

Major Findings of the Opinion Survey

- Whilst 63.8% and 71.8% of the viewers considered that the quantity of advertisements shown during prime time and outside prime time respectively was moderate, many indicated that they did not usually watch the advertising content shown during the commercial breaks between or within programmes.
- Viewers generally did not find product placement featured in free TV services objectionable. 41.9% of the viewers considered product placement in free TV acceptable or strongly acceptable, 39.4% indicated that their acceptance level was average and 13.8% considered it unacceptable or strongly unacceptable.
- Viewers generally considered it unacceptable for product placement to be employed in news and current affairs programmes. On the other hand, they generally found product placement acceptable in programmes like travelogues, magazine programmes, talk shows, food programmes and reality shows.
- The major factors affecting the viewers' acceptance level towards product placement shown in free TV services were whether the presentation was natural, the frequency of exposure, the duration of exposure and whether it was obtrusive to viewing pleasure.
- With the emergence of new media in recent years, more than half (56.6%) of the viewers accepted that free TV stations should be allowed to extend the use of product placement within programmes for the purpose of increasing revenue. That said, more than half (51.0%) of the viewers considered it necessary to impose restrictions on the employment of product placement in free TV programmes.

Major Findings of the Focus Group Discussions

General Public and TRCS

- Participants generally considered the quantity of advertisements shown on free TV during commercial breaks to be moderate. Many expressed that they would take a break or deal with other matters during commercial breaks.

- Most considered the employment of product placement in infotainment and lifestyle programmes (such as game shows, food programmes, music programmes, sitcoms, etc.) and sports programmes to be acceptable. On the other hand, they found the employment of product placement in programmes of a more serious nature (such as news and current affairs programmes) and in children's programmes unacceptable.
- Participants generally considered that whether the presentation was natural and whether the product placement was obtrusive to viewing pleasure were the most important factors affecting their acceptance of product placement in programmes.
- Noting that free TV licensees were facing more vigorous competition with the emergence of new media, participants generally considered it acceptable for them to employ more product placement in TV programmes (especially in infotainment and lifestyle programmes) for the purpose of increasing revenue, provided that it was presented in a natural manner and not obtrusive to viewing pleasure.
- Participants generally considered it necessary to regulate the employment of product placement in free TV programmes, but that the current regulatory standards could be relaxed.

Creative Industry and Media Professionals

- The participants generally considered that the current regulation of product placement should be relaxed so as to facilitate the development of the creative industry.
- There was comment that the existing rules governing product placement were vague and difficult for licensees to follow, had hindered creativity and made it difficult for free TV licensees to satisfy the demand of advertisers especially in times of economic downturn. Some considered that to support the industry, the CA should adopt more relaxed standards in enforcing the relevant provisions on product placement. Some cautioned that excessive employment of product placement would result in public complaints.
- There was comment that general principles instead of detailed rules should be adopted for regulating product placement as licensees would have difficulties in complying with detailed rules governing the duration

and size of product placement unless exemptions were provided for acquired programmes. Adoption of detailed rules would also hinder creativity.

- There was comment that the regulation of product placement in programmes acquired by licensees should be relaxed. However, some held that the same requirements on product placement should apply to both self-productions and acquired programmes on grounds of equity.
- There was suggestion that licensees should be required to clearly inform viewers of the inclusion of product placement at the start of the programme. However, some considered that the existing requirement of identifying the sponsor(s) concerned in end sponsor credits was a sufficient safeguard.