Priming Movie Product Placements: New Insights from a Cross-National Case Study

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Abstract:

The paucity of research on priming product placements and insights from practitioners (Study 1) motivated our investigation into how and when priming works in movie placements. Study 2 explores the impact of media priming (a media story announcing a movie placement before the movie's release) and ad priming (a similar ad announcement) on recall through contrasts with no priming (control). US students watched a movie in a theatre after such priming for a subtle or a prominent placement. When compared to no priming, both media priming and ad priming enhanced recall for the subtle placement; no difference in recall performance emerged between no priming and either type of priming for the prominent placement. Contrast tests comparing media priming and ad priming indicated no differences in recall for either subtle or prominent placement. Study 3 replicated these recall findings with Italian moviegoers, and supported additional hypotheses and propositions for brand attitude. For the subtle (prominent) placement, attitude did not change (decreased) when comparing either media priming or ad priming with no priming. Contrast tests comparing media priming and ad priming indicated no differences in attitude outcomes, for either subtle or prominent placement. Using no priming as a baseline for comparison, the converging conclusion is that any type of priming improves (does not change) recall and does not change (worsens) attitude for subtle (prominent) placements. Overall, results do not support priming for prominent placements; selective use of any type of priming for subtle placements appears appropriate to improve recall outcomes.

Keywords: product placement; subtle; prominent; ad priming; media priming; brand recall, brand attitude

Introduction

Product placements represent a huge growth story driven primarily by shifts in ad spend and media fragmentation (Lehu 2007). Placements enjoy a perfect trifecta in popularity among brand sponsors, moviemakers and consumers. Brand sponsors are attracted to placements because audiences may leverage technology to avoid ads, but a mechanism to avoid placements may not exist: for example, exposure to movie placements typically occurs in a 'captive' theatre setting (Cowley and Barron 2008). Similarly, moviemakers find placements appealing because they contribute realism to story plots (Chan, Lowe and Petrovici 2017; Chen and Haley 2014; DeLorme and Reid 1999). Additionally, placements contribute revenues or promotional support for movies that supplement moviemakers' budgets. Finally, for a variety of reasons (e.g., realism), audiences are generally positively disposed toward placements (Eisend 2009; Gupta and Gould 1997; Nebenzahl and Secunda 1993; Sung, de Gregorio and Jung 2009). Not surprisingly, projections suggest that US product placements reached $11.44 billion in 2019 - a huge increase from $4.75 billion in 2012 (Statista 2019).

Although product placements have attracted significant research attention (Guo et al. 2019) some areas remain under-explored. Priming product placements (whereby audiences become aware of a placement prior to exposure) is one such area. Balasubramanian, Karrh and Patwardhan (2006) discuss the importance of contextual priming for brand placements. They draw conceptual analogies from Groenendyk and Valentino (2002) to propose two priming strategies for placements: *media priming* and *ad priming*. For movie placements, media priming conveys a non-partisan message (e.g., a media story about an upcoming placement) that reaches audiences before movie exposure. Ad priming involves a partisan message (e.g., an ad from a brand sponsor announcing a future placement) for the audience, also prior to movie exposure.

This research will propose several new hypotheses and propositions that extend the arguments advanced in Balasubramanian, Karrh and Patwardhan (2006) about priming placements.

Why is priming placements such an important research issue? What are the key considerations that motivate this research?

First, it is clear that practitioners aggressively pursue opportunities to prime product placements (see Table 1 for several examples). Therefore, they can benefit from research guidance on effective approaches to priming that help this pursuit.

Second, with the exception of Cowley and Barron (2008), research that advances marketing goals through priming remains an unexplored area. We acknowledge that priming product placements has attracted research attention in another context i.e., warning/disclosure alerts for product placements prior to placement exposure (Bennet, Pecotich and Putrevu 1999; Boerman, Reijmersdal and Niejens 2015a, 2015b; Campbell, Mohr and Verlegh 2013; Chan, 2020; Guo et al. 2018; Janssen et al. 2016; Matthes, and Naderer 2016; Spielvogel, Naderer, and Matthes 2019). This line of inquiry explores important topics, concepts and theories. The influential inoculation theory and its 'weakened virus' analogy resonates with this research pursuit with the argument that attitudes can resist persuasive influence in a manner analogous to how the human body develops resistance against a potent virus through inoculation or exposure to a weakened virus (Lessne and Didow1987; McGuire 1962; McGuire 1969). For example, warnings and disclosure statements about product placements prior to movie exposure may 'inoculate' audiences against attitude change following such exposure. For the purpose of our research, however, Table 2 shows that there are more dissimilarities than similarities between priming alerts that represent warning/disclosure statements for product placements on the one hand, and our unique focus on marketing-oriented priming of placements as a strategic tool to

advance audience communication goals on the other hand. Illustratively, disclosure/warning alerts may caution viewers against embedded placements while marketing-oriented priming strategies for placements generally encourage viewers to watch specific embedded placements. In sum, priming placements to advance marketing goals is a promising area of inquiry that deserves more attention.

Tables 1 and 2 about here

Third, the priming phenomenon encompasses two conceptually related stimuli whereby one stimulus influences the responses to another stimulus presented at a later point in time. From a marketing perspective, we observe that the vast majority of movie placements are not primed. That is, audience awareness of such placements occurs in real time during the first movie exposure (in contrast, such awareness precedes movie exposure when placements are primed with either the media priming or ad priming approach). This likely reflects a managerial judgment that it is better not to prime most placements. Clearly, academic research should rigorously test if this judgment reflects missed marketing opportunities or not, just in case the benefits from priming placements outweigh the costs/risks involved.

Finally, research needs to investigate if audience outcomes differ across different types of priming (e.g., no priming, media priming, ad priming), and for different types of product placements. With respect to the latter, researchers (Gupta and Lord 1998; Cowley and Barron 2008; Dens et al. 2012) have studied two types of placements (i.e., subtle or prominent). For example, *subtle* brand placements are peripheral and less visible (predominantly appear in the background; smaller in size), occur less frequently, and account for a lower cumulative time of

brand exposure in the movie; in contrast, *prominent* placements are highly visible and central (appear in the foreground), occur more frequently, and for a higher cumulative exposure duration. It is useful to consider academic/theoretical and managerial/practical perspectives on these topics.

On the academic side, Balasubramanian, Karrh and Patwardhan (2006; p 122 – 5a and 5b; 3a and 3b) advanced the following four theoretical propositions related to priming or the characteristics of prominent placements when considering recall or attitude outcomes:

TPa: Primed placements produce better cognitive outcomes (recall) than non-primed placements.

TPb: Non-primed or media-primed placements produce better affective outcomes than ad-primed placements.

TPc: As a placement's prominence increases, viewers can better differentiate the brand from other program stimuli, thereby increasing cognitive outcomes, that is, recall.

TPd: As a placement's exposure duration increases, viewers can better process the brand's appearance or audio mention, thereby increasing cognitive outcomes, that is, recall.

Note that **TPa** and **TPb** focus exclusively on priming without considering types of placement. Similarly, **TPc** and **TPd** acknowledge placement type (especially prominent placement) without considering the types of priming. When taken together, there is an opportunity to investigate simultaneously both the *type of priming* and the *type of placement* with respect to impact on recall and attitude outcomes. Our research explores this opportunity.

On the managerial side, the importance of our work is abundantly clear. Given evidence that practitioners are open to both media priming and ad priming opportunities in the product placement domain (see Table 1), research that sheds light on what type of priming is beneficial for what type of placement with respect to specific brand outcomes (e.g., impact on recall or attitude) is a timely and valuable contribution. More specifically, managers/practitioners need

guidance on when they should ignore priming opportunities (i.e., no priming) and the circumstances under which they should pursue them. When and if managers decide that priming a placement is a good idea, they can benefit from research-guided insights on what type of placement (subtle or prominent) is appropriate for what type of priming, to reach what type of brand-related goal (e.g., enhance audience recall, improve audience brand attitude). Research-driven insights on such questions are currently unavailable. We address these knowledge gaps.

Theory Development and Hypotheses

Given our focus on marketing-oriented priming, we investigate implications for recall and attitude outcomes for *prominent* and *subtle* product placements. Note that both *placement priming* and *placement prominence* stimulate cognitive attention, elaboration and processing; in the *former (latter)* case, such cognitive outcomes occur *before (during)* placement exposure. Cowley and Barron (2008) characterized an *ad prime* as an ad for the same brand as in the placement that followed in a TV program. They found that attitude toward a prominently placed brand increased for viewers with lower levels of program-liking, but this attitude shift disappeared for viewers exposed to a persuasive intent (ad prime) prior to placement exposure. In contrast, our research defines *ad priming* as ad-based pre-announcement of a specific brand placement in a movie before its release. Furthermore, *media priming* for placements represents a relatively unexplored area of empirical research; our study therefore represents new contributions on these two popular priming approaches.

To develop hypotheses, we draw from Limited Capacity Model of Mediated Message processing (or LCMMM - Lang 2000) for recall outcomes, and rely on two theoretical models for attitudinal outcomes: Hybrid Message Model (or HMM – Balasubramanian 1994) and

Persuasion Knowledge Model (or PKM - Friestad and Wright 1994). We orient hypothesis development to circumstances conducive to priming two placement types: subtle and prominent.

