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Wonka Chocolates: fictional brand analysis

*Chocolates Wonka: análisis
de la marca de ficción*

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This paper analyzes the fictional brand Wonka by means of the reverse product placement tool. The methodology is exploratory-descriptive which has required a bibliographic review and in-depth interviews with the experts responsible for the brand. The results illustrate how it is dealt with in the market, reflecting on its transmedia identity. In this way, a view on how this technique is applied is built up with a case study of an advertising practice on which there has been little academic research.

KEYWORDS: Advertising, narrative, marketing, transmedia, communication.¹²

Este artículo analiza la marca de ficción Wonka a través del uso de la herramienta de product placement inverso. Cuenta con una metodología exploratorio-descriptiva que ha necesitado de una revisión bibliográfica y de entrevistas en profundidad a los expertos responsables de la marca. Los resultados ilustran su tratamiento en el mercado reflexionando sobre su identidad transmedia. Se construye así una visión sobre la aplicación de esta técnica a través del estudio de caso de una práctica publicitaria que ha sido muy poco investigada en el ámbito académico.

PALABRA CLAVE: Publicidad, narrativa, marketing, transmedia, comunicación.

Este artigo analisa a marca fictícia Wonka por meio do uso da ferramenta de colocação reversa de produtos. Possui uma metodologia exploratório-descritiva que exigiu revisão bibliográfica e entrevistas em profundidade com os especialistas responsáveis pela marca. Os resultados ilustram seu tratamento no mercado refletindo sobre sua identidade transmídia. Assim, constrói-se uma visão sobre a aplicação desta técnica através do estudo de caso de uma prática publicitária pouco investigada no meio acadêmico.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Publicidade, narrativa, marketing, transmídia, comunicação.

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INTRODUCTION

There are brands which in some way or another are in everybody's lives; brands so famous that it is hard to find someone who has not heard about them. There are dozens of examples of these which have become cases of international renown, present in many countries. One such brand is Wonka, a fictional trade name, birthchild of Roald Dahl, which, due to different adaptations, is understood to be an imaginary brand that creates the best chocolate.

For this to happen, we may imagine that in the past few decades behind the scenes important marketing and communication work goes into defining this fictional product for the real world. We can, of course, find interpretations of this not only in literature, but also in the movies, videogames, theme parks and, lastly, in physical confectionery stores in different countries over the world. Thus, here we can observe transmedia advertising by which this product has been conveyed to the life of the consumer. In fact:

Advertising was the first decidedly mass transmedia message in history: the advertising message. It never had an exclusive format but was aimed at being omnipresent. This was always due to nurturing a sole creative idea, with narrative frequency or narrative *in nuce* or a variety of media and different formats, thus ensuring they would be remembered and would complement each other (Rodríguez Ferrández, 2014, p. 33).

Therefore, we see the adaptation of a fictional brand to different environments which have led to its materialization and marketing. This exercise makes us see "transmediality has enough ingredients to be a key element in creative advertising in the twenty-first century" (Martínez Sáez et al., 2017, p. 56). This means the message is built up by means of different media, which are adapted and coordinated by composing the same multidimensional and perpetual idea. Moreover, in cases such as this one, the narrative facilitates these types of actions whose discourse is based on storytelling. Authors such as Javanshir et al. (2020) believe that "transmedia storytelling use a variety of techniques, such as a range of media combinations, varying levels of audience interaction and relating with different media" (p. 5).

Considering how these techniques have evolved within an audiovisual and communicative context, it seems evident that the advertising industry has needed to combine the concepts of advertising and fiction in order to undertake these types of actions. In this way, the *reverse product placement* tool arose, a marketing communication technique which imbues these types of fictional brands with meaning and are the subject matter of this study.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Reverse product placement “consists in transforming these fictional brands into products and services in the physical world” (Muzellec et al., 2013, p. 399). To date, there has been very little academic research into this tool. In many respects it needs to be conceptualized and systemized. In fact, Wonka may be considered as the first reverse brand in history, dating from its birth in 1972 (Pereira, 2012). Other renowned companies followed in its wake and embraced this technique to bring products and brands such as NikeMag sneakers from *Back to the Future II* (1989) (Álvarez-Rodríguez, 2020), Bubba Gump restaurants in *Forrest Gump* (1994) (Hosea, 2007) and Duff beer in *The Simpsons* (1989-) (Scott & Maull, 2012). Although these trade names are popular, this tool is also hardly known in advertising. Also, authors such as Patwardhan and Patwardhan (2016) hold the view that “reverse product placement enables marketing opportunities to be exploited for these successful fictional brands as a promising move for product development” (p. 364). Thus, it is a technique for escaping conventionality, by creating a narrative experience for consumers of these brands (Wasserman, 2007).

