descriptive analysis of what was currently occurring. These shows were ones that had been on the air for more than three seasons, giving them the opportunity to have already tapped into product placement resources.

### ***Program Selection Process***

#### *Genre*

Most prime time broadcast programming can be broken down into one of three genres: comedy, drama, or reality. This study focuses on comedies. This comedy genre was selected for analysis in this study because program type has been found to be related to the program's ability to influence audience attitudes (Davis, Hull, Young, & Warren, 1987; Forgas & Moylan, 1987). Specifically, shows that are more upbeat in tone yield more positive moods for viewers. There has also been a connection made to such programs yielding more positive cognitive responses, leading to improved advertising effectiveness (Goldberg & Gorn, 1987). Therefore placement practitioners would be expected to acknowledge this and work accordingly, favoring more upbeat programs (e.g. comedies) when determining where to place their brands (Karrh, et al. 2003).

In order to ensure similar audiences, the comedies were all NBC programs with similar target demographics. The researcher chose to analyze a number of select seasoned NBC comedic

programs including: *30 Rock*, *The Office*, and *Chuck* (NBC Universal, 2010). These shows have had several successful seasons on the air, each having been ranked within the top ten most popular comedies currently on the air (TV.com, 2010). In 2008, *Chuck* ranked number two in its 8pm timeslot with a rating of 4.4 within the 18-49 demographic. *The Office* was ranked number two in its 9pm time slot with a rating of 5.2, only trailing behind CBS's *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation* within the 18-49 demographic. *30 Rock* took third place with a rating of 4.5 with ABC's *Grey Anatomy* only beating it by .1. CBS's *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation* maintained at number one for the 9pm-10pm timeslot for the 18-49 demographic (Broadcasting & Cable, 2008).

*The Office* and *30 Rock* are both critically acclaimed NBC comedies starring Emmy winners like Alec Baldwin, Tina Fey, and Steven Carell (NBC Universal, 2010). In addition to this, the three programs after having been on the air for several seasons have been renewed for next fall. Each has had the time and resources to delve into the world of product placement. The data gathered was used to explore these shows in the hopes of uncovering what is currently being done in regards to product placement in prime-time comedies, creating a type of prime-time product placement inventory. With this knowledge, three newer NBC comedies will then be examined and possible placement opportunities assessed based on what is being done in similar shows. This information will then be used to make concrete recommendations to (1) prime-time programmers and (2) prime-time advertisers.

### ***The Chosen Programs***

NBC is an American television network and former radio network as well. NBC has found success in shows like *The Office*, *Chuck*, and *30 Rock*. These situational comedies vary in length with *The Office* and *30 Rock* running in half hour increments and *Chuck* airing hour-long episodes. With these shows laying the groundwork for possible product placements, the plotlines are important to understand. These may all fit into the category of comedy, but the storylines vary greatly. In

addition to these comedies, the new programs *Community*, *Parks and Recreation*, and *Parenthood* will also be examined for possible placement opportunities.

Although the programs chosen can all be considered comedies, they each can also be categorized into more specific groups such as “mockumentaries,” sitcoms, or dramedies. *30 Rock* and *Community* fall into the traditional sitcom set. *The Office* and *Parks and Recreation* can be grouped into the newer category of “mockumentary.” Finally, the two hour-long programs, *Parenthood* and *Chuck* balance comedy and drama, which place them into the dramedy category.

The comedy line-up for NBC on Thursday night kicks off with *Community* at 8pm. This program follows the inter-mingling of a group of misfit community college students. As a part of a study group the characters bicker and bond as friends. *The Office*, another comedic program airing on Thursday nights on NBC, took on a new type of comedic style with what NBC deems a “mockumentary.” The program follows the daily operation of a paper-supply organization. The main character is the office manager, who is viewed as unskilled and rather inept in his relationships with his co-workers. *Parks and Recreation* is a newer NBC comedy that has followed in the “mockumentary” style. Created by the same people who fashioned *The Office*, this program follows the team of workers in the Parks and Recreation Department in the small town of Pawnee, Indiana. *30 Rock*, airing Thursdays at 9:30pm, maintains a storyline revolving around a television writer who is constantly trying to manage the daily chaos behind the scenes of a variety show.

Along with these four thirty minute comedies, two additional comedic programs were selected, both an hour in length. *Chuck* airs on Monday nights at 9pm. The plot of this program is based on a computer geek who is intertwined in a covert intelligence operation where government secrets were accidentally cataloged into his memory. Airing at 10pm on Tuesday nights is *Parenthood*, a comedy following the lives of a large and eccentric family. With clashing

personalities and a set of characters ranging in age from childhood to retirement, the rollercoaster of events entangles the family at every turn.

### ***Content Analysis***

The purpose of examining the seasoned programs was to uncover what is currently being practiced in regards to product placement. These shows are meant to illustrate and document the types of placements that are being practiced. Knowledge of this inventory was then applied to newer programs.

A form of content analysis was completed for the purposes of the project. One of the main uses of content analysis is to describe and make inferences about characteristics of a communication text; in this case inferences were made regarding product placement within prime-time comedies. It is an appropriate tool for the objectives of this project because quantitative content analysis can involve any kind of analysis where communication content (e.g. television programs and product placements) is categorized and classified. By having such content available in readable texts, such as coding logs, the data is analyzed for frequencies and category building which can later be used to formulate inferences regarding the data.

The programs were recorded for coding purposes and included 17 hours of programming and were examined for a total of four weeks during the May 2010 sweeps period. The four week period began on April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2010 and ended on May 27<sup>th</sup>, 2010. This time period presents the best chance of identifying product placement in programs, as May is one of the television's "sweeps" months. Sweeps is the period of time when television programs are rated based on the number of viewers. The rating analysis is completed by The Nielsen Company. Nielsen ratings are audience measurement figures that represent the size (percentage of households) of the viewing audience and the composition of that audience. The Nielsen Company also provides detailed information on

specific demographics. This demographic information is seen as extremely important because advertising rates are influenced by factors such as age, gender, race, economic class, and geographical area. In addition to this, younger viewers are considered more attractive for many products, whereas in some cases older and wealthier audiences are desired, or female audiences are desired over males. However as a general rule, advertisers usually feel that the number of viewers within the 18-49 age range is more important than the total number of viewers.

When examining the programs for brands, a brand was defined to include traditional consumer products, organizations, and entertainment-related vehicles such as songs, other television programs or movies. An exposure was coded when a brand was referred to verbally, visually, or in dual-mode. In order for an exposure to be coded, it must have been present for a minimum of one second. If a brand was present multiple times in a short amount of time, the length of each appearance was added together to form a single placement. The data collected was not limited to the program content. The commercial breaks were examined as well to determine whether they correlated with any placements present within the program content. In addition to this, the start and end time for each program was recorded along with the length of each show.

### ***Coding Procedures***

A code sheet was created to catalog the placements shown in each of the chosen programs during the May 2010 sweeps period (see Appendix A). The coding sheet can be broken down into several categories, including the different types of product placements. It was created in order to keep track of the placements noticed during the chosen programs. Aspects of the placements observed within the columns of the coding sheet include the different modes of placements such as visual or verbal. The location in reference to the characters is noted as well. For example, a placement may exist in the foreground, the mid-ground, or the background. Foreground placements appeared nearest the viewer, usually with a close-up shot of the product. Background placements

were typically seen amidst the set, slightly more difficult to identify without pausing the program. Mid-ground placements were located somewhere between the other two locations, usually with the brand or logo somewhat visible without having a close-up view of the product. Another aspect examined will be whether the placement occurs in connection with a corresponding commercial.

As a precondition for coding, the placements logged needed to have the product name or brand visible. When numerous brands were noticed, the digital video recorder was stopped. The author then searched for logos or brand identifiers. An image search was done to verify the brands on screen. There were cases when one brand was shown in multiple instances throughout a program. If the product was shown continuously within one steady camera shot, the instance was logged as a singular placement. However if the camera shots varied, each instance was logged as a separate placement. For example, if the HP computer was shown in a close up shot for a total of 15 seconds, that instance was logged as a single placement lasting 15 seconds. If the computer was shown in a close up shot for 11 seconds and then shown in the background, immediately following the close up, for 5 seconds, the author logged it as two placements. The change in camera shot determined whether the product shown was considered to be one or more placements. In order to keep track of the length of each placement, a stop watch was used. To assess the occurrence of placements in prime-time NBC comedic programs, each observed placement was logged. Because it was not possible to recognize paid placements from unpaid ones, every placement identified was coded by the author. The author was the only coder for this project.