Recall Outcome Hypotheses. The LCMMM view (Lang 2000) holds that individuals are information processors but possess limited capacity to process such information. Essentially, information in any message enters a sensory store where only a fraction thereof is selected - via automatic or controlled processes - and transformed into mental representations in working memory. If these representations are further associated with active information in the associative memory network, the likelihood of the message being stored in long-term memory increases thereby facilitating subsequent retrieval (i.e., recall performance). Overall, the LCMMM model suggests that recall is more likely if a message receives greater elaboration.

For a prominent placement, a fundamental feature of LCMMM (limited capacity to process) imposes constraints on priming-induced elaboration. These constraints are important because both placement prominence and the priming process for placements are predisposed to stimulate elaboration. LCMMM therefore implies a ceiling effect such that, when a prominent placement induces elaboration, the constraints from limited processing capacity preclude additional elaboration attributable to priming of this placement. For this reason, we expect no change in recall outcomes when comparing primed and non-primed prominent placements. Notably, no such constraints on priming-induced elaboration apply for subtle placements. This is because subtle placements are unlikely to attract attention or elaboration unless they are primed; prominent placements are unlikely to attract more elaboration or attention even when they are primed. As such, we propose that subtle (prominent) placements differently influence cognitive elaboration such that recall outcomes increase (remain unchanged).

The theoretical proposition **TPa**, when integrated with the recognition above of higher (lower) potential for elaboration from priming for subtle (prominent) placements leads to

H1a: For a subtle placement, priming increases recall outcome when compared to no priming.

H1b: For a prominent placement, priming does not change recall outcome when compared to no priming.

Attitudinal Outcome Hypotheses. Tutaj and van Reijmersdal (2012) investigated the role of persuasion knowledge in how audiences process subtle and prominent online ads. Specifically, these authors found that *subtle* messages (sponsored content) appear more informative, more amusing and less irritating than *prominent* communications (banner ads). Banner ads scored consistently higher – relative to sponsored content – on several measures of persuasion knowledge (recognition of advertising format, understanding of persuasive intent and ad scepticism), providing insights into differences in the processing of subtle and prominent messages that are attributable to persuasion knowledge. We next extend and integrate these findings (Tutaj and van Reijmersdal 2012) with predictions from two models (the Hybrid Message Model or HMM – Balasubramanian 1994; Persuasion Knowledge Model or PKM – Friestad and Wright 1994). More specifically, we explore mechanisms surrounding audience awareness of placements, activation of persuasion knowledge, and related implications for subtle and prominent placements from different priming options.

The HMM model (Balasubramanian 1994, p. 30) defines placements as hybrid messages that are

> *paid attempts to influence audiences for commercial benefit using communications that project a non-commercial character; under these circumstances, audiences are likely to be unaware of the commercial influence attempt and/or to process the content of such communications differently than they process commercial messages.*

Consider the following: if audiences ought to be 'unaware' of a placement's persuasive intent, is the pre-announcement of placements through priming potentially counterproductive, thereby undermining persuasion? We consider such theoretical questions to develop appropriate testable hypotheses.

In a movie context, HMM suggests that subtle (prominent) placements are more (less) likely to project a non-commercial character whereby the audience is less (more) predisposed to be aware of their persuasive intent. In other words, the threshold for such *audience awareness* is steeper for subtle placements when compared to prominent placements. Similarly, priming a subtle (prominent) placement is less (more) likely to increase audience awareness when compared to not priming. From the PKM model perspective, subtle (prominent) placements are less (more) likely to activate movie viewers' persuasion knowledge; furthermore, priming a subtle (prominent) placement is less (more) likely to activate persuasion knowledge when compared to not priming.

To integrate these two models, we note the directional similarity in their conceptualizations and process outcomes. That is, actions that increase either *audience awareness* (in HMM) or *persuasion knowledge* (in PKM) is likely to trigger greater scepticism and counter-argumentation. Therefore, priming a prominent (subtle) movie placement is more (less) likely to diminish attitude when compared to no priming. Additionally, priming a subtle placement may not increase attitude. This is because attitude is unlikely to increase under circumstances when persuasion knowledge becomes salient, regardless of the degree of such activation in persuasion knowledge. In sum, priming will decrease (not change) brand attitude for prominent (subtle) placements when compared to no priming. Analogous to the findings in

Tutaj and Reijmersdal (2012), priming (no priming) is more (less) likely to activate persuasion knowledge. Accordingly, we propose

H1c: For a subtle placement, priming does not change attitudinal outcome when compared to no priming.

H1d: For a prominent placement, priming decreases attitudinal outcome when compared to no priming.

The preceding four hypotheses restrict focus to contrasts between priming and no priming conditions for subtle or prominent placements. Although we attempted to develop hypotheses for three additional contrasts that compare types of priming (i.e., no priming versus media priming; no priming versus ad priming; media priming versus ad priming) on recall and attitudinal outcomes for subtle/prominent placements, the lack of germane empirical literature precluded this worthwhile goal. On the other hand, the pursuit of media priming and ad priming approaches in industry practice (see Table 1) encouraged us to conduct a qualitative study with expert practitioners in the product placement industry as informants. Study 1, described next, generated practice-based insights that inform the development of Practitioner Research Propositions (PRPs instead of hypotheses) for the three contrasts listed earlier.

Study 1

Prior surveys of US practitioners on placements (Karrh 1995; Karrh, McKee and Pardun 2003; Um and Kim 2014) include the following three scale items; the brand is shown for a long period of time; the brand is supported with other promotion and advertising; the placement receives publicity through the news or trade press. These items describe characteristics of *prominent placement*, *ad priming* and *media priming,* respectively. The three cited surveys affirmed the importance of these three scale items to practitioners. Consistent with this finding,

we sought practitioners' responses to the following questions: Relative to no priming, how do media priming and ad priming strategies compare on audience impact outcomes (recall or brand attitude) by placement type (subtle/prominent)? Do media priming and ad priming differ on audience impact outcomes by placement type?

Method

In this qualitative research effort, one author conducted individual Skype interviews with four veteran Italian practitioners (2 males; 2 females) with expertise in advertising and product placement domains. Qualitative research typically involves in-depth exploration of focal topics with a few informants (Kates and Goh 2003; Kelly, Kerr and Drennan 2010; Taylor, Grubbs Hoy and Haley 1996; Sanz-Marcos 2020). We employed a purposive sampling approach to recruit participants. Using the LinkedIn database, we selected a product placement consultant, a senior marketing executive, and two seasoned professionals who represented product placement agencies. Each participant possessed between 8-12 years of experience in the product placement industry, including direct involvement in product placement decisions and related priming initiatives. All practitioners contacted agreed to participate.

Each interview lasted between 30-50 minutes and included both structured and unstructured (follow-up) questions about practitioners' knowledge, perceptions and experiences on appropriate strategies to prime product placements. Interviewees received assurance that their responses remain anonymous. Initially, they read the examples in Table 1 along with formal definitions from published studies for the following concepts: priming, advertising, publicity, and placement types (subtle and prominent placements). This step ensured that participants shared a common understanding of relevant concepts, examples and definitions in the literature.

All interviews were audio-recorded. Following the phenomenological reduction method (Moustakas 1994), participants' comments were professionally transcribed and classified with the help of two trained coders. Following Spiggle (1994), the first coder used open coding to classify responses into several categories (e.g., placement effectiveness, priming effectiveness, ad priming, media priming). A second coder independently classified participants' responses into these categories. Inter-coder reliability was acceptably high (0.93), attesting to classification consistency. Disagreements between the coders were resolved through discussion. Participants subsequently reviewed this analysis to assure that findings accurately reflect their perspectives.

Perceptions of the effectiveness of No Priming, Media Priming and Ad Priming

In line with previous surveys (Karrh 1995; Karrh, McKee and Pardun 2003; Um and Kim 2014), participants affirmed the importance of priming placements and cross-promotional marketing campaigns that support both the entertainment program (movie or TV show) and the brand placed. They were positively disposed toward such campaigns and justified priming product placements by pointing to potential improvements in placement effectiveness. To conserve space and avoid redundancy, we selectively report representative comments below that inform the development of practitioner research propositions (PRPs) that follow:

> *Efficacy of ad priming or media priming (compared to no priming) depends on how much attention and notice a placement gets during movie exposure, especially for recall measures. However, too much attention to the placement may not help for recall.* ***(Practitioner 2)***

> *For attitude outcomes, too much attention to a brand during movie exposure may be detrimental to the placed brand. Priming can avoid negative impact only when the placement does not attract much notice during the movie. If that does not happen, negative brand evaluations will follow.* ***(Practitioner 2)***

Brand managers have to be careful, as priming helps when the placement does not attract too much attention in the movie (i.e., subtle placement). In other cases, it's better not to inform audiences in advance about the placement (i.e., no priming). A lot of attention on the placement when priming a prominent placement may irritate audiences and product negative evaluations of the brand and the movie. ***(Practitioner 2)***

A product placement is properly developed (adds value to the story) only if the presence of the product is not annoying or invasive. In such cases, either ad priming or media priming before the movie's release will increase recall outcomes.
Conversely, if the presence of the product is annoying, ad priming or media priming might emphasize the "persuasive" nature of the product placement transaction to the audience, and distract viewers away from the brand, or even decrease brand attitude. ***(Practitioner 3)***

PRP #2a: For a subtle placement, media priming increases recall outcome when compared to no priming.

PRP #2b: For a prominent placement, media priming does not change recall outcome when compared to no priming.

PRP #2c: For a subtle placement, media priming does not change attitude outcome when compared to no priming.

PRP #2d: For a prominent placement, media priming decreases attitude outcome when compared to no priming.