In reverse product placement we can identify different characteristics which act as a springboard for this research. Firstly, “one of the main advantages for using this strategy with these brands is that it saves on the costs involved in product development” (Martí Parreño, 2010, p. 135). Consumers see that they can identify the brands and their features within this narrative setting. As a result, they seem more competitive from a marketing and communication point of view.

Authors such as Gutnik et al. (2007) believe that “reverse product placement could one day be used to attract the audience to new

products on offer” (p. 19). This practice concerns making an integrated advertising message with a narrative that tickles the curiosity of the viewer. The aim is to round off the transmedia experience as when consuming it one can experience the same sensations as those the fictional characters have. However, sometimes, initially “there is no intention to commercially develop it at the time the placement is made. Whether it is subsequently marketed or not may depend on how popular the product/movie is” (Patwardhan & Patwardhan, 2016, p. 351). Here is when collaborative culture can convey some of this fiction into the real world (Matellanes Lazo, 2019). This leads us to our first reflection on the capacity these types of brands have to create experiences. Therefore, it should be noted that concerning this tool, “sensorial marketing aims to go beyond and break the audiovisual advertising barrier. At present, its purpose is to promote the differential values and features certain products, services or even events have” (Jiménez-Marín et al., 2019, p. 127).

Here we can identify the Wonka brand as an example of reverse product placement derived from the birthchild of a work of fiction by Roald Dahl. It has had a long track record in advertising by means of different media and has become an internationally renowned brand. In order to gain an insight into how this trade name has been reinterpreted for the physical world this research was undertaken with a special focus on the advertising relationship established between fact and fiction.

OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The main aim of this research is to analyze the communicative actions taken for adapting the Wonka brand to the physical world. This is to gain an insight into the processes and results on the materialization of this fictional brand. This way, from a mainly exploratory viewpoint, valuable information can be obtained on the reverse product placement technique. This general objective is then broken down into two specific ones. The first of these is to explore how the brand has been adapted to the physical world by means of transmedia. This will enable us to evaluate the narrative aspects of this type of advertising. Additionally, the second specific objective is to analyze the history of the Wonka brand in the real world.

This research format was divided into three phases. The first was essentially descriptive and based on obtaining primary information on the subject matter of the study. To be specific, two ex-directors of Nestlé who were in charge of developing this brand in the real world were interviewed in-depth. Here, we mean Pat Marnell, brand marketing manager for Wonka between 2001 and 2006, and Glenn R. Jendricky, brand innovation manager between 1999 and 2005. These interviews were carried out online in April, 2018, and then transcribed and analyzed according to a series of analysis categories: context; adapting the brand to the real world; the nature of the project; brand identity; target market; the marketing, advertising and communication dimensions of the brand in the real world; development of specific technology for production; the contribution of participative culture; and a transmedia assessment of the brand as well as its advantages and limitations. Both interviewees provided quality information about the work carried out and the decisions taken to market the Wonka brand. Lastly, the company Nestlé, which was the last license holder for this brand, was contacted by e-mail in order to gain a first-hand understanding of the current situation of the brand in the market.

Secondly, and starting with a qualitative exploratory approach, there was an analysis of the bibliography on this advertising tool, product placement, its dimensions and the case study itself. In this way, this analysis was grounded from a theoretical perspective and adapted to the latest trends in academic research on this topic. The data and information obtained at this stage are considered as secondary sources.

Both phases mentioned gave rise to a third one, which, from the exploratory-descriptive approach, constituted a qualitative case study (Stake, 2020) stemming from the two types of sources contemplated. In this way an insight could be gained into the communicative actions and decisions made as well as the results. This study was undertaken by developing an in-house analysis model which considered all the communicative dimensions related to this type of brand.

Finally, it should be noted that this methodological design enabled us to concisely and specifically further our understanding of an advertising tool particularly focused on establishing the links between viewer/consumer, brand and audiovisