

A few years ago, a company called Space Marketing came up with a plan to send a mile-long advertisement into space. Using light reflected from the sun, it would beam out a message as large as the moon that could be seen by every single person on the planet as it orbited the Earth.

This would have been one advert that couldn't have been thrown out with the junk mail or switched off by remote control. (1)___ Advertising standards agencies eventually decided not to allow Space Marketing to go ahead with their plans and they were forced to abandon them, but not before several major companies had made serious enquiries about launching their logos into space.

Space may indeed be the final frontier for advertisers, because on Earth we are already surrounded by advertising wherever we are and whatever we are doing. (2)___ There are the promises of health and vitality on the cereal packet we ate from this morning, for example, and the ad that we saw on the side of the bus we caught to work. Most of the time, we are probably not even aware of these less obvious advertising tactics, but that doesn't mean that they aren't effective. (3)___ You are in a packed cinema, watching the latest Hollywood blockbuster. There are adverts before the film or during a break in the film, but are there any during the film? Well, look carefully at the make of car your favourite actor is driving. And what about his watch? Can you see what brand it is? Chances are, you can, and the company that owns the brand is likely to have paid thousands for it to appear in the film.

Whilst products are most often placed in this way in movies and TV series, they also sometimes appear in music videos, video games, plays and even books. (4)___ You may not realise you are being influenced by a technique that sounds so simple, but advertisers consider product placement to be a highly effective form of advertising. After all, they would not be willing to spend as much money as they do on it if they didn't truly believe it worked.

In fact, associating products with cool, exciting lives seems to be one of the most common forms of advertising. (5)___

And let's not forget the power of pure entertainment (6)___ If the consumers are looking forward to the next 'episode' of an ad, once again the product has become associated with something 'cool' and is therefore likely to see a considerable rise in popularity.

So, whether Space Marketing eventually succeeds in launching ads into space or not is perhaps a less important issue than it might seem.

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1 — To a certain extent, this would not change a thing.

2 — The hope is to convince people to believe that if they can have the products, then they can have the cool, happy lifestyles of their heroes, too.

3 — Nowadays, many TV adverts have become more like soap operas with a series of humorous adventures complete with their own cast.

4 — Some advertising companies even employ 'cool hunters' or marketing professionals to find out for them exactly what young people find cool.

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