PRP #3a: For a subtle placement, ad priming increases recall outcome when compared to no priming.

PRP #3b: For a prominent placement, ad priming does not change recall outcome when compared to no priming.

PRP #3c: For a subtle placement, ad priming does not change attitude outcome when compared to no priming.

PRP #3d: For a prominent placement, ad priming decreases attitude outcome when compared to no priming.

It is difficult for me to imagine that ad priming and media priming will have different impacts on outcomes irrespective of placement type. ***(Practitioner 1)***

In my opinion, I do not think there are many differences between media priming and ad priming approaches in terms of their impact on audience outcomes. ***(Practitioner 3)***

PRP #4a: For subtle placements, the impact on recall from media priming does not differ from the impact on recall from ad priming.

PRP #4b: For prominent placements, the impact on recall from media priming does not differ from the impact on recall from ad priming.

PRP #4c: For subtle placements, the impact on attitude from media priming does not differ from the impact on attitude from ad priming.

PRP #4d: For prominent placements, the impact on attitude from media priming does not differ from the impact on attitude from ad priming.

Conclusions

We acknowledge that the twelve PRPs advanced above may appear to lack the rigor of tightly developed and theoretically defensible hypotheses. Nevertheless, these PRPs are conceptually positioned somewhere on a continuum between formal hypotheses on the one hand, and research questions on the other. PRPs represent a good option for our work given the abundance of primed placements in industry practice and the relative paucity of published work on priming placements. Our empirical analyses will rigorously test and either reject or accept each of the twelve **PRPs**, much as they also seek to test and verify each of our four theory-based hypotheses (**H1a**, **H1b**, **H1c** and **H1d**).

Helpful declarative statements from participants informed the inductive development of the twelve PRPs. For example, two participants (Practitioners 1 and 3) stated that media priming and ad priming approaches do not differ on audience outcomes for both subtle and prominent placements. This shared insight led to **PRP #4a**, **PRP #4b**, **PRP #4c**, **PRP #4d**, and reaffirmed the rationale to combine media priming and ad priming under one category labelled "Priming" that could then be compared with "No priming" category in our four hypotheses **H1a** through **H1d**. This also explains the similarity of four PRPs devoted to media priming (**PRP #2a**, **PRP**

#2b, **PRP #2c**, **PRP # 2d**) with the corresponding PRPs devoted to ad priming (**PRP #3a**, **PRP #3b**, **PRP #3c**, **PRP # 3d**).

Study 2 and Study 3

For brevity and presentation ease, Studies 2 and 3 are discussed together because they are similar: they both use a 3 (**Priming:** no priming, media priming, ad priming) x 2 (**Placement Type:** Subtle, Prominent) design with identical priming stimuli to test recall outcomes. In Study 2 – conducted in US – 142 undergraduate students (69 males, mean age 22.47 years) from a university participated for extra course credit. In Study 3 – conducted in Italy – 370 consumers (182 males; mean age 22.45 years) participated voluntarily[1].

Both studies 2 and 3 test and validate recall hypotheses **H1a** and **H1b** along with **PRP #2a, PRP #2b, PRP #3a, PRP #3b, PRP #4a,** and **PRP #4b**. Additionally, Study 3 tests attitudinal hypotheses **H1c**, and **H1d** along with **PRP #2c, PRP #2d, PRP #3c, PRP #3d, PRP #4c, and PRP #4d**. Thus, Study 3 sought two goals: (a) replicate Study 2 to explore cross-national generalizability of recall results, and (b) analyse attitude toward the placed brand.

Movie Choice, Priming Stimuli

The authors took advantage of a free, limited choice opportunity to conduct research on movie placements in a theatre setting by leveraging serendipitous local developments. The

[1] Questionnaire instruments and experimental stimuli (for the priming related manipulations) were prepared in English and later translated into Italian by an author. Using a backward-translation approach, we verified the veracity of the latter version with a language expert fluent in both languages. The questionnaires administered in US and Italy were English and Italian versions, respectively.

student association at the University in Italy organized free showings of seven movies that feature Harrison Ford (*Apocalypse Now, Blade Runner, Raiders of the Lost Ark, Return of the Jedi, Regarding Henry, The Fugitive*, and *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*) at a downtown theatre. A key research requirement of our study was that all subjects watched the entire movie chosen for our study in a real theatre setting. Therefore, we analysed the seven listed movies and chose *Regarding Henry*[2] for our study because it was unlikely to be previously seen by participants, lacked offensive content, and included several candidate brand placements of each type (subtle or prominent) for products that were available to participants in both US and Italy.

Participants in Study 3 represented consumers in Italy who voluntarily chose to watch a free screening of *Regarding Henry* (as is typical for foreign movies in Italy, this movie was a dubbed version in Italian language without English subtitles). In contrast, Study 2 participants were students enrolled at a US university who, in exchange for course credit, took advantage of an opportunity to watch a Harrison Ford movie at the University auditorium – a theatre setting.

Content analysis to identify exemplar brand by Placement Type, Confounding Checks

We developed and tested (Perrault and Leigh 1989) a content analysis instrument derived from past studies (Brennan, Dubas and Babin 1999; Dens et al. 2012; Ferraro and Avery 2000;

[2] Henry is a lawyer who survives a shooting accident and finds out later that he cannot remember anything. Henry also has to recover his speech and mobility, and adapt back into a life that he no longer fits in. Fortunately, he has a loving wife and daughter to help him. He learns about his old (pre-accident) life throughout the movie and discovers that he does not really care for the person he was earlier.

Gupta and Gould 2007; La Ferle and Edwards 2006). Three independent judge-coders coded each of the 14 brands placed in *Regarding Henry* on characteristics of subtle/prominent placements defined in the literature (e.g., Gupta and Lord 1998; Cowley and Barron 2008; Dens et al. 2012; Brennan, Dubas and Babin 1999; Gupta and Gould 2007; La Ferle and Edwards 2006). For each placed brand, the determination of its placement type (subtle or prominent) depended on the characteristics of its placement episodes as shown in Appendix A.

Agreement among the judge-coders on the subtle/prominent placement classifications reached 85.71% with Krippendorff's $\alpha = 0.81$ [values range from 0 to 1, where 1 represents perfect agreement, and $\alpha \geq 0.80$ is considered acceptable (Krippendorf 2004)]. Reebok athletic shoes and Ritz crackers – two placed brands in *Regarding Henry* – respectively emerged as the top choice for subtle and prominent placement in our research.

We investigated if this choice of Reebok and Ritz was confounded with plot connection. According to Dens et al. (2012), the degree of brand prominence in a placement and plot connection represent conceptually separate dimensions. It is therefore important to rule out any confounding between these constructs. For example, if Ritz and Reebok differ on the degree of prominence or Placement Type factor (as they should), but also differ on the degree to which they are integrated with the movie plot, it will be difficult to uniquely attribute our empirical findings to the factors included in our experimental design, since plot connection is excluded from that design. Recall that the three judge-coders had rated the degree of plot-integration of all brands in our movie as one of the placement attributes (see Appendix A). At first glance, it is reassuring that both Reebok and Ritz brands were considered as "highly plot-integrated" by these judge coders. Furthermore, the (high-low) brand classifications on the "integration with plot"

attribute reflected agreement among the judge-coders (92.85% agreement with a reassuringly high Krippendorff's $\alpha = 0.90$).

Nevertheless, we took a further step to validate the judge-coders' interpretation about placement type and integration with the plot. We ran a pretest with 33 students (15 males, mean age = 24.21 years) who were instructed about the concepts of brand placement and plot integration. After watching *Regarding Henry*, each respondent was asked to rate the degree of plot integration for each of the 14 placed brands using a 7 point scale (1=very low plot integration, 7=very high plot integration). The corresponding mean ratings for each placed brand appear within brackets in Appendix A. The pre-test results are in line with the earlier interpretation from the three judge-coders about the degree of integration with the plot for each of the placed brands [$M_{\text{Low integration with the plot}}$= 1.64 (0.79) vs. $M_{\text{High integration with the plot}}$= 5.87 (0.90); $t(460)=-53.414$ $p<0.001$]. Specifically, Reebok and Ritz (M_{Reebok}= 5.96; M_{Ritz}= 6.27; $t(33)=-1.379$, $p=0.177$) are not noticeably different on the dimension of plot integration. For this reason, we conclude that differences ascribed to the Placement Type factor in our research are not confounded with the degree of plot integration.

Pre-test for Placement Type (Subtle/Prominent)

Following Homer (2009), a separate student sample (n=35; 19 males; mean age 21.49 years) participated in a pre-test to assess whether Reebok and Ritz placements are respectively perceived as a subtle and prominent placement. Participants watched *Regarding Henry* and read definitions of product placement, subtle and prominent placements extracted from published work. Using a seven-point scale (1=very subtle; 7=very prominent), they evaluated four placed brands (Reebok, Beck's, Ritz crackers and Ajax representing the top two exemplars of subtle and

prominent placements in Appendix A). Results affirmed that Reebok and Ritz are perceived as the most subtle and most prominent placement, respectively ($M_{Becks} = 2.83$; $M_{Reebok} = 1.83$; $M_{Ritz} = 6.63$; $M_{Ajax} = 6$); the difference between Reebok and Ritz on this seven point scale is statistically significant ($M_{Reebok} = 1.83$ v $M_{Ritz} = 6.63$; $t(34) = -30.435$ $p<0.001$).