When coding, each placement was identified by product, brand, and product category (i.e. apparel, food, computer, etc.). Details regarding the mode were also catalogued. If the placement was visual, details regarding how it was presented were noted. Prominence was also acknowledged in the coding. For the purposes of this project, prominence was broken down into three categories: foreground, mid-ground, and background. Whether the product was shown in



relation to a character was also considered. Verbal placements were coded in a similar manner. Whether the mention of the product was essential to the scene, whether it was mentioned in sheer banter between characters, or if it was subtly dropped into the dialogue with no real connection to the scene were all noted within a description area of the coding sheet.

In addition to the analysis of the aforementioned seasoned programs, three newer programs were examined. All were NBC situational comedies and are newer programs. *Community* and *Parks and Recreation* were introduced September 2009, and *Parenthood* began airing in March of 2010. These three programs have not had the time to explore all the placement opportunities possible. Using the review of the literature, and the analysis of rather successful (in that they have been on the air for multiple seasons) shows, it was hoped that some possible placement opportunities for these three newer programs would be uncovered. The first stage of the project was done to help inform subsequent stages.

### ***The Coding Sheet***

In order to understand what is being offered in terms of placement in the comedy format of NBC programs, a coding sheet was created prior to examining the shows. A number of aspects were considered for each placement noticed. The coding sheet began with basic information in order to aid in the organization of the data collected. Aspects such as date of placement, day program aired, start time and end time, and length of program were all noted.

Modality is one of the first aspects of the placement considered in the coding sheet. Modality is broken down into three categories: visual, auditory, or dual-mode. Dual-mode placements are those that have both a visual and auditory element (Gupta & Lord, 1998; Law & Braun, 2000; Russell, 2002; Sabherwal, et al., 1994).

Basic categories of modality are not the only aspects explored. Details such as length of shot and mention are noted. The time lengths are taken from the academic study done by La Ferle and Edwards (2006). Visual placements were examined for demonstrative characteristics and visual exposure. Demonstrative placements describe the use of the product being featured in an advantageous way. The placement would present the potential advantages of the product. For instance, a new expensive high-tech cell phone may be shown doing tasks that most other phones would be ill-equipped to handle. The special features may not be boasted about but would be visually presented (Hong, et al., 2008). As for the visual exposure category, the visual placements were examined to determine whether they were obscured in any way (La Ferle & Edwards, 2006).

The auditory placements were further categorized by reference types: brand, product, category, or pronoun. This codes whether the brand name is mentioned or if it was merely the product title. Auditory mentions can be made referencing categories and pronouns as well. An example of a category reference would be if a Jack Daniels alcohol bottle is present within the screen shot and the character asks, "would you like a drink?" The drink would be a category. A pronoun reference can take place when a character is pouring a glass of Jack Daniels and turns to another character and says, "Would you like this?" This would be an example of the pronoun category reference, with no specific brand or product name being given verbally, just the modifier.

A brief description of the placement is also stated within the coding sheet. This adds to a greater understanding of what occurred. It should help in the analysis phase of the project, giving some depth, context, and description to the placement. Other aspects such as whether the placement occurs in connection with a commercial or whether there is a character connection present are also noted.

The final two notation sections within the code book relate to placement category and placement setting. The placement category consists of: entertainment, food, non-alcoholic

beverage, alcoholic beverage, books, jewelry, apparel, computer, home/garden, services, auto, electronic, furniture, sporting goods, beauty, and health/nutrition. A similar placement category list was used in the La Ferle and Edwards study "Product Placement: How Brands Appear on Television" in 2006 in *the Journal of Advertising*. The placement setting groups are made up of: work/business, outdoors/not home, sporting venue, home, restaurant/bar, outdoors at home, school, and unclear. These categories allow for groups of similar placements to be analyzed at one time if necessary.

## RESULTS

A total of 314 product placements were coded in six different prime-time NBC comedic programs for this project. Data were collected through the four week period of the May 2010 sweeps. The results amount to approximately one placement exposure every 3.25 minutes across seventeen hours of programming. The older programs contained more placements than the newer programs. A summary of the number of exposures, broken down by comedic category, is located in Table 1A, with Table 1B showing the number of exposures separated within program titles. Dramedies featured the most instances of product placement, with mockumentaries and sitcoms trailing behind respectively. The older programs contained a higher frequency of placements compared to the newer shows.

### *Frequency of Placements*

The data featured 130 different products. The data showed 213 of the placements as being visual, 85 being auditory, and 16 being dual-mode as shown in Table 2. Each program was examined to determine how often a placement was present within thirty minute intervals. The older programs, as expected, had the highest frequencies of placements per thirty-minute intervals, with *The Office* having the most of all the other programs examined. Despite airing twice as much content as *The Office*, *Parenthood* had the least amount of placements per thirty-minute interval. The breakdown of placement frequency per thirty minutes of content is shown in Table 3A. During the coding process, there was no way to determine which placements were paid and which were unpaid. However, if there were multiple mentions of a specific product or brand within each program, it is likely that the placement was paid. Table 3B illustrates the products or brands most frequently placed within each program. In addition to this, the table shows what percent of the total placements that product or brand was within each program. The Apple iPhone was the most frequently placed product within *Chuck*. The iPhone represented eight of the total 83 placements.

HP was the most frequently placed brand in *The Office*, with 26 of the total 77 placements. *30 Rock* had 15 NBC placements of the 53 total placements. The newer programs did experience some consistent placements; however the percentage of these to the total were small.

### ***Visual Placements***

Several aspects of visual placements were examined within the coding process, including the visual location of the placement, the degree of exposure, and the length of exposure. The placements were also examined to determine whether the visual placement was demonstrative in nature. These details are illustrated within Tables 4A-4D. The visual locations of the placements were broken down into categories consisting of foreground, midground, and background. The data showed 67 foreground visual placements, 118 midground, and 44 within the background. Degree of exposure was determined to be either slightly obscured or completely exposed. The majority of the visual placements were determined to be completely exposed. However, the number of placements for the two degrees of exposure was very close, with 119 being completely exposed and 110 being slightly obscured. Visual placements were identified as demonstrative or not. The great majority of visual placements were not demonstrative in nature. The visual placements were broken down into segmented lengths of exposure time ranging from 1-5 seconds to more than 15 seconds. The frequency of the visual exposure lengths are shown in Table 4D. The majority lasted between one and five seconds.

### ***Auditory Placements***

Auditory placements were examined for length of mention and reference type. As with the visual length categories, the auditory placements were examined in length categories consisting of 1-5 seconds, 6-10 seconds, 11-15 seconds, and more than 15 seconds. The data showed the majority of auditory placements lasting 1-5 seconds. There were 92 auditory placements lasting 1-

5 seconds, 5 lasting 6-10 seconds, and 3 lasting 11-15 seconds, as seen in Table 5A. Auditory placements were examined to determine whether they were referenced by brand, product, category or pronoun. Of the 101 auditory placements (auditory plus dual-mode), 58 were referenced by brand, with 39 referenced by product title and 3 referenced by category, as shown in Table 5B.

### ***Dual-Mode Placements***

Dual-mode placements were coded as well. As with auditory and visual placements, dual-mode placements were coded for length on screen including degree of exposure, reference type and whether the placement was demonstrative. There were a total of 16 dual-mode placements, four of which were shown within mockumentaries, five within sitcoms, and seven within dramedies. Of the 314 placements, five percent were dual-mode.

### ***Product Category***

The placements were broken down into product categories, with entertainment, electronics, computer, auto and apparel being the most frequently presented within the programs. The frequency of placements in each product category is illustrated in Table 6A. When each program is examined separately, the most popular categories vary slightly. *Chuck* presented more placements in electronics, apparel, automobiles and computers. *Parenthood* more frequently placed entertainment products, sporting goods, and automobiles. The computer and apparel categories were also utilized frequently. *Community* and *The Office* utilized placements within electronics, entertainment, automobiles and services. However, *The Office* also showed quite a few computer placements. *30 Rock* utilized a large number of entertainment placements, followed by placements within the reading materials, toys, and services categories. *Parks and Recreation* had more placements within the computers, entertainment, automobiles, and electronics categories. In

addition to those, there were also quite a few alcohol placements. The breakdown of placement categories within each show is seen in Table 6B. When broken down by comedic style, the dramedy category had more placements than any other. Sitcoms featured more entertainment placements. The mockumentaries had more computer placements. The breakdown per comedic category is seen in table 6C.

