

# FTWK:

## PRODUCT PLACEMENT HITS THE MARK

By Aaron Rosen — Somewhere North Features Inc.

In the contemporary film and television production business, product placement has become an integral part of the overall production process. From below the line, in the very preliminary stages of development, it is clear that products are intentionally incorporated into the generated scripts that become blocked scenes. All these inclusions are very carefully thought out and pre-negotiated to serve a dual purpose. Primarily, the placement and existence of recognizable brands and products in a scene reinforces a sense of realism and genuineness for the viewer. Furthermore, it serves to save a production plenty of money, time and effort. Upon request, art departments are forwarded samples of the desired products to utilize for the benefits of the production as well as for use and presence in shots.

With a decline in the overall number of productions in Canada in recent months due partially to the outbreak of SARS, the rapid rise of the

Canadian Dollar, and a decline in government funding to the Canadian Television Fund, micro and macro productions have become less motivated and/or able to exploit all the Canadian talent and resources available. "Things can only get better", says Jason Silver who with his optimism and passion for the industry recently launched a firm called FTWK Agency. "I am eager to assist and service the film community in any and every way possible. The approach is simple; we will focus our efforts on representing key products that are frequently requested by productions. Essentially we are the liaison between productions and the brands we represent and act in both of their interests. Our service will make the production process simpler." FTWK Agency proudly opened shop this year and already represents the products of Procter & Gamble, Joe Boxer, Izod, Obus Forme



and they are aggressively pursuing other key accounts. "The real beauty of product placement is that it is a mutually beneficial exercise for both the production and the brand. The production receives hassle-free props for their usage and the opportunity to initiate interesting back-end cross-promotional campaigns. All this just adds up to stronger marketing muscle to support the project's release. The

brand has an opportunity to receive priceless exposure and even a subliminal endorsement being attached to a film or television episode, it's integrated marketing at it's finest".

Product placement is now more visible than ever. Productions understand and appreciate the important role it plays within the context of

a film's production process, and brands are becoming more eager to be apart of the process as well. "The shelf life of a film is eternal, which creates great brand exposure opportunities for any product," says Silver. "I am excited about what the future of this service holds".

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