Figures 1a, 1b and 1c about here

Pre-test for Priming

Figures 1a, 1b and 1c depict the stimuli used for the three priming treatments (no priming/control, media priming and ad priming) for Reebok athletic shoes chosen as the subtle placement. The priming stimuli featured appropriate variations of editorial and ad content in *BusinessWeek* online. The *no priming* stimulus featured an ad for *Perrier Sparkling Natural Mineral Water*, a neutral brand not placed in *Regarding Henry*. The adjoining editorial content was a neutral media story (from the placement perspective) about the bottled water industry. The *media priming* stimulus included a media story on product placement that described actor Harrison Ford's role in the Reebok placement, with an adjoining ad for the neutral brand. The *ad priming* stimulus included the neutral media story and an ad describing Ford's role in the Reebok placement. The three stimuli corresponding to the prominent placement (Ritz crackers) followed a similar approach.

We ran another pre-test to assure equivalence in information content across the priming stimuli. Subjects (n=109, 55 females, mean age 25.83 years) were randomly assigned in a 2 (*brand*: Ritz, Reebok) x 2 (*priming*: Media priming, Ad priming) between subject design.

Participants rated their assigned stimulus on information content and execution quality scales adapted from Meyers-Levy and Peracchio (1992).

Table 3 about here

As shown in Table 3, univariate ANOVAs indicated that the ad priming and media priming conditions did not differ on these two constructs for each type of placement.

Method, Procedure and Measurement Items

Our investigation required participants' exposure to the entire movie in a theatre setting. Participants in both Studies 2 and 3 were randomly assigned to one of two placement types (subtle or prominent) and one of three priming treatments (no priming, media priming, ad priming) prior to movie exposure. Before watching the movie, subjects read a stimulus message that was appropriate for their assigned placement type and priming condition. We provided a cover story that the study was focused on a short movie review that subjects will be asked to write after watching the movie and that the stimulus provided to them (i.e., for one of the three priming conditions) contained additional information. After that, they watched *Regarding Henry* in a theatre setting and responded to questions (free brand recall and demographics).

Additionally, following a distraction task, Study 3 participants responded to measures of attitude toward the brand (four 5-point semantic differential items - Mitchell and Olson 1981) and other germane items (e.g., manipulation checks). Subjects then wrote a short movie review and responded to additional questions about the purpose of our study. Participants felt the study objective was to help them to gain practice with writing a movie review, which was as expected.

Manipulation Checks for Placement Type and Priming Factors

We ran manipulation checks for placement type in both Study 2 and Study 3. After watching the movie, participants in both US and Italy responded to two items that rated the degree of prominence of Reebok and Ritz movie placements respectively on a 1= very low; 7=very high scale. As expected, in the US sample, mean ratings for Reebok shoes were lower than for Ritz crackers (M_{Reebok} = 2.08 v M_{Ritz} = 6.05; t(168) = 46.121 p<0.000). Similarly, for the Italy sample, mean ratings for Reebok shoes in the US sample were lower than for Ritz crackers (M_{Reebok} = 2.15 v M_{Ritz} = 5.94; t(367) = 54.605 p<0.000).

We also ran manipulation checks for the priming factor. After watching the movie, participants in both US and Italy were instructed to respond to three items using a (1=total disagreement, 7=total agreement) scale. These three items asserted that the stimulus sheet provided to the participant prior to watching the movie contained (1) an advertisement of a placed brand, (2) an article discussing a placed brand, and (3) no information about a placed brand.

In the US sample, subjects assigned to the ad priming condition scored higher on item 1 above ($M_{Item\ 1}$ = 6.09; F(2, 166)=602.57, p<.001). Subjects assigned to the media priming condition scored higher on item 2 ($M_{Item\ 2}$ = 6.13; F(2, 166)=733.52, p<.001), and those assigned to the no priming condition scored higher on item 3 ($M_{Item\ 3}$ = 5.94; F(2, 166)=817.67, p<.001).

In the Italy sample, subjects assigned to the ad priming condition scored higher on item 1 above ($M_{Item\ 1}$ = 5.60; F(2, 365)=672.01, p<.001). Subjects assigned to the media priming condition scored higher on item 2 ($M_{Item\ 2}$ = 5.74; F(2, 365)=890.69, p<.001), and those assigned to the no priming condition scored higher on item 3 ($M_{Item\ 3}$ = 5.64; F(2, 365)=497.63, p<.001).

Recall Outcome Results

Summary results for Studies 2 and 3 for recall outcomes appear in Tables 4 and 5. Brand recall was coded as a binary variable [0 = not recalled; 1 = recalled] for brands placed in the movie that were mentioned during free recall.

Tables 4 and 5 about here

For each of two datasets (Study 2 - US data; Study 3 – Italy data), Table 4 reports results from a MANOVA analysis with two recall dependent variables (Subtle – Reebok; Prominent – Ritz). The multivariate F test is statistically significant for all the model terms for both US and Italy data. Given this result, we next focus on the univariate ANOVA results separately for each dependent variable. For both countries, these ANOVA results show that all model terms are statistically significant for the subtle placement (Reebok), but not for the prominent placement (Ritz).

Table 5 reports, for both US and Italy, results for various contrast tests to validate our recall-related hypotheses **H1a** and **H1b,** and recall-related practitioner research propositions **PRP #2a, PRP #2b, PRP #3a, PRP #3b, PRP #4a** and **PRP #4b**. Stated differently, we ran four sets of contrasts (No priming v Priming, No priming v Media priming, No priming v Ad priming, Media priming v Ad priming) separately for each placement type (subtle and prominent), and for each country. For both US and Italy data, we note that the multivariate F tests for all country-specific contrasts tests involving both recall dependent variables are statistically significant for the following three pairs: **H1a** and **H1b**; **PRP #2a** and **PRP #2b**; and **PRP #3a** and **PRP #3b** – see the p values in **bold** in the middle of Table 5. Focusing on the univariate test results for

contrasts for each dependent variable corresponding to these three pairs (see the Contrast Estimate column and the last column of Table 5), it is clear that these results are statistically significant for subtle placements - p values in **bold** - and not statistically significant for prominent placements. Finally, the contrast results that compare media priming and ad priming approaches (**PRP #4a** and **PRP #4b)** are not statistically significant in Table 5. Overall, we note that recall results reported in both Tables 4 and 5 for the Italy sample (Study 3) are reassuringly in line with corresponding findings from the US sample (Study 2).

*Contrast tests for **H1a** and **H1b***: For a subtle placement, a priming strategy effectively improves brand recall when compared to no priming, both for US data ($M_{\text{No priming}} = 0.37 < M_{\text{Priming}} = 0.61$; $F(1, 163) = 10.28$; $p<0.002$) and Italy data ($M_{\text{No priming}} = 0.38 < M_{\text{Priming}} = 0.64$; $F(1, 364) = 25.75$; $p<0.000$). In contrast, for a prominent placement, a priming strategy has no impact on brand recall when compared to no priming, both for US data ($M_{\text{No priming}} = 0.85 \sim M_{\text{Priming}} = 0.91$; $F(1, 163) = 1.46$; $p<0.229$) and Italy data ($M_{\text{No priming}} = 0.88 \sim M_{\text{Priming}} = 0.90$; $F(1, 364) = 0.14$; $p<0.711$). These results support **H1a** and **H1b**.

*Contrast tests for **PRP #2a** and **PRP #2b***: For a subtle placement, a media priming strategy effectively improves brand recall when compared to no priming, both for US data ($M_{\text{No priming}} = 0.37 < M_{\text{Media Priming}} = 0.63$; $F(1, 163) = 9.66$; $p<0.002$) and Italy data ($M_{\text{No priming}} = 0.38 < M_{\text{Media Priming}} = 0.66$; $F(1, 364) = 21.79$; $p<0.000$). In contrast, for a prominent placement, a media priming strategy has no impact on brand recall when compared to no priming, both for US data ($M_{\text{No priming}} = 0.85 \sim M_{\text{Media Priming}} = 0.90$; $F(1, 163) = 0.69$; $p<0.409$) and Italy data ($M_{\text{No priming}} = 0.88 \sim M_{\text{Media Priming}} = 0.88$; $F(1, 364) = 0.04$; $p<0.849$). These results support **PRP #2a** and **PRP #2b**.

*Contrast tests for **PRP #3a** and **PRP #3b***: For a subtle placement, an ad priming strategy effectively improves brand recall when compared to no priming, both for US data ($M_{No\ priming}$ = 0.37 < $M_{Ad\ Priming}$ = 0.58; F(1, 163) = 6.15; p<0.014) and Italy data ($M_{No\ priming}$ = 0.38 < $M_{Ad\ Priming}$ = 0.62; F(1, 364) = 17.17; p<0.000). In contrast, for a prominent placement, an ad priming strategy has no impact on brand recall when compared to no priming, both for US data ($M_{No\ priming}$ = 0.85 ~ $M_{Ad\ Priming}$ = 0.93; F(1, 163) = 1.61; p<0.206) and Italy data ($M_{No\ priming}$ = 0.88 ~ $M_{Ad\ Priming}$ = 0.92; F(1, 364) = 0.71; p<0.399). These results support **PRP #3a** and **PRP #3b**.