### ***Placement Setting***

The majority of the placements that took place occurred within settings such as work, home, school or outdoors/not home. Most of the placements present within *Chuck* were seen either at work or at home. The *Parenthood* placements were mostly seen either at home or outdoors/not home. The other programs more frequently placed products within one setting. School was the main setting for *Community* placements. Work was the main setting for *The Office*, *30 Rock* and *Parks and Recreation* placements. The corresponding frequencies are shown on Table 7B.

### ***Character Connection***

Placements were also examined for their connection to a character, and whether they were also associated with a commercial advertisement during the program. Each placement was coded as being connected with either a primary character, a guest character, a celebrity guest star or having no character association. Of the 314 placements seen, 260 of them were linked to primary characters and 32 were associated with guest characters. One placement was linked to a celebrity guest star and 21 placements had no character association. These details are shown in Table 8A. Product placements can occur in and of themselves or in connection with a commercial break. Each placement was coded for this. As seen in Table 8B, the majority did not occur in association with a commercial advertisement. A total of 43 did correspond to a commercial, whereas 271 did not.

**TABLES 1A-1B: PROGRAM PLACEMENT FREQUENCIES**

TABLE 1A: PLACEMENTS PER COMEDIC CATEGORY

	FREQUENCY	VALID PERCENT
SITCOM	85	27.1
DRAMEDY	127	40.4
MOCKUMENTARY	102	32.5
TOTAL	314	100.0

TABLE 1B: FREQUENCY OF PLACEMENTS PER PROGRAM

	FREQUENCY	VALID PERCENT
CHUCK	83	26.4
PARENTHOOD	44	14.0
COMMUNITY	32	10.2
THE OFFICE	77	24.5
30 ROCK	53	16.9
PARKS AND RECREATION	25	8.0
TOTAL	314	100.0

**TABLE 2: MODALITY FREQUENCIES**

TABLE 2: MODALITY OF PLACEMENT

	FREQUENCY	VALID PERCENT
VISUAL	213	67.8
AUDITORY	85	27.1
DUAL-MODE	16	5.1
TOTAL	314	100.0



**TABLES 3A-3B: PLACEMENT FREQUENCY PER 30 MINUTE INTERVALS & MOST FREQUENT BRAND**

**TABLE 3A: FREQUENCIES PER 30 MINUTES OF CONTENT**

	<b>FREQUENCY PER 30 MINUTES</b>	<b># OF 30 MINUTE INTERVALS</b>
<b>CHUCK</b>	8	10
<b>PARENTHOOD</b>	5	8
<b>THE OFFICE</b>	19	4
<b>PARKS AND RECREATION</b>	6	4
<b>30 ROCK</b>	13	4
<b>COMMUNITY</b>	8	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	59	34

**TABLE 3B: MOST FREQUENTLY PLACED PRODUCT/BRAND PER PROGRAM**

	<b>PRODUCT/BRAND PLACED</b>	<b>FREQUENCY WITHIN PROGRAM</b>	<b>% OF TOTAL PLACEMENTS WITHIN PROGRAM</b>
<b>CHUCK</b>	Apple iPhone	10	12%
<b>PARENTHOOD</b>	Nike	9	20%
<b>THE OFFICE</b>	HP	26	34%
<b>PARKS AND RECREATION</b>	Dell	5	20%
<b>30 ROCK</b>	NBC	15	28%
<b>COMMUNITY</b>	Lexus	3	9%

**TABLES 4A-4D: VISUAL FREQUENCIES**

TABLE 4A: VISUAL PLACEMENTS

	FREQUENCY	VALID PERCENT
NONE	85	27.1
BACKGROUND	44	14.0
MIDGROUND	118	37.6
FOREGROUND	67	21.3
TOTAL	314	100.0

TABLE 4B: VISUAL EXPOSURES

	FREQUENCY	VALID PERCENT
COMPLETELY EXPOSED	119	37.9
SLIGHTLY OBSCURED	110	35.0
N/A	85	27.1
TOTAL	314	100.0

TABLE 4C: DEMONSTRATIVE PLACEMENTS

	FREQUENCY	VALID PERCENT
YES	2	.6
NO	227	72.3
N/A	85	27.1
TOTAL	314	100.0

TABLE 4D: LENGTH OF VISUAL PLACEMENTS

	FREQUENCY	VALID PERCENT
NONE	85	27.1
1-5 SECONDS	159	50.6
6-10 SECONDS	46	14.6
11-15 SECONDS	12	3.8
MORE THAN 15 SECONDS	12	3.8
TOTAL	314	100.0

**TABLES 5A-5B: AUDITORY FREQUENCIES**

**TABLE 5A: LENGTH OF AUDITORY MENTIONS**

	<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>VALID PERCENT</b>
<b>NONE</b>	214	68.2
<b>1-5 SECONDS</b>	92	29.3
<b>6-10 SECONDS</b>	5	1.6
<b>11-15 SECONDS</b>	3	1.0
<b>TOTAL</b>	314	100.0

**TABLE 5B: REFERENCE TYPE FREQUENCIES**

	<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>VALID PERCENT</b>
<b>BRAND</b>	58	18.5
<b>PRODUCT</b>	39	12.4
<b>CATEGORY</b>	3	1.0
<b>N/A</b>	214	68.2
<b>TOTAL</b>	314	100.0

**TABLES 6A-6C: PLACEMENT CATEGORIES**

TABLE 6A: PRODUCT PLACEMENT CATEGORIES

	FREQUENCY	VALID PERCENT
ENTERTAINMENT	74	23.6
FOOD	10	3.2
NON-ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE	4	1.3
ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE	6	1.9
READING MATERIAL	9	2.9
TOY (CHILD'S)	3	1.0
GAME (NON-ELECTRONIC)	1	.3
JEWELRY	2	.6
APPAREL	27	8.6
COMPUTER	47	15.0
SERVICES	16	5.1
AUTO	30	9.6
ELECTRONIC	56	17.8
SPORTING GOODS	13	4.1
BEAUTY	2	.6
OTHER	14	4.5
TOTAL	314	100.0

TABLE 6B: PLACEMENT CATEGORY & NAME OF PROGRAM CROSSTABULATION

	CHUCK	PARENTHOOD	COMMUNITY	THE OFFICE	30 ROCK	PARKS AND RECREATION	TOTAL
ENTERTAINMENT	6	13	9	8	35	3	74
FOOD	2	2	1	3	2	0	10
NON-ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE	0	0	2	0	0	2	4
ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE	0	0	0	0	2	4	6
READING MATERIAL	3	0	0	2	3	1	9
TOY (CHILD'S)	0	0	0	0	3	0	3
GAME (NON-ELECTRONIC)	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
JEWELRY	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
APPAREL	17	4	2	3	0	1	27
COMPUTER	10	4	0	27	0	6	47
SERVICES	1	0	3	8	3	1	16
AUTO	10	7	4	5	1	3	30
ELECTRONIC	25	0	7	20	1	3	56
SPORTING GOODS	0	9	2	0	1	1	13
BEAUTY	1	0	1	0	0	0	2
OTHER	6	5	0	1	2	0	14
TOTAL	83	44	32	77	53	25	314

TABLE 6C: PRODUCT CATEGORIES PER COMEDIC CATEGORY

	SITCOM	DRAMEDY	MOCKUMENTARY	TOTAL
ENTERTAINMENT	44	19	11	74
FOOD	3	4	3	10
NON-ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE	2	0	2	4
ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE	2	0	4	6
READING MATERIAL	3	3	3	9
TOY (CHILD'S)	3	0	0	3
GAME (NON-ELECTRONIC)	1	0	0	1
JEWELRY	0	2	0	2
APPAREL	2	21	4	27
COMPUTER	0	14	33	47
SERVICES	6	1	9	16
AUTO	5	17	8	30
ELECTRONIC	8	25	23	56
SPORTING GOODS	3	9	1	13
BEAUTY	1	1	0	2
OTHER	2	11	1	14
TOTAL	85	127	102	314

