



Stewart Gandy  
Product Placement Consultation  
5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Department of Culture Media and Sport  
2-4 Cockspur Street  
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4th January 2010

Dear Mr Gandy,

Product Placement in TV Programmes

Having read your consultation paper on Product Placement in TV Programmes and based on long experience of watching TV in other countries and as an experienced programme maker in this country and for overseas TV companies, I would earnestly urge you not to allow any product placement in any form of TV programme in this country. Experience suggests that allowing product placement in any form in any programmes will prove "the thin edge of the wedge".

In Britain we have long prided ourselves on having "The Best TV in the World". An essential element in the quality and integrity of British TV and British TV programmes has been the absolute separation between editorial and content decisions and commercial interests. This applies as much to drama and entertainment programmes as it does to news and current affairs. To allow any element of programme placement will serve to undermine the audience's trust in what they see on screen and once the damage is done it will be impossible to undo it. On top of this, the arguments being put forward by commercial interests in this debate are not only self-interested they are both suspect and weak. The total sums of money involved are relatively small, especially when compared to the fundamental nature of the damage that would be done to our TV and its integrity if product placement were allowed.

It would seem perverse for the government to change its mind on this issue so soon after the previous Secretary of State, Andy Burnham, set out the arguments against product placement so clearly and came down so firmly against it.

So I earnestly implore you not to allow any form of product placement in British TV programmes. This is a matter of vital cultural importance to the UK and its reputation for the quality and integrity of its broadcasting.

Yours sincerely

  
Michael Darlow