*Contrast tests for **PRP #4a** and **PRP #4b***: For a subtle placement, a media priming strategy does not differ on brand recall when compared to an ad priming approach, both for US data ($M_{Media\ Priming}$ = 0.63 ~ $M_{Ad\ Priming}$ = 0.58; F(1, 163) = 0.33; p<0.564) and Italy data ($M_{Media\ Priming}$ = 0.66 ~ $M_{Ad\ Priming}$ = 0.62; F(1, 364) = 0.37; p<0.542). For a prominent placement, a media priming strategy does not differ on brand recall when compared to an ad priming approach, both for US data ($M_{Media\ Priming}$ = 0.90 ~ $M_{Ad\ Priming}$ = 0.93; F(1, 163) = 0.22; p<0.638) and Italy data ($M_{Media\ Priming}$ = 0.88 ~ $M_{Ad\ Priming}$ = 0.92; F(1, 364) = 1.08; p<0.300). These results support **PRP #4a** and **PRP #4b**.

Attitudinal Outcome Results

Summary results for Study 3 (Italy data) for attitudinal outcomes are in Tables 6 and 7.

Tables 6 and 7 about here

Table 6 reports results a MANOVA analyses with two attitude dependent variables (Subtle – Reebok; Prominent – Ritz). The multivariate F test (top row) is statistically significant for all the model terms. Given this, we advance our focus to the univariate ANOVA results

reported separately for each dependent variable that show that all model terms are statistically significant for the prominent placement (Ritz) but not statistically significant for the subtle placement (Reebok).

Table 7 reports results for various contrast tests to validate our attitude-related hypotheses **H1c** and **H1d,** and attitude-related practitioner research propositions **PRP #2c, PRP #2d, PRP #3c, PRP #3d, PRP #4c** and **PRP #4d**. Stated differently, we ran four sets of contrasts (No priming v Priming, No priming v Media priming, No priming v Ad priming, Media priming v Ad priming) separately for each placement type (subtle and prominent). We note that the multivariate F tests for all contrast tests involving both attitude dependent variables are statistically significant for the following three pairs: **H1c** and **H1d**; **PRP #2c** and **PRP #2d**; and **PRP #3c** and **PRP #3d** – see the p values in **bold** in the middle of Table 7. Focusing on the univariate test results for contrasts for each dependent variable corresponding to these three pairs (see the Contrast Estimate column and the last column of Table 7), it is clear that these results are only statistically significant for prominent placements (p values in **bold**), and not significant for subtle placements. Finally, the contrast results that compare media priming and ad priming approaches (**PRP #4c** and **PRP #4d**) are not statistically significant in Table 7.

*Contrast tests for **H1c** and **H1d***: For a subtle placement, a priming strategy does not improve brand attitude when compared to no priming ($M_{No\ priming} = 2.74 \sim M_{Priming} = 2.70$; $F(1, 361) = 0.31$; $p<0.578$). In contrast, for a prominent placement, a priming strategy worsens brand attitude when compared to no priming ($M_{No\ priming} = 3.46 > M_{Priming} = 3.13$; $F(1, 361) = 11.32$; $p<0.001$). These results support **H1c** and **H1d**.

*Contrast tests for **PRP #2c** and **PRP #2d***: For a subtle placement, a media priming strategy does not improve brand attitude when compared to no priming ($M_{No\ priming} = 2.74 \sim$

$M_{Media\ Priming}$ = 2.75; F(1, 361) = 0.03; p<0.863). In contrast, for a prominent placement, a media priming strategy worsens brand attitude when compared to no priming ($M_{No\ priming}$ = 3.46 > $M_{Media\ Priming}$ = 3.07; F(1, 361) = 11.78; p<0.001). These results support **PRP #2c** and **PRP #2d**.

*Contrast tests for **PRP #3c** and **PRP #3d***: For a subtle placement, an ad priming strategy does not improve brand attitude when compared to no priming ($M_{No\ priming}$ = 2.74 ~ $M_{Ad\ Priming}$ = 2.64; F(1, 361) = 1.33; p<0.249). In contrast, for a prominent placement, an ad priming strategy worsens brand attitude when compared to no priming ($M_{No\ priming}$ = 3.46 > $M_{Ad\ Priming}$ = 3.18; F(1, 361) = 5.80; p<0.017). These results support **PRP #3c** and **PRP #3d**.

*Contrast tests for **PRP #4c** and **PRP #4d***: For a subtle placement, a media priming strategy does not differ on brand attitude when compared to an ad priming approach ($M_{Media\ Priming}$ = 2.75 ~ $M_{Ad\ Priming}$ = 2.64; F(1, 361) = 1.78; p<0.183). For a prominent placement, a media priming strategy does not differ on brand attitude when compared to an ad priming approach ($M_{Media\ Priming}$ = 3.07 ~ $M_{Ad\ Priming}$ = 3.18; F(1, 361) = 1.20; p<0.274). These results support **PRP #4c** and **PRP #4d**.

Discussion

Following a literature review, we initially developed four hypotheses focused on recall and attitudinal outcomes. In Study 1, we report insights shared by industry practitioners and inductively derive several additional research propositions. The hypotheses and propositions were empirically tested in Study 2 and Study 3.

All four hypotheses and twelve PRPs were supported. Results for recall outcomes from both Studies 2 and 3 show that elaboration-related implications are largely similar for priming a placement and for increasing the degree of its prominence. Because these studies involved two

countries, the recall findings also provide evidence of cross-national generalizability. In sum, both Study 2 and Study 3 demonstrate that priming a prominent placement does not produce a significant improvement in recall outcome, thereby supporting a LCMMM-based ceiling effect on elaboration. In contrast, recall-related findings from both US and Italy data consistently show that for subtle placements, any type of priming improves recall performance.

For attitudinal outcomes, any type of priming decreases brand attitude for prominent placements, as predicted by HMM and PKM models. This finding reinforces the importance of two concepts (audience awareness and persuasion knowledge) from HMM and PKM models. It also underscores a practitioner's cautionary comment in Study 1 that prominent placements should never be perceived as an 'ad within the movie.' As hypothesized in H1c, our results show that this risk of decrease in attitude does not apply to priming of subtle placements.

Overall, our results offer an extension – *in the marketing-oriented priming context* – to van Reijmersdal's (2009) thesis that prominent placements are generally good for memory outcomes but bad for attitude outcomes. Given the similarity in elaboration related implications for prominence and priming, priming a prominent placement does not improve memory outcomes when compared to no priming. In this case, our research results support a ceiling effect for recall performance. Additionally, our findings indicate that *priming* prominent placements may significantly lower brand attitude when compared to no priming.

Managerial implications

A key contribution of our research is to extend the investigation of priming product placements in a marketing-oriented direction, in the spirit of Cowley and Barron (2008). As predicted in comments from Practitioners 1 and 3 in Study 1, our results indicate no differences

between media priming and ad priming strategies, for a given type of placement and a specific outcome variable. Tables 5 and 7 affirm the consistent lack of statistically significant differences in contrast results (for both recall and attitude outcomes respectively) that compare media priming and ad priming. Since media priming is relatively more difficult to plan and execute than ad priming, this finding allows managerial freedom to choose any of these two priming strategies because the results are comparable on both recall or attitude outcomes.

Practitioner participants in Study 1 averred that media priming of placements is more appropriate when the campaign goal is to reach a wide audience, and that ad priming of placements is more suitable if there is a need to (a) repeat the ad prime over a short period or (b) to target the prime to a narrow audience. Such observations should also consider implications of Homer's (2009) findings showing that repeated exposure to prominent (subtle) placements decrease (do not change) brand attitude.

In the case of ad priming, note that the brand sponsor controls the content and format of the priming message but this is not the case for media priming. In other words, brand sponsors need to manage any challenges related to effective and timely delivery of the intended media prime message for placements. Finally, the placement type that characterizes a specific brand's placement in a movie depends entirely on the story or plot. For example, a brand may appear as a prominent placement in one movie and as a subtle placement in another.

Our research offers two basic managerial recommendations. First, *any priming strategy deserves consideration for subtle placements because it is likely to improve recall outcomes and does not diminish attitudinal outcomes, when compared to no priming*. Second, *priming is simply not appropriate for prominent placements because it does not improve recall outcomes, and is likely to diminish attitudinal outcomes*. With respect to the first recommendation, there are other

advantages related to restricting focus to subtle placements in placement priming campaigns. For example, the bulk of placement opportunities are subtle placements (e.g., Ferraro and Avery 2000). Additionally, as mentioned earlier, the overwhelming majority of movie placements are not primed. Taken together, this implies that the opportunities to prime subtle placements are considerably higher than opportunities to prime prominent placements. The second recommendation above is somewhat counter-intuitive in that prominent placements are relatively more expensive, and therefore, campaigns to prime prominent placements can be expensive as well. Prominent placements are widely perceived as much sought-after, high-profile opportunities for brand sponsors to feature their products in movies. As such, high profile cross-promotional campaigns that serve to prime prominent movie placements – typically coordinated by the movie producer and the brand sponsor – often synergistically feature both the movie and the placed brand before the movie's release. Such cross-promotional campaigns satisfy our definition of ad priming for placements. Under the circumstances, our advice to avoid any type of priming for prominent placements should raise red flags for managers. To the extent that cross-promotional campaigns may substitute for payment consideration toward a specific placement, or even emerge as a pre-condition for access to a highly prominent placement opportunity, our results provide a cautionary note to managers and brand sponsors. Before considering a cross-promotion campaign that primes/promotes a brand placement in a movie, a careful assessment of the related benefits that will accrue to the brand/sponsor as opposed to the movie/producer is vital.

In general, managers need to assess the incremental cost of a priming campaign relative to the benefits attributable to the campaign. Compared to the cost of placement opportunities, priming opportunities are sometimes free, or have negligible impact on marketing budgets.