**TABLES 7A-7B: PRODUCT PLACEMENT SETTINGS**

TABLE 7A: PLACEMENT SETTINGS

	FREQUENCY	VALID PERCENT
WORK/BUSINESS	172	54.8
OUTDOORS/NOT HOME	30	9.6
SPORTING VENUE	4	1.3
HOME	44	14.0
RESTAURANT/BAR	7	2.2
OUTDOORS AT HOME	3	1.0
SCHOOL	33	10.5
UNCLEAR	2	.6
OTHER	19	6.1
TOTAL	314	100.0

TABLE 7B: NAME OF PROGRAM & PLACEMENT SETTING CROSSTABULATION

	WORK/ BUSINESS	OUTDOORS/ NOT HOME	SPORTING VENUE	HOME	RESTAURANT/ BAR	OUTDOORS AT HOME	SCHOOL	UNCLEAR	OTHER	TOTAL
CHUCK % WITHIN PROGRAM	45 54.2%	6 7.2%	0 .0%	21 25.3%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	2 2.4%	9 10.8%	83 100%
PARENTHOOD % WITHIN PROGRAM	0 .0%	13 29.5%	4 9.1%	20 45.5%	0 .0%	3 6.8%	1 2.3%	0 .0%	3 6.8%	44 100%
COMMUNITY % WITHIN PROGRAM	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	32 100%	0 .0%	0 .0%	32 100%
THE OFFICE % WITHIN PROGRAM	73 94.8%	3 3.9%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	1 1.3%	77 100%
30 ROCK % WITHIN PROGRAM	38 71.7%	6 11.3%	0 .0%	3 5.7%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	6 11.3%	53 100%
PARKS AND RECREATION % WITHIN PROGRAM	16 64.0%	2 8.0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	7 28.0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	25 100%
TOTAL % WITHIN PROGRAM	172 54.8%	30 9.6%	4 1.3%	44 14.0%	7 2.2%	3 1.0%	33 10.5%	2 .6%	19 6.1%	314 100%

**TABLES 8A-8B: PLACEMENT CHARACTERS AND COMMERCIALS**

**TABLE 8A: PLACEMENTS ASSOCIATED WITH A CHARACTER**

	<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>VALID PERCENT</b>
<b>NONE</b>	21	6.7
<b>PRIMARY CHARACTER</b>	260	82.8
<b>GUEST CHARACTER</b>	32	10.2
<b>CELEBRITY GUEST STAR</b>	1	.3
<b>TOTAL</b>	314	100.0

**TABLE 8B: PLACEMENTS IN CONNECTION WITH A COMMERCIAL**

	<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>VALID PERCENT</b>
<b>YES</b>	43	13.7
<b>NO</b>	271	86.3
<b>TOTAL</b>	314	100.0



## ***Comedic Types***

The programs examined could be separated into groups, either by comedic style or by length. The comedic categories were sitcom, dramedy and mockumentary. The sitcom style of comedy consisted of *30 Rock* and *Community*. The dramedy category consisted of *Chuck* and *Parenthood*. Finally, the mockumentary style category was made up of *The Office* and *Parks and Recreation*.

The dramedy category experienced more placements, with mockumentaries and sitcoms trailing behind respectively. The dramedies had a total of 127 placements, with 102 placements taking place in mockumentaries and 85 in sitcoms. Approximately 77% of the placements within dramedies were visual, with about 17% being auditory and 5.5% being dual-mode. Some of the dual-mode placements consist of the inclusion of Photoshop in *Parenthood* and Subway in *Chuck*.

### *Dramedy Characteristics*

The majority of the visual placements within dramedies took place midground, with foreground visual placements following closely. The visual placements were often completely exposed. There were 65 of the 105 visual dramedy placements completely exposed, with 40 of the total slightly obscured. The use of demonstrative placements was unlikely, with only one of the visual dramedy placements being demonstrative. Over three-fourths of the visual dramedy placements were viewed for only 1-5 seconds.

If the placement was auditory, the mention also only lasted 1-5 seconds. Auditory mentions more often referenced brands instead of products within the dramedy category. The majority of the dramedy placements were not associated with a commercial. Over 90% of the placements within dramedies were associated with primary characters, with about 6% associated with guest

characters. Electronics, apparel, and entertainment were the more common placement categories within the dramedy style category. Work and home were the most common settings.

#### *Mockumentary Characteristics*

A little over 75% of the mockumentary placements were visual, with about 20% being auditory and about 4% being dual-mode. The visual placements within the mockumentary category were most often shown in the midground, with almost 30% being shown in the background. Of the total visual mockumentary placements, the majority were shown slightly obscured, with none of them being demonstrative in nature. The large majority of the visual and auditory mockumentary placements lasted between 1 and 5 seconds. The auditory placements were more often referenced by brand rather than product. Approximately 95% of the mockumentary placements were not in connection with a commercial, and about 76% were associated with a primary character. Computers, electronics, and entertainment were the most common product categories. About 87% of placements within mockumentaries were seen in the business setting.

#### *Sitcom Characteristics*

The sitcoms had more auditory placements than visual, however the two modalities were closely matched. About 49.5% of the sitcom placements were auditory, with 44.7% being visual and only about 6% being dual-mode. Visual sitcom placements were viewed equally in the foreground and midground, with only three of the visual sitcom placements being shown in the background. The majority of the visual placements were shown completely exposed. Of the 42 visual placements within the sitcom category, only one was viewed as demonstrative. Similarly to the other comedic categories, the majority of the visual placements within the sitcom category were exposed between one and five seconds. The majority of the auditory placements were also

mentioned between one and five seconds. Of the auditory mentions, 24 were referenced by brand with 15 referenced by product and two by category. Approximately 72% of the placements were not associated with a commercial. About 67% of all the sitcom placements were linked to a primary character. Entertainment was the most common product category utilized, with business and school being the most common placement settings.

### ***Program Length Findings***

The length of the programs was coded. Although the shows were typically either 30 minutes long or an hour long, the finale of *Chuck* lasted two hours. When separated into program length, the 30 minute shows experienced more visual placements than auditory and dual-mode combined. The majority of the visual placements for 30 minute shows were placed midground, and were slightly obscured. Of the total visual placements within 30 minute programs, only one was demonstrative. The majority of both visual and auditory placements lasted between one and five seconds.

More than half of the auditory placements were referenced by brand rather than by product. Only a small portion of the 30 minute program placements were associated with a commercial, with the vast majority of placements linked to a primary character. Entertainment, computers, and electronics were the most common product categories within the 30 minute comedies (Table 5B). Almost all of the placements occurred in a business setting (Table 6B).

The hour long programs, including *Chuck* and *Parenthood*, experienced more visual placements than auditory. The majority of the visual placements were seen in the midground with the foreground placements closely following in frequency. Most of the visual placements were completely exposed, with only some being slightly obscured. Almost every one of the visual placements was deemed to not be demonstrative in nature.

The majority of both visual and auditory placements lasted between one and five seconds. Auditory placements were more frequently referenced by brand. Most of the placements were not associated with a commercial advertisement. Similarly to the 30 minute programs, the hour long programs also tended to link products to primary characters. Electronics, apparel, and entertainment were the most common product categories (Table 5B). Forty-five of the placements took place at work, and 41 took place at home (Table 6B).

### ***Specific Program Findings***

The placements were also organized by the program they appeared in. Within the program *Chuck*, more visual placements were found than auditory and dual-mode placements combined. Most of the visual *Chuck* placements were shown in either the midground or the foreground. The majority of the visual placements were completely exposed. None of the visual *Chuck* placements were deemed to be demonstrative. The majority of the auditory and visual placements found lasted between one and five seconds. The auditory mentions were equally referenced by brand and product. The vast majority of the placements found were not associated with a commercial. Most of the placements featured in *Chuck* were linked to a primary character. Electronics, apparel, computers and automobiles were the most common product categories placed (Table 5B). The two most common settings were work and home (Table 6B).

*Parenthood* had similar trends compared to *Chuck*, with the majority of placements being visually presented in either the midground or foreground. However, *Parenthood* visual placements were more frequently viewed slightly obscured. The majority of the visual placements were not demonstrative in nature. Both auditory and visual placements typically lasted between one and five seconds. More often than not, auditory placements were referenced by brand. Only 6 of the placements were linked to a commercial, with 38 not associated to a commercial advertisement. Most of the placements were associated with a primary character. Entertainment, sporting goods,

and automobiles were the most common product categories (Table 5B). The majority of the placements took place at home (Table 6B).

