

UK Film Council Response to

**Department for Culture,
Media and Sport**

Consultation

on

Product Placement on Television

8 January 2010

1. UK Film Council View

- 1.1. The UK Film Council is the Government-backed lead agency for film in the UK ensuring that the economic, cultural and educational aspects of film are effectively represented at home and abroad. The Board of Directors, appointed by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, oversees the work of the UK Film Council and provides advice to the Government on film. We recognise that product placement in films shown on UK television is specifically out of scope of the consultation but we welcome the opportunity to underline our commitment to the importance of such placement in films.
- 1.2. As the Consultation notes, "Product placement is however a routine aspect of cinema films made in the UK, as it is in most other countries around the world." It provides a valuable source of finance for production entities. As traditional sources of finance – such as advances secured against the sale of DVD and television rights – decline in value, so the ability of producers to secure alternative sources of money such as those offered by product placement becomes more important.
- 1.3. We are not aware of any evidence to suggest that product placement in films has a detrimental effect on audiences. The UK Film Council therefore agrees with the Government's position that "viewers are capable of recognizing when they are being sold to, and there is no evidence that product placement in films and non-UK TV shows has led to viewers being misled or harmed."
- 1.4. The best means of ensuring that audiences do not suffer harm from product placement in television programming generally is to develop media literacy so that people are able to exercise critical understanding over the choices of products, services, information and entertainment content available – and to be able to respond, comment or complain.
- 1.5. For these reasons we welcome the fact that the consultation contains the statement "that the Government's 11 March statement confirmed that product placement will continue to be allowed in films shown on UK television and in non-UK television programmes which are shown here, subject to the existing rule about undue prominence and other limitations and safeguards. This remains the position." We also welcome the fact that product placement is explicitly permitted in video-on-demand services.

- 1.6. Furthermore, we think that the definition of 'Cinematographic films' as "films originally made for showing in the cinema" is fit for purpose.

Ends.