Finally, managers need to understand the conditions when it is appropriate to prime a movie placement: after the movie's release and/or before? When a brand sponsor commits to a product placement opportunity or decides to prime a placement before the movie's release, there is a risk associated with uncertainty about how well the movie will perform in future. If the placement priming campaign occurs after the movie's release (where the prime stimulus serves more to reinforce an existing placement than to alert audiences about an upcoming placement), this risk is reduced to the extent that the sponsor can assess the movie's success before launching the campaign.

Limitations, Strengths and Future Research Directions

Our research is not without limitations. We conceptualized and executed priming in a very constrained/controlled experimental setting wherein the prime (a print ad) preceded movie exposure. The studies described here focused on only two brands in one movie with 14 placed brands. Although the recall outcomes were analysed with data from two countries, there is a pressing need for more generalizable research findings that span more movies, placed brands, countries, and desirable audience outcomes.

Our research has key strengths. Importantly, it demonstrates how practitioners' insights can inform the development of propositions that advance academic research. It also illustrates how academic research can provide unequivocal and powerful recommendations that will be very useful to practitioners. Finally, it demonstrates ecological validity (Deighton, Romer and McQueen 1989), because respondents in Study 2 and Study 3 were regular movie watchers who watched the entire movie in an appropriate (theatre) setting.

To improve managerial guidance, future research should explore several research areas. First, although this study restricted focus to priming stimuli in print media, managers need research insights on using non-print media vehicles for priming placements. Second, future research should improve our understanding of the following *movie-specific* factors that influence the success potential of placement priming campaigns: number of placed brands, the cumulative exposure time devoted to placements, the modality of placements, and the number of placement episodes. Furthermore, third, *brand-specific* considerations also likely influence the choice of appropriate placement priming strategies for a movie prior to its release. In this regard, future research should develop guidance on priming-related implications of (a) an unfamiliar/novel (as opposed to a familiar) brand placement, (b) a brand unavailable to the movie audience in a different country (as opposed to a brand that is readily available), and (c) frequency of priming (if it is optimal to prime just once or more frequently).

Our description of Table 2 earlier highlighted a similarity between warning/disclosure statements about product placements on the one hand and our marketing-oriented priming strategies for product placements on the other. Specifically, both these research streams compared in Table 2 leverage the priming of product placements, and are similar in that they both draw viewers' attention to the movie product placement before movie exposure. There is significant support in the literature that such enhanced attention stimulates greater cognitive elaboration and recall, an outcome evident in US and Italy data in this research as well as in the literature on warning/disclosure statements (see Bennet, Pecotich and Putrevu 1999; Matthes and Naderer 2016; Chan 2020). Although no consensus view has emerged on how warnings/disclosures influence attitudinal outcomes (for example, see Bennet, Pecotich and Putrevu 1999; Boerman, Reijmersdal and Neijens 2015a, 2015b; Campbell, Mohr and Verlegh

2013; Chan 2020; Guo et al. 2018; Janssen et al. 2016; Matthes and Naderer 2016) this literature has generated many useful research insights. These include the role of instructions to avoid disclosure, disclosure timing, level of disclosure (none, partial and full), disclosure type (text, logo) and several potential mediator/moderator variables of research interest. We hope that future research can similarly replicate and extend our findings with regard to marketing-oriented priming strategies.

Finally, managers often face several problems and risks associated with priming placements. Consider the problem of *fake priming* whereby the brand sponsor primes audiences to expect their product placement in an upcoming movie but the product does not appear in that movie. For example, a 2005 news story from Italy (Offeddu, 2005) predicted the replacement of Aston Martin with Fiat Panda as James Bond's preferred automobile in *Casino Royale*, but this placement did not appear in the movie. Future research needs to explore the consequences to a brand or to its sponsor from encouraging consumer expectations through priming that do not materialize later. In addition to potential risks associated with fake priming, managers should consider other post-priming risks such as production delays or cancellation of the movie.

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Appendix A. Brand placement characteristics

Brand Placement	Placement Type			Duration of exposure (seconds)			N° of appearances	Modality	Plot Integration	Context Description
	Coder 1	Coder 2	Coder 3	Cumulative	Background	Foreground				
Ajax	1	1	1	15	0	15	1	A-V	High (5.12)	When Henry begins to read again after his accident (a key plot element), he screams the name Ajax while holding this product.
Beck's	1	0	0	45	45	0	2	V	Low (2.33)	Henry enjoys Beck's beer with his friend and physical therapist Bradley, while talking about his affair.
Champion	0	0	0	5	0	5	1	V	Low (1.24)	A t-shirt brand that Bradley wears to work.
Mallomars	1	1	1	14			4	A	High (5.67)	Henry and his wife Sarah discuss the fact that before the accident he did not like Mallomars but that changed after the accident. They mention the brand name several times.
Marlboro	0	0	0	12	10	2	1	V	Low (1.52)	While shopping at a convenience store for cigarettes, Henry is injured when he interrupts a robbery. This brand is visible in that scene.
Mercedes	0	1	0	22	10	12	2	V	Low (1.55)	Henry's car before the accident. Henry's character is a highly successful Manhattan lawyer.
Merit	1	1	1	4	0	4	3	1 V, 2 A	High (5.55)	At the convenience store Henry asks for a pack of Merit, his favorite brand of cigarettes.
National Geographic	0	0	0	69	69	0	1	V	Low (2.03)	During his recovery, he reads this magazine while visiting a library with his daughter Rachel.
Nike	0	0	0	23	20	3	3	V	Low (1.27)	Bradley usually wears Nike shoes.
Pepsi	0	0	0	7	5	2	1	V	Low (1.15)	Henry places his paint brush in a can of Pepsi.
Reebok	0	0	0	14	14	0	2	V	High (5.96)	Henry wears white Reebok shoes during his recovery. In a plot-connected scene, Henry's daughter teaches him how to tie his Reebok shoelace after his accident, saying that he had taught her that skill before his accident.
Ritz crackers	1	1	1	207	73	134	21	18 V, 3 A	High (6.27)	Ritz is the first word that Henry uttered after the accident. He then paints the logo for Ritz crackers several times, as a way to recover his memory.
Tabasco ® Mcilhenny Co	1	1	1	13	0	13	1	A-V	Low (2.06)	Bradley abruptly pours a lot of Tabasco on Harry's meal to prompt his reaction because he wasn't able to speak after the accident.
The Ritz-Carlton	1	1	1	8	0	8	3	A-V	High (6.52)	Before the accident Henry had an affair with his colleague Linda and they used to meet at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel.

Placement Type: Subtle=0; Prominent=1; Modality: A=Audio; V=Visual; A-V=Audio-Visual; All data in this table are from judge coders (N=3) except for the numbers in brackets under "Plot Integration" that are averages on a "very low plot integration .. very high plot integration" 1-7 scale obtained from the validation pre-test sample (N=33).

Table 1. Examples of Media Priming and Ad Priming

Media Priming	Ad Priming
Proctor & Gamble placed 20 of its brands in the TV show *Survivor* (CBS seasons 8-10) released in 2004. This news appeared in chiefmarketer.com in 2003.	Fiat Chrysler featured its Jeep Rubicon in an ad before the release of the film *Sahara* (April 8, 2005) where this product was placed. The ad (and related campaigns) describes the brand's story role.
Audi produced a prototype RSQ Sport Coupé for the movie *I, Robot* (released on October 22, 2004), as reported by *repubblica.it* on April 18, 2004. (https://www.repubblica.it/2004/d/motori/aprile/audi2035/audi2035.html).	For its hundredth anniversary, the Italian firm Perugina placed its 'chocolate school' (https://www.perugina.com/it/casa-del-cioccolato/scuola-del-cioccolato) as a key part of the movie *Lezioni di Cioccolato*. Prior to this movie's release (November 23, 2007), Perugina ran an ad campaign to promote this.
The news that Brioni – the famous Italian bespoke house – will design the outfit for James Bond in *Casino Royale* was published on December 16, 2003 long before the film's release in 2006. (https://bamfstyle.com/2013/12/16/cr10-monty-aston/)	Lehu (2007, p. 194) notes that Audemars Piguet placed its watch brand (Royal Oak) in the movie *Terminator 3*. An ad for this watch preceded the movie's release (July 2, 2003), ostensibly intended as a prime for the brand's movie placement.
Information about Pasta Garofalo's placement in Woody Allen's movie *To Rome with Love* (released on June 22 2012) appeared in *laweekly.com* on April 19, 2012; (https://www.laweekly.com/restaurants/garofalo-the-italian-pasta-in-woodys-new-film-to-rome-with-love-2380342)	For a product launch campaign, Fiat placed its Lancia Delta car model in *Angels & Demons*. Prior to the movie's release, Fiat ran a print ad using the movie poster (where the car was placed) after replacing the main actors with this car's image in the foreground (https://www.ultimogiro.com/lancia-delta-angeli-demoni/)
Information about Bollinger champagne's future placement in the Bond 25 movie (that has no title yet, but expected to be released in 2020) appeared in an executive interview in The Advertiser. (https://www.jamesbondlifestyle.com/ultimate-guide-bond-25-products-and-locations#bollinger)	Lehu (2007, p. 139) notes that Finlandia developed an ad for the release of the movie *Die Another Day* to anticipate its presence in the Bond movie. Ian Fleming characterized the James Bond spy as enjoying many types of alcoholic drinks, so many brands of alcoholic drinks seek to link their image with James Bond.