*The Office* has more visual placements than auditory placements, with only four being featured dual-mode. Most of the visual placements were shown in the midground, with background being the second most used degree of visual placement. *The Office* visual placements were more frequently shown slightly obscured, and no demonstrative placements were identified. Both auditory and visual placements within *The Office* typically only lasted between one and five seconds. Again, most auditory mentions were referenced by brand rather than product, category, or pronoun. Only five of the total placements were connected to a commercial. Approximately 83% of *The Office* placements were linked to a primary character. Computers and electronics were the most frequent product categories featured within *The Office* (Table 5B), with work being the most common setting (Table 6B).

Similar to *The Office*, *Parks and Recreation* experienced more visual placements, with most of them being shown in the midground. The degree of exposure for visual placements were almost equally split between completely exposed and slightly obscured. None of the visual placements were determined to be demonstrative. Again, auditory and visual placements usually lasted between one and five seconds. However, the auditory mentions were equally referenced by brand and product, with none being noted by category or pronoun. There were no placements associated with commercials, and the majority of them placements were linked to a primary character. Computers and alcoholic beverages were the most commonly placed categories, with entertainment, automobiles, and electronics trailing behind (Table 5B). Work was the most common setting, with restaurant/bar being the second most common (Table 6B).

*30 Rock* featured almost an equal number of auditory and visual placements with very few placements represented in dual-mode. Most of the visual placements in *30 Rock* were shown

midground. The majority of the visual placements were completely exposed, however none of the placements were identified as demonstrative. Similar to several of the other programs, the auditory and visual placements typically lasted between one and five seconds. Most of the auditory mentions were done so by brand. A total of 23 of the placements found in *30 Rock* were associated with a commercial, with 30 not connected to a commercial break. Again, most of the placements were linked to a primary character, and took place at work (Table 6B). Almost all of the placements were within the entertainment category (Table 5B).

Finally, *Community* featured a similar number of visual and auditory placements. Most of the visual placements were seen in the foreground, and were slightly obscured. Only one of them was identified to be demonstrative. The visual and auditory placements often only lasted between one and five seconds. Nine of the auditory placements were referenced by brand, and 8 were referenced by product. None of the *Community* placements were associated with a commercial. However, most of the placements were linked to a primary character. Entertainment, electronics and automobiles were the most common featured product categories (Table 5B), with school being the most frequent setting (Table 6).

## **DISCUSSION**

This project quantified the product placement exposures occurring on prime-time NBC comedic programs, paying attention to the location of the product on screen (prominence), the mode of the placement and the type of product placed. The data allowed for the gathering of information crucial in understanding the current state of placements in comedic programming today.

A number of important findings can be suggested from the data gathered. Product placements are rather commonplace in today's NBC comedic programming, making an appearance every 3.25 minutes. This illustrates the current crowded programming landscape which demands that practitioners actively manage their placements. The program with the highest number of placements per thirty minute interval was *The Office*. This is likely due to the immense number of setting props connected to the program's HP sponsorship, with 26 of the total 77 placements within *The Office* being HP computers. Without this, the number of placements would be drastically lower.

Although there were specific product categories that were prominent in each comedic style, this is not as important as the program itself. The findings show that setting and characters trump program format. Products should be placed in relation to the set or a specific character and not due to only the comedic style of the program.

### ***Specific Program Considerations***

*Chuck* contained more product placements than the other programs examined. Although show longevity can relate to the higher number of placements, the length of the program also ties into this. Hour-long programs have more time available to insert placements than programs that last half of the time. Therefore, the longer shows such as *Chuck* and *Parenthood* should have higher

rates of placement. However, *Parenthood* has yet to utilize all of the placement opportunities that might be available due to its new arrival on air.

### ***Modality Considerations***

The programs viewed yielded data showing that placements had a tendency to be presented in one mode or the other, rarely being done in dual-mode. More often than not, visual placements were more frequent. This seems somewhat counterintuitive considering that for the purposes of brand recall, the most effective mode of placement is dual-mode, with auditory and visual following respectively (Gupta & Lord, 1998; Law & Braun-LaTour, 2004; Sabherwal, et al., 1994). With dual-mode likely being more expensive, it is understandable why it may not be utilized as often as the other two modalities.

The most frequently appearing brands were typically visual placements. As was seen in *The Office* and *Chuck*, the placements were props that matched well with the setting. The use of Apple laptops and cell phones (Table 3B) in *Chuck* was common in the electronics store. *The Office* had a large number of HP prop placements (Table 3B). NBC was represented in placement form quite a bit in *30 Rock*, sometimes as dual-mode but mostly in only visual form. The placements such as the iPhone within the program *Chuck* or HP within the show *The Office* are likely paid placements due to their high frequencies throughout the sweeps episodes. The constant use of the products as placements within the programs suggests a paid form of placement.

However, it is also likely that if a placement is dual-mode, it was paid placement and not gratis (“accidental” placement) or barter. When examining the cost of placements, it is understandable that dual-mode placements may be more expensive due to the fact that they utilize both visual and auditory means. In *Chuck*, for example, the auditory mention of Subway’s new



breakfast sandwich in addition to a close-up visual shot of the sandwich was likely a paid placement.

The cost of a product placement can vary. It usually depends on the exposure rate of the product, the duration of the exposure, and the degree of inclusion into the plot. Products can be actively used by a character, or just placed in the foreground of a shot (Segrave, 2004).

As with so many industries, the media industry operates on the notion that time is money. Companies are always on a budget when it comes to advertising, and are always in search of the most cost-effective ways to get their product publicized. Therefore, when it comes to product placement it can be understood that auditory placements can be more costly than visual placements most of the time. The time it takes to incorporate auditory placements into the script can become costly, not to mention the more time the placement takes within the program, the less time available for content intended for the scriptwriter. However, placing a product with an identifiable brand in the background of a set takes less time and effort. Clearly, dual-mode placements can be the most expensive modality, utilizing both the efforts of including auditory mentions and placing the product on the set. It is, therefore, understandable why, although dual-mode and auditory placements have been shown to increase recall, they are not as common individually as visual placements.

When it comes to the tone in which placements appeared, neutrality seemed to be the overriding theme. For example, if an exposure was verbally portrayed, it was not likely that the product would receive rave reviews within the dialogue. In addition to this, exposures generally lasted between 1 and 5 seconds in length, whether visual or auditory.

### ***Product Category and Setting Considerations***

The largest amount of placements fell into the category of entertainment, with electronics and computers following. However, this could be due to the shows chosen to be examined. The program *30 Rock* is based on the behind-the-scenes happenings of an NBC television show. Clearly, the NBC logo will be present, whether on staff name badges or on the building sign. In addition to this, it is understandable that NBC would be referenced in the program dialogue. As for the other programs examined, the entertainment category was still rather popular as it related to product placements.

Although some placements were paid for, a number of placements likely took place gratis. A number of brand or product references took place within the dialogue. These could have been purposely placed or merely used to add context to the script or the characters. As is the case in regular conversation, people often make references to popular culture or entertainment. For instance, if someone said that the couple sitting next to them “was no Ross and Rachel from *Friends*,” they would be referencing an entertainment program. This reference to the program *Friends* was not meant to advertise the show but to allow for the dialogue to be more realistic in nature. Auditory mentions such as this were included in the data set. This may explain why the entertainment category was so often used. With the storyline of *30 Rock* so closely tied to the entertainment industry, contextual references such as these were very common, which would explain why it had a more equal ratio of visual and auditory placements. The auditory contextual references were more common in *30 Rock* than in the other programs, most likely due to its plot.

The use of computers and electronics were rather frequent within the data set. The high frequency of these categories could also be tied to the specific programs chosen. With *The Office* taking place in a business setting, computers and phones are frequently viewed within the camera shot. With *Chuck* taking place in either an electronics store or within CIA headquarters, electronics

are likely to be used and seen. As seen in *30 Rock*, *The Office* and *Chuck*, the program setting can direct the types of products placed. Just as a character needs to relate to the set around him/her, the products must match their surroundings as well. The benefit of placements that correlate to characters and their surroundings is that the products receive an indirect endorsement (Ong, 2004; Puto & Wells, 1984; Russell, 1998; Saini, 2008). In essence, a marketer employing an endorsement tactic should ensure that the image being portrayed and the product are well suited. Gadgets being used at CIA headquarters are likely to be viewed as high-tech and sophisticated. The atmosphere can impact the viewer's perception of the product.

### ***Character Connection Considerations***

Although connection to the setting is important, a connection with a character is also worth noting. The Match Up Hypothesis discusses the character-product connection. It explains that the link between a character and the endorsed product, or the lack of congruence between the two, can impact attitudes toward the placement (Cronin, 2004; Kamins, 1994; McCracken, 1989; Misra & Beatty, 1990). In essence, a marketer employing an endorsement tactic should ensure that the image of the character and the image of the product are complementary. As a part of the program *Chuck*, there are a number of products that add to Chuck's persona. His somewhat geeky personality lends itself to the use of high-tech products such as new cell phones, laptops, and other electronics. However, apparel can also add to a character. Converse tennis shoes are often worn by the main character. The shoes have become a part of his character identity.

*Parenthood* utilized several character-linked placements, one being the use of Photoshop and the other being Autism Speaks. A single mom taking night classes tried to learn more computer skills. She struggled at first, but by the end of the episode the computer program showcased a beautiful illustration of what family meant to the character. With an artistic side shared between the mother and the grandmother, they both stood in front of the computer taking in the final

project. Although when one thinks of product placement, non-profit organizations may not come to mind, such a placement did exist in *Parenthood*. With one of the younger characters diagnosed with Autism, the family joins together in an effort to raise money and awareness for this cause. Both of the hour-long programs seemed to have more character-centric products than the thirty minute programs.

However, one noticeable character-associated placement took place on *Community*. One main character recently began taking classes at community college in order to receive his degree. He had been practicing law for a while previously with a false-degree. His past work in the legal profession afforded him a nice automobile. His Lexus was seen in the majority of the episodes analyzed. Most of the surrounding cars in the college parking lot were less extravagant makes and models.

### ***Associated Commercials and Sponsorship Considerations***

Commercial advertisements can be used to add to the value of product placements. *30 Rock* was the only program that seemed to have a close split between placements associated with a commercial and those that were not. This is most likely due to the type of placements noted within the program. Most of the placements for the show were within the entertainment category, and a large portion of them were referencing NBC. During the commercial breaks within the program, NBC would advertise the new upcoming programs. NBC's presence within the program and within the commercial likely was due to the fact that both the content and advertisements were being aired on the NBC network.

However, the data collected did not show commercial associated placements to be a common practice. This may be due to the fear that audiences are skipping the commercial breaks

or due to the limited amount of funds available to advertise a product or brand. It is important to recognize that additional commercial advertisements can be helpful as part of a placement strategy.

Research has been done on time-compressed advertisements (Gilmore & Secunda, 1993; LaBarbera & MacLachlan, 1979; MacLachlan & Siegel, 1980; Shapiro, et al., 1997; Stout & Burda, 1989). Although some viewers do use their digital video recorders to fast-forward through commercials, there are at least two reasons to believe those compressed advertisements are somewhat effective. Viewers may focus attentively on the screen while fast-forwarding through commercials. This is the only way to ensure that they do not in fact miss the start of the next block of programming (Mandese, 2004C; Zufryden, et al., 1993). A creative way of intertwining a commercial advertisement and a product placement has been done as a part of the *Parenthood* program.

*Parenthood* is sponsored by Lowes. Although the Lowes products are not branded or labeled within the show, there is a Lowes commercial during every episode of the program that combines the program into the advertisement. A Lowes representative is seen standing on one of the sets of the program explaining how anyone can use Lowes products to create a similar feeling within their home or patio area. Fast forwarding through the commercial breaks may be a common practice for some. However, as they are intently focusing on the screen in hopes of not missing the next segment of the program, that commercial might catch their attention, causing them to begin playing the program content again. In a sense, they are tricked into thinking the show has begun again, when in fact it is merely a creative commercial advertisement.

Sponsorship was a rather common practice within the data set. *Chuck* has a well-known sponsorship with Subway. There are times within the program that the manager of the electronics store will be adoring his Subway breakfast sandwich or merely consuming his Subway six-inch sandwich. The manager unwraps a subway breakfast sandwich as he says, "Hello egg white

sandwich on English muffin with my favorite banana peppers to boot." Some sponsorships, such as the *Chuck* and Subway sponsorship, are not directly tied to a character, setting or plot-line. However, the connection between Hewlett-Packard and *The Office* is tied to the setting and the plot-line. Taking place in an office setting, computers are necessary parts of the scenery. If such products are mandatory in creating a realistic setting, it is understandable why the programmers would choose to link the show with a particular brand.

The findings of this project can provide guidance for practitioners and researchers in understanding the current state of placement, including the up-to-date techniques being explored. The use of modality, setting, and character-linking should be considered when deciding on placements in the future and for determining the most effective opportunities in newer network programs.

## **CONCLUSION**

Product placement can allow for a sense of realism to be added to programming (Hirschman, 1988; Holbrook & Grayson, 1986; Solomon & Englis, 1994). People assemble their perceptions of reality from a number of sources including television (Gerbner & Gross, 1976; Lang & Lang, 1984). If the world communicated through television had no brands, it would lack believability. Audiences have a tendency to look to television as a way to gain further understanding of their reality. Successful placements insert real brands into fictional situations in a manner that is believable (Schmoll, et al., 2006).

The data collected for this project shed some light on the types of placements being utilized within NBC comedic programs. The programs were analyzed using a coding sheet, and the data for each program was compared as a means of understanding possible trends, producing a current “inventory” of product placement types and practices, at least as it pertains to NBC comedic programming. The comparisons were then used in an effort to formulate possible placement opportunities for the newer comedic programs examined on the NBC network.

### ***Effective Product Placement and Best Practices***

Although effectiveness can be measured in a number of ways, the most commonly utilized form is based on brand recall. With this in mind, placements should be examined as they relate to characters and sets. In addition to this, the modality of the placement should be determined. If budgets permit, placements should be inserted in dual-mode. If this option is deemed to be too expensive, auditory placements have been shown to be more easily recalled compared to visual ones. However, such auditory placements should tie into the plot or scene. Random mentions of brand or product does not allow for the optimum chance of recall. With all this in mind, visual placements may be inserted as a way to complement other more prominent auditory or dual-mode placements, or as a way of creating a character identity. Mere exposure states that such placements will likely still have some effect.

Placement success is tied to its effectiveness and, as alluded to above, can be measured in a number of ways, with recall being the most common. In addition to using dual mode, the placement should be tied into the plot, or if it can be shown in connection with a character, it should be. Visual placements do sometimes have the opportunity to be shown in a demonstrative manner. In the data set, this was not a common theme. However, that could be due to costs. The more involved a product is in the storyline or the longer it is shown in the shot, the more the placement can cost. Those aspects can also lead to the possibility of the audience recognizing the placement as a blatant attempt to persuade, leaving them agitated that the placement disrupted the program content.

Although prominent placements have been found to be recalled, they can also lead to counter-arguing in the mind of the consumer. When a consumer recognizes a prominent placement as a blatant attempt to persuade, he/she can become agitated by this and begin to argue against the positive attributes being shown in the placement out of mere frustration in the disruption of the program. This may be why the majority of the placements found within the data set tended to be located in the mid-ground or background, with few being in the foreground.

Brand recall has been found to increase when the product is associated with a character (Brennan, et al., 1999). However, brand recall is only one measure. The methods of success measurement can vary. Although recall is commonly used, mere exposure states that no matter what is recalled, the impact is still there (Matthes, et al., 2007). Therefore, product placements can prove to be a great addition to a marketing strategy. However, it should be one tactic in an overall marketing strategy, including things such as plugs, commercials, and even promotions.

### ***Placement Recommendations for Producers***

As a general rule, producers need to ensure that placements appear almost seamlessly within the program. Viewers may easily identify the placement, but the less intrusive it appears, the better. Linking products to characters or a set can aid in this process. Allowing for a product to



become a part of a character's identity will allow for audience members to recognize the product without causing the viewers to counter-argue. The audience will be less likely to feel as if the placement disrupted their viewing experience, unlike with an overt attempt at persuasion. Producers should try to avoid a clutter of placements. If the placement has no direct purpose within the program, it should probably not be included. Allowing the placements to make a scene more realistic, a conversation more natural, or a character more identifiable will be most beneficial.