Table 2. A Comparison of Characteristics of Research that Leverages Priming of Placements to Provide Warning/Disclosure statements or Strategies to improve audience communication outcomes

Similarity/ Differences	Key Features	Descriptive Characteristic	Warning/ Disclosure Statements	Strategies such as media-priming/ad-priming
Similarity	Goal	The goal of the alert (or prime) message is to draw viewers' attention to the movie product placement before movie exposure.	X	X
Dissimilarities	Nature	The alert message is a warning/disclosure statement to caution viewers about movie placements that may interrupt or discourage viewing.	X	
		The alert message often encourages viewers to see the movie placement.		X
	Specificity	The alert message applies generally to all placements in a movie.	X	
		The alert message applies to a specific brand in a specific movie.		X
	Regulation	The alert message may comply with a regulatory disclosure requirement.	X	
		The alert message is unrelated to a regulatory requirement.		X
	Link to Movie Plot	The alert message is unrelated to a movie's plot or characters.	X	
		The alert message may relate to a movie's plot or its characters.		X
	Framing	The alert message focuses on protecting the consumers' interest.	X	
		The alert message focuses on advancing the interest of a brand sponsor or a business.		X
	Source	The alert message may originate from the movie producer/distributor in order to comply with regulation.	X	
		The alert message originates from the brand sponsor to promote a brand and/or the movie.		X
	Purpose	To advance public policy and consumer protection. That is, a disclosure/warning statement pre-emptively alerts viewers that product placement(s) represent a commercial message embedded in the movie.	X	
		To advance marketing objectives of a placed brand. That is, priming a placement is a deliberate marketing effort to promote the brand.		X

Table 3. Content Equivalence of Ad Priming and Media Priming Stimuli, by Placement Type

Placement Type	Scale name	Ad Prime	Media Prime	F	p <
Subtle	Information Content	2.68 (1.32)	2.51 (0.94)	F(1,45)=0.236	0.629
	Execution Quality	3.51 (1.34)	2.86 (1.27)	F(1,45)=2.727	0.106
Prominent	Information Content	2.58 (1.31)	2.45 (1.18)	F(1,62)=0.001	0.691
	Execution Quality	3.67 (1.19)	3.47 (1.62)	F(1,62)=0.293	0.864

Note: Means (standard deviations)

Table 4. MANOVA with Recall dependent variables – Results from US (Study 2) and Italy (Study 3)

Study/ Country	Scope of Analysis	Recall dependent variable(s) – for Subtle (Reebok), Prominent (Ritz)	Model Terms			
			Intercept	**Priming**	**Placement Type**	**Priming*Placement Type**
US	Multi-variate	Subtle and Prominent	Wilks λ = 0.091 F(2,162)=813.61; **p=.001;** partial η^2 =0.909	Wilks λ = 0.929 F(4,324)=3.03; **p=.018;** partial η^2 =0.036	Wilks λ = 0.891 F(2,162)=9.95; **p=.001;** partial η^2 =0.109	Wilks λ = 0.918 F(4,324)=3.52; **p=.008;** partial η^2 =0.042
	Uni-variate	Subtle	F(1,163)=232.30; **p=.001;** partial η^2 =0.588	F(2,163)=5.35; **p=.006;** partial η^2 =0.062	F(1,163)=19.15; **p=.001;** partial η^2 =0.105	F(2,163)=6.29; **p=.002**; partial η^2 =0.072
	Uni-variate	Prominent	F(1,163)=1400.01; **p=.001;** partial η^2 =0.896	F(2,163)=0.83; p=.439; partial η^2 =0.010	F(1,163)=0.83; p=.363; partial η^2 =0.005	F(2,163)=0.91; p=.403; partial η^2 =0.011
Italy	Multi-variate	Subtle and Prominent	Wilks λ = 0.089 F(2,363)=1861.80; **p=.001;** partial η^2 =0.911	Wilks λ = 0.930 F(4,726)=6.76; **p=.001;** partial η^2 =0.036	Wilks λ = 0.931 F(2,363)=13.46; **p=.001;** partial η^2 =0.069	Wilks λ = 0.959 F(4,726)=3.79; **p=.005;** partial η^2 =0.020
	Uni-variate	Subtle	F(1,364)=535.55; **p=.001;** partial η^2 =0.595	F(2,364)=13.00; **p=.001;** partial η^2 =0.067	F(1,364)=24.82; **p=.001;** partial η^2 =0.064	F(2,364)=6.94; **p=.001;** partial η^2 =0.037
	Uni-variate	Prominent	F(1,364)=3021.47; **p=.001;** partial η^2 =0.892	F(2,364)=0.62; p=.541; partial η^2 =0.003	F(1,364)=1.34; p=.249; partial η^2 =0.004	F(2,364)=0.49; p=.614; partial η^2 =0.003

Coding information:
Brand recall: 1=recall; 0=no recall; **Priming:** No priming=0; Media priming=1; Ad priming=2; **Placement Type:** Subtle (Reebok)=0; Prominent (Ritz)=1.
All p values that are statistically significant at the .05 level or better are in **bold**.

Table 5. Brand Recall Results – Planned Contrasts for US (Study 2) and Italy (Study 3)

Contrast/ weights for Priming factor	Recall dependent variable for Subtle (Reebok)/ Prominent (Ritz)	Country	Contrast Hypothesis Tests		
			Contrast Estimate [SE] from K Matrix	**Multivariate Test of contrasts (for *both* recall dependent variables)**	**Univariate Test of contrast (for *each* recall dependent variable)**
No priming versus Priming (2 -1 -1) ***H1a, H1b***	Subtle	US	**.477 [.149]**	Wilks λ = 0.933; F(2,162)= 5.85; **p=.004;** partial η^2 =0.067	F(1,163)=10.28; **p=.002;** partial η^2=0.059
	Prominent	US	.124 [.102]		F(1,163)=1.46; p=.229; partial η^2=0.009
	Subtle	Italy	**.522 [.103]**	Wilks λ = 0.933; F(2,363)=13.08; **p=.001;** partial η^2 =0.067	F(1,364)=25.75; **p=.001;** partial η^2=0.066
	Prominent	Italy	.026 [.069]		F(1,364)=0.14; p=.711; partial η^2=0.000
No priming versus Media priming (-1 1 0) ***PRP#2a, PRP#2b***	Subtle	US	**.263 [.085]**	Wilks λ = 0.940; F(2,162)= 5.15; **p=.007;** partial η^2 =0.060	F(1,163)=9.66; **p=.002;** partial η^2 =0.056
	Prominent	US	.048 [.058]		F(1,163)=0.69; p=.409; partial η^2 =0.004
	Subtle	Italy	**.279[.060]**	Wilks λ =0.943; F(2,363)=10.87; **p=.001;** partial η^2 =0.057	F(1,364)=21.79; **p=.001;** partial η^2 =0.056
	Prominent	Italy	-.008[0.40]		F(1,364)=0.04; p=.849; partial η^2 =0.000
No priming versus Ad priming (-1 0 1) ***PRP#3a, PRP#3b***	Subtle	US	**.214 [.086]**	Wilks λ = 0.954; F(2,162)= 3.87; **p=.023;** partial η^2 =0.046	F(1,163)=6.15; **p=.014;** partial η^2=0.036
	Prominent	US	.075 [.059]		F(1,163)=1.61; p=.206; partial η^2 =0.010
	Subtle	Italy	**.243 [.059]**	Wilks λ = 0.952; F(2,363)= 9.18; **p=.001;** partial η^2 =0.048	F(1,364)=17.17; **p=.001;** partial η^2=0.045
	Prominent	Italy	.033 [.039]		F(1,364)=0.71; p=.399; partial η^2=0.002
Media priming versus Ad priming (0 1 -1) ***PRP#4a, PRP#4b***	Subtle	US	.049 [.084]	Wilks λ=0.997; F(2,162)=0.28; p=.760; partial η^2 =0.003	F(1,163)=0.33; p=.564; partial η2=0.002
	Prominent	US	-.027 [.058]		F(1,163)=0.22; p=.638; partial η2=0.001
	Subtle	Italy	.036 [.059]	Wilks λ=0.996; F(2,363)=0.69; p=.504; partial η^2 =0.004	F(1,364)=0.37; p=.542; partial η^2=0.001
	Prominent	Italy	-.041 [.040]		F(1,364)=1.08; p=.300; partial η^2=0.003

Coding information:
Brand recall: 1=recall; 0=no recall; **Priming:** No priming=0; Media priming=1; Ad priming=2. **Placement Type:** Subtle (Reebok)=0; Prominent (Ritz)=1.
Figures within square brackets represent standard error [SE].
p values that are statistically significant at the .05 level or better (and the contrast estimates for the corresponding dependent variable) appear in **bold**.