There are some differences between dramedies, sitcoms and mockumentaries. The main difference between the comedic categories is the time constraint. Dramedies are typically an hour long, with many opportunities to include products into the content. However, mockumentaries and sitcoms are limited to thirty-minute spots. Just based on the length of the program, dramedies offer more placement opportunities for producers. However, the shorter time period that sitcoms and mockumentaries share can be shown as an advantage to advertisers. There will be fewer opportunities for other products to be shown in competition.

Producers should be aware that the thirty-minute comedies allow for a more steady flow of the same types of products. A large number of short, visual computer placements can be shown back to back within one program segment or many visual entertainment placements can be shown one right after the other. On the other hand, dramedies allow for a variety of product categories. The placements are likely to be interspersed throughout the hour, with few presented back to back.

*Parenthood* has already found a great match with its connection with Lowes, presenting Lowes' commercials featuring program settings during the commercial breaks. This placement allows for the Lowes products to be showcased without any overt logos or brand names intruding on the script or set. At the same time, there is the chance that those who are fast-forwarding through the commercials might begin to play the content once they recognize the program's familiar set.

Similar in length to *Chuck*, *Parenthood* has more time than traditional comedies to include placements. Due to the fact that *Chuck* is typically set around an electronics store and CIA headquarters, the electronic and computer products are easily understandable as placement options. *Parenthood*, however, is typically shown at home. This means, household products might be more easily incorporated into the scenery and script. Computers would still be a good option for a placement, with the fact that most households today do include a computer. A high-tech security system may be another option for a placement that would suit the setting or even a type of electronic such as a brand of television.

Character connection is considered to be an important aspect of placement. With this in mind, placed automobiles may be a good fit for this program, with a vehicle matching each key character's personality. With the traditional soccer mom driving a new type of SUV, and the fun-loving teenager sporting a Volkswagen Beetle in a bright color, automobiles can tie into a character's individuality. With two teenage girls as main characters on the show, there is bound to be a desire for a new car in an up-coming episode.

Characters allow for a number of opportunities for product placement. The Autism Speaks placement is a great example of how to tie a character to a product or service. The youngest boy on the program was diagnosed with Autism; therefore the family's desire to support the cause is clear. The teenage characters are likely to be technologically savvy. In a past episode, a son was attempting to help his mother choose a laptop that would suit her needs. With a younger generation present in this program, items such as iPods and HP laptops could easily be woven into the script, both of which fit into popular product categories seen within the data set.

*Parks and Recreation* shares a similar concept with *The Office*, both being mockumentaries and taking place primarily in a business setting. This atmosphere allows for electronic and computer placements above all else. If it is possible for *Parks and Recreation* to find sponsorship

with HP or Apple for the computers seen in the background and mid-ground of the sets, the exposure for the products would be great.

Although *Parks and Recreation* does share similarities to *The Office*, a connection can be made between *Parks and Recreation* and *Chuck*. As part of the program *Chuck*, the electronics store has a specific vehicle that is used. A Toyota sedan is shown as a Nerd Herd vehicle on the show. *Parks and Recreation* also has a company vehicle as seen in one of the episodes examined. A Honda sedan is shown with the *Parks and Recreation* logo on the side. With occasional excursions out of the office, the more this vehicle is tied into the daily operations of the show, the better. Perhaps Honda can become the official *Parks and Recreation* vehicle, seen whenever anyone is driving to or from a park or historic location within the jurisdiction of the Parks department.

Although alcohol was seen as a frequent placement within the data set, this was due more to one specific episode. A character turned twenty-one and as a way of celebrating her birthday, a party was thrown at a local bar where the alcoholic beverages were seen in the background quite a bit. Due to the circumstances surrounding those placements, it is not likely that alcohol will continue to be a common placement for the show. With some concern shown in past research toward ethically-charged products such as alcohol (Gupta & Gould, 1997; Karrh, et al., 2003; McKechnie & Zhou, 2003), programs should shy away from overt alcohol placements as much as possible.

*Community* is set in one primary setting, a school atmosphere. Most of the goings-on occur in one study room. This does not leave much to placement opportunities. However, the casual conversations that occur between friends within the study room allow for a variety of auditory placements such as new films, music groups or other entertainment references. According to the data set, entertainment placements were more commonly done in auditory form. Therefore, it is more likely that a group would be discussing a new movie like *Avatar* rather than having the DVD present on the table.

*Community* also lends itself to character-centric placements. With a neutral setting, the characters are the best way to present a product. One of the characters was practicing law prior to returning to community college, this relates directly to the vehicle he is seen driving a number of times throughout the data set. His Lexus is seen in several episodes, with multiple auditory mentions. In addition to his character, a female character is seen as a rather obsessive student, recording every school lecture. She may be well suited for other scholarly products, such as a branded backpack or even a laptop.

It seems through the data collected that products that fit into the categories of entertainment, electronics, computers and automobiles seem to be seamless intertwined into NBC comedic programs. With the use of them in more successful shows such as *30 Rock*, *The Office*, and *Chuck* such products should be kept in mind for new programs as well. However, aspects of the program such as setting and character association should always be considered prior to deciding on a placement. The link between a character and the endorsed product, or the lack of congruence between the two can impact attitudes toward the placement (Cronin, 2004; Kamins, 1994; McCracken, 1989; Misra & Beatty, 1990).

The connection between a character and a product can also lend itself to further marketing opportunities. Not only can the product be seen as a part of the character's identity on the show, but when the actor portraying that character does talk-show interviews promoting the program, he can add to the promotion of the product by either having the product on him during the interview process or mentioning it in the dialogue. Although placements can be a beneficial way of getting a product in front of an audience full of possible consumers, it cannot be a stand-alone strategy.

### ***Placement Recommendations for Advertisers***

With electronics being an ever-changing product category, advertisers should always keep their eyes on new products, especially those from well known electronics brands. Computers can be included within the electronics category. With the success of Apple, advertisers have already

seen the numerous product placements than can be associated with the brand, from the Apple laptop to the iPod to the iPad. Electronics will always be growing and improving upon what was once considered perfection. This product category should allow for endless opportunities. It should also be kept in mind for programs with younger characters. Teenagers are often seen as technologically-savvy, always wanting to take part in a new trend.

Entertainment is another product category that can be ever-changing. New music groups and new movies are always coming to the forefront. If a new movie is coming out, or if the movie is just coming to DVD, placements can help aid in word of mouth. Avatar recently came to DVD. The mention of the film in the program *Community* may have added to the hype of the already popular film. With the constantly evolving world of entertainment, the opportunities are vast.

This category also lends itself to further placements. Advertising a new film in a prime-time program may lead to more viewers of the film. Therefore there would be more people viewing the placements within the film. As an advertiser, placing a product in a movie and then using that movie as a placement itself within the context of a prime-time program could be beneficial.

Although electronics and entertainment were popular placement categories, non-profit organizations, as advertisers, may benefit from possible placement opportunities. Although they are not common, when non-profit organizations allow for placements in programs, they can be tied into the plot using dual-modality. *Parenthood* allowed for a non-profit organization, Autism Speaks, to be referenced within the script of the show. An Autism Speaks rally was also seen, with a commercial at the end of the episode giving more information on the topic of Autism and details on how to get involved with Autism Speaks. Non-profit services were seen more often than one might expect. Although they were not common compared to other product categories, they did appear several times throughout the data collection process. This concept of non-profit organizations reaching out to consumers via prime-time is a good one. Along with the commercials located at the conclusion of the program, when people are less likely to be fast-forwarding, the use of such tactics

might be good additions to promotional events such as The American Cancer Society's Breast Cancer Walk or the March for Dimes. Moreover, the network or program will benefit by looking like a "good citizen" with such pro-social messages.

Automobiles are always connected to a character. The soccer-mom drives her children to school in an SUV. The high-power attorney drives a Lexus. The personality of the character can also be shown, with vibrant personalities being linked to brightly colored cars. Almost any program genre will allow for a vehicle placement. Even *The Office*, which takes place within an office building, found a way to incorporate a branded vehicle. However, when placing an automobile, advertisers should keep in mind where the automobile will be placed. If the paid placement of a Honda takes placed next to multiple other noticeable vehicles, the Honda logo may get lost in the shuffle.

With so many placements finding their way to prime-time, there will always be a struggle to ensure one product is seen over the rest. With this in mind, sponsorship should be considered. Sponsorships can allow for a specific product or brand to be constantly present throughout a program, increasing the exposure and therefore, increasing the likelihood of effects such as increased purchase behavior. It is crucial that advertisers identify ways their product can be tied into a specific program. Advertisers must look for the best match for their product.

One thing to remember is that programs are not only present on television. Programs have a presence online, and not just in the webisode format. Networks have webpages directly tied to each of their prime-time programs. On *The Office* webpage there is a link to a Dunder Mifflin website. Although Dunder Mifflin is a fictitious company, the website still exists as an extension of the program. Some cable programs have begun using their program webpages as character guides. On broadcast network program webpages there are character biographies and information about what is seen in each episode. However, some cable program pages have gone so far as to explain the style of each character, citing the clothing items each character has been shown wearing in key

episodes. If a product is being used as part of a sponsorship deal, it is worth discussing whether the product can have a presence in connection with the program or a specific character online. If the main character of a program is always seen holding her hot-pink iPod, then under her character biography online there should be a mention of the product or link to the brand's website. The program's webpage can add to the sponsorship deal if advertisers and producers agree to it.

Clearly the program audience demographics should be examined to ensure that placement is being viewed by those who would be likely to purchase or use the product. In addition to this, matching the product to a set or character can add in the seamless intertwining of the placement. This will allow for audiences to see the placement as an addition to the show rather than as a distraction or disruption. Advertisers should imagine how they want the product viewed. Do they envision it being used by a younger person or do they want an older, more reliable feel? If it is expensive and valuable, the character should have the means to afford it. The character should exemplify the type of person for whom the product is intended.

If the product has been viewed in one way, and advertisers are hoping to build a new image for their product, they must match those new attributes to a suitable character. If the product is brand new, a strong marketing campaign should be the primary goal, with product placement as one tactic of many. Newer products may be more difficult for audiences to identify among the clutter of the set, characters, and other placements. If it is possible, plugs can be a wonderful additional tactic for the marketing strategy. Not only will the character be shown utilizing the product in the program, but mentioning it during the talk-show interviews can add to the value of the placement.

### ***Notable Placements***

One rather notable placement found by the author within the older programs examined was the presence of Converse tennis shoes on the primary character of *Chuck*. Qualities such as quirkiness, fun, and exciting are shared between the product and the character. The connection

between Chuck's character and the Converse shoes can impact attitudes toward the placement (Cronin, 2004; Kamins, 1994; McCracken, 1989; Misra & Beatty, 1990). The image of the character and the image of the product are well suited. His funny yet oddly dangerous persona correlates well with quirky Converse shoes. There is a level of congruence between his character and the product and the young male audience who may also view themselves as popular yet secretly geeky.

As for the newer shows, although they have yet to fully explore the possible placement opportunities out there, *Parenthood* made use of a unique placement. The intertwining of Autism Speaks into the script was a notable use of product placement. Research has shown that effective placements tie into a setting, character, or the plot itself. Although Autism Speaks was not a consistent placement throughout numerous episodes, its use within a single episode was effective for several reasons. With a character on the show having been diagnosed with Autism, the rally tied into the script rather seamlessly. There were visual and auditory presentations of the placement, and towards the end of the episode a dual-mode placement was even present. Taking place in every form possible, there was little way for the audience to miss the brand. Finally, the connection to a commercial break was yet another reason it is worth being noted. Although some viewers are fast-forwarding through the breaks, research has shown that they are paying attention as the ads speed by (Gilmore & Secunda, 1993; LaBarbera & MacLachlan, 1979; MacLachlan & Siegel, 1980; Shapiro, et al., 1997; Stout & Burda, 1989). In addition to this, the commercial for Autism Speaks took place at the end of the episode, a place where most viewers are not likely to skip through. Such an extreme form of placement may not be recommended for everyday products, but for non-profit organizations, this placement strategy can be very helpful.

### ***Research Limitations & Future Research***

This study has several limitations. First and foremost, the author was the only data coder for this project. However, based on a previous study the findings were somewhat similar (La Ferle



& Edwards, 2006). The slight discrepancies can be due to the way the author defined product placement, the use of only a single coder, and the limited number of programs examined. The project examined only one genre of programming, from one specific network. Future research examining other genres or even cable programs may help fill in some of the knowledge gaps. Another line of added research could examine the possible differences in the placement of services and products. As advertisers seek out ways to evade the clutter of advertising bombarding the television screen, it is expected that more name-brand products will be starring in entertainment content. This project was a first step in identifying how placements are currently being employed within NBC comedic programs.

It can be expected that the next decade will allow for an increase in product placement on television. Technology will continue to advance and commercial avoidance techniques will, as they have in the past, remain strong. Television, despite fragmentation, will continue to be a beneficial venue for advertising. At the forefront of such advertising strategies will be product placement. The strategies and recommendations made within this paper should allow advertisers and NBC producers to improve upon existing placement trends.

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## APPENDIX A: The Coding Sheet

<p>DATE OF PLACEMENT: _____</p>	<p>BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF PLACEMENT: _____ _____ _____ _____ _____</p>	<p>IN CONNECTION WITH A COMMERCIAL:  <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>
<p>DAY OF PLACEMENT:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Monday <input type="checkbox"/> Tuesday <input type="checkbox"/> Thursday</p>		<p>ASSOCIATED WITH A CHARACTER:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> Primary Character <input type="checkbox"/> Guest (Supporting) Character <input type="checkbox"/> Extra/Background Character <input type="checkbox"/> Celebrity Guest Star (As him/herself)</p>
<p>NAME OF PROGRAM:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Chuck <input type="checkbox"/> Parenthood <input type="checkbox"/> Community <input type="checkbox"/> The Office <input type="checkbox"/> 30 Rock <input type="checkbox"/> Parks and Recreation</p>	<p>VISUAL PLACEMENT:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> Background <input type="checkbox"/> Mid-Ground <input type="checkbox"/> Foreground</p>	<p>PLACEMENT CATEGORY:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> Food <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Alcoholic Beverage <input type="checkbox"/> Alcoholic Beverage <input type="checkbox"/> Reading Material <input type="checkbox"/> Toy (Child's) <input type="checkbox"/> Game (Non-electronic) <input type="checkbox"/> Jewelry <input type="checkbox"/> Apparel <input type="checkbox"/> Computer <input type="checkbox"/> Home/Garden <input type="checkbox"/> Services <input type="checkbox"/> Auto <input type="checkbox"/> Electronic <input type="checkbox"/> Furniture <input type="checkbox"/> Sporting Goods <input type="checkbox"/> Beauty <input type="checkbox"/> Health/Nutrition <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____</p>
<p>PROGRAM START TIME:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 8:00pm <input type="checkbox"/> 8:30pm <input type="checkbox"/> 9:00pm <input type="checkbox"/> 9:30pm <input type="checkbox"/> 10:00pm</p>	<p>VISUAL EXPOSURE:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Completely Exposed <input type="checkbox"/> Slightly Obscured <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p>	
<p>PROGRAM END TIME:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 8:30pm <input type="checkbox"/> 9:00pm <input type="checkbox"/> 9:30pm <input type="checkbox"/> 10:00pm <input type="checkbox"/> 10:30pm <input type="checkbox"/> 11:00pm</p>	<p>DEMONSTRATIVE:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p>	
<p>PROGRAM LENGTH:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 30-minute <input type="checkbox"/> 1-hour <input type="checkbox"/> 2-hour</p>	<p>LENGTH OF VISUAL SHOT:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> 1-5 Seconds <input type="checkbox"/> 6-10 Seconds <input type="checkbox"/> 11-15 Seconds <input type="checkbox"/> More than 15 Seconds</p>	<p>PLACEMENT SETTING:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Work/Business <input type="checkbox"/> Outdoors/Not Home <input type="checkbox"/> Sporting Venue <input type="checkbox"/> Home <input type="checkbox"/> Restaurant/Bar <input type="checkbox"/> Outdoors at Home <input type="checkbox"/> School <input type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____</p>
<p>PRODUCT FEATURED: _____</p>	<p>LENGTH OF AUDITORY MENTION:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> 1-5 Seconds <input type="checkbox"/> 6-10 Seconds <input type="checkbox"/> 11-15 Seconds <input type="checkbox"/> More than 15 Seconds</p>	
<p>MODALITY OF PLACEMENT:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Visual <input type="checkbox"/> Auditory <input type="checkbox"/> Dual-Mode</p>	<p>REFERENCE TYPE:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Brand <input type="checkbox"/> Product <input type="checkbox"/> Category <input type="checkbox"/> Pronoun <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p>	