Table 6. MANOVA with Attitude dependent variables – Results from Italy (Study 3)

Scope of Analysis	Attitude dependent variables for Subtle (Reebok), Prominent (Ritz)	Model Terms (Independent Variables)			
		Intercept	**Priming**	**Placement Type**	**Priming*Placement Type**
Multi-variate	Subtle and Prominent	Wilks λ=0.035 F(2,360)=4935.29; **p=.001;** partial η^2 =0.965	Wilks λ=0.961 F(4,720)=3.59; **p=.007;** partial η^2 =0.020	Wilks λ=0.943 F(2,360)=10.86; **p=.001;** partial η^2 =0.057	Wilks λ = 0.947 F(4,720)=5.01; **p=.001;** partial η^2 =0.27
Uni-variate	Subtle	F(1,361)=4621.58; **p=.001;** partial η^2 =0.928	F(2,361)=1.06; p=.347; partial η^2 =0.006	F(1,361)=0.69; p=.408; partial η^2 =0.002	F(2,361)=3.38; **p=.035;** partial η^2 =0.018
Uni-variate	Prominent	F(1,361)=5365.30; **p=.001;** partial η^2 =0.937	F(2,361)=6.17; **p=.002;** partial η^2 =0.033	F(1,361)=21.03; **p=.001;** partial η^2 =0.055	F(2,361)=6.71; **p=.001;** partial η^2 =0.036

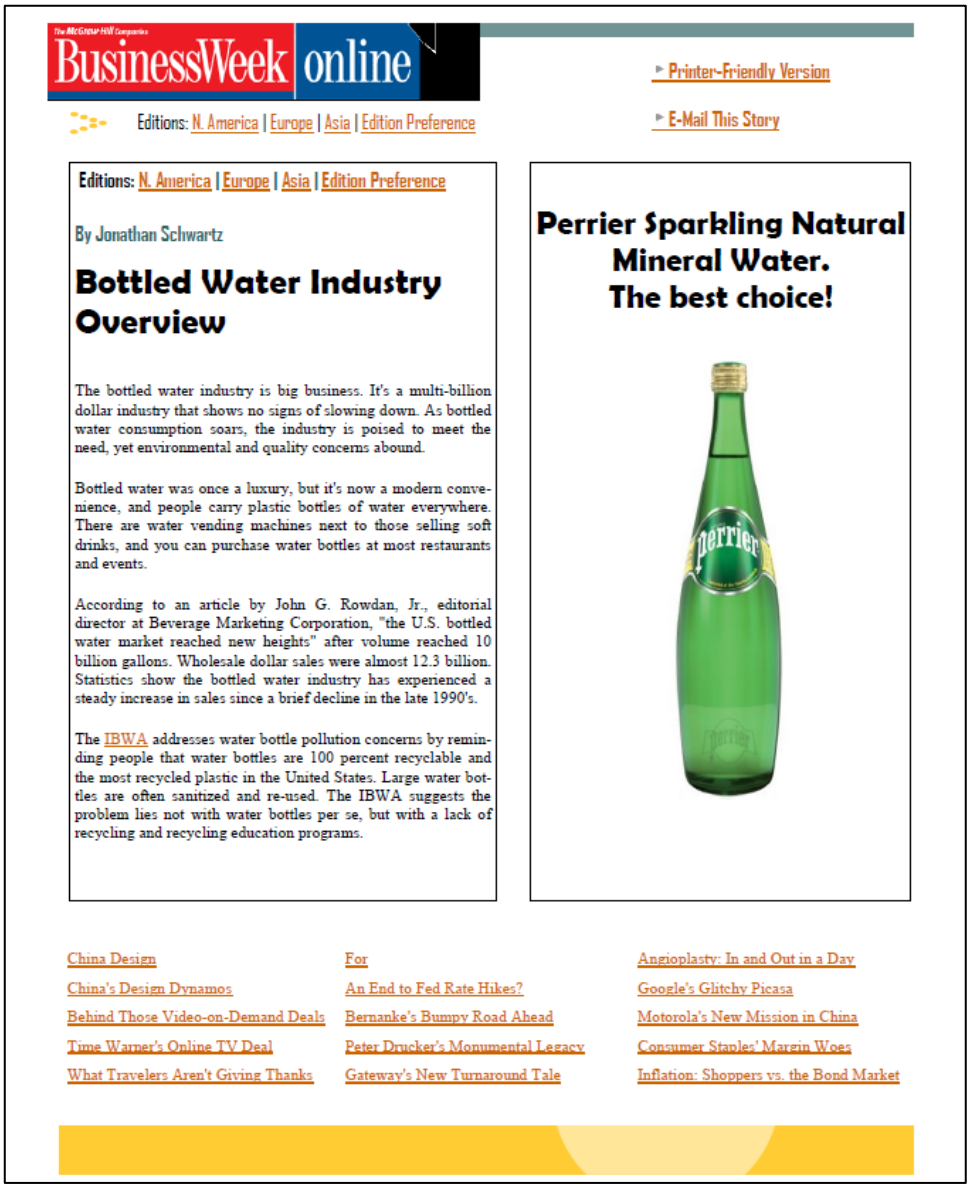
Coding information - **Priming:** No priming=0; Media priming=1; Ad priming=2. **Placement Type:** Subtle (Reebok)=0; Prominent (Ritz)=1.
p values that are statistically significant at the .05 level or better appear in **bold**.

Table 7. Brand Attitude Results – Planned Contrasts for Italy (Study 3)

Contrast/ weights for Priming factor	Attitude dependent variables for Subtle (Reebok), Prominent (Ritz)	Contrast Hypothesis Tests		
		Contrast Estimate [SE] from K Matrix	Multivariate Test (for *both* attitude dependent variables)	Univariate Test (for *each* attitude dependent variable)
No priming versus Priming (-2 1 1) ***H1c, H1d***	Subtle	-.095 [.171]	Wilks λ = 0.969; F(2,360)=5.78; **p=.003**; partial η^2 =0.031	F(1,361)=0.31; p=.578; partial η^2=0.001
	Prominent	**-.637 [.189]**		F(1,361)=11.32; **p=.001**; partial η^2=0.030
No priming versus Media priming (-1 1 0) ***PRP#2c, PRP#2d***	Subtle	.017 [.099]	Wilks λ = 0.968; F(2,360)=5.89; **p=.003;** partial η^2 =0.032	F(1,361)=0.03; p=.863; partial η^2 =0.000
	Prominent	**-.378 [.110]**		F(1,361)=11.78; **p=.001;** partial η^2 =0.032
No priming versus Ad priming (-1 0 1) ***PRP#3c, PRP#3d***	Subtle	-.112 [.097]	Wilks λ = 0.981; F(2,360)=3.53; **p=.030;** partial η^2 =0.19	F(1,361)=1.33; p=.249; partial η^2=0.004
	Prominent	**-.260 [.108]**		F(1,361)=5.80; **p=.017;** partial η^2 =0.016
Media priming versus Ad priming (0 1 -1) ***PRP#4c, PRP#4d***	Subtle	.129 [.097]	Wilks λ=0.992; F(2,360)=1.50; p=.225; partial η^2 =0.008	F(1,361)=1.78; p=.183; partial η^2=0.005
	Prominent	-.118 [.108]		F(1,361)=1.20; p=.274; partial η^2=0.003

Coding information - **Priming:** No priming=0; Media priming=1; Ad priming=2. **Placement Type:** Subtle (Reebok)=0; Prominent (Ritz)=1.
Figures in square brackets represent standard error [SE].
p values that are statistically significant at the .05 level or better (and the contrast estimates for the corresponding dependent variable) appear in **bold**.

Figure 1a, 1b, and 1c. Stimulus for No Priming, Media Priming (subtle placement), and Ad Priming (subtle placement)



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By Jonathan Schwartz

Product Placement Preview—Hopping along with Branded Goods

In the movie *Regarding Henry*, Harrison Ford showcases a host of products including Reebok, athletic shoes. Ford's character play is the protagonist Henry, a professional whose life is transformed after a robbery/shooting incident while shopping. A serious head injury from the shooting results in serious memory loss, but during the prolonged rehabilitation process, he realizes the importance of family values, while the movie showcases a host of products including Reebok shoes. Ford's character wears Reebok shoes while recovering from the accident. It helps him recover at a critical part of his life.

Product placements have become a big business item in the Hollywood industry. Watching Reebok's role in this movie will provide you an understanding of the integrated roles that products play in recent Hollywood films.

China Design For Angioplasty: In and Out in a Day
China's Design Dynamos An End to Fed Rate Hikes? Google's Glitchy Picasa
Behind Those Video-on-Demand Deals Bernanke's Bumpy Road Ahead Motorola's New Mission in China
Time Warner's Online TV Deal Peter Drucker's Monumental Legacy Consumer Staples' Margin Woes
What Travelers Aren't Giving Thanks Gateway's New Turnaround Tale Inflation: Shoppers vs. the Bond Market

Editions: N. America | Europe | Asia | Edition Preference

By Jonathan Schwartz

Bottled Water Industry Overview

The bottled water industry is big business. It's a multi-billion dollar industry that shows no signs of slowing down. As bottled water consumption soars, the industry is poised to meet the need, yet environmental and quality concerns abound.

Bottled water was once a luxury, but it's now a modern convenience, and people carry plastic bottles of water everywhere. There are water vending machines next to those selling soft drinks, and you can purchase water bottles at most restaurants and events.

According to an article by John G. Rowdan, Jr., editorial director at Beverage Marketing Corporation, "the U.S. bottled water market reached new heights" after volume reached 10 billion gallons. Wholesale dollar sales were almost 12.3 billion. Statistics show the bottled water industry has experienced a steady increase in sales since a brief decline in the late 1990's.

The IBWA addresses water bottle pollution concerns by reminding people that water bottles are 100 percent recyclable and the most recycled plastic in the United States. Large water bottles are often sanitized and re-used. The IBWA suggests the problem lies not with water bottles per se, but with a lack of recycling and recycling education programs.

China Design
China's Design Dynamos
Behind Those Video-on-Demand Deals
Time Warner's Online TV Deal
What Travelers Aren't Giving Thanks

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Inflation: Shoppers vs. the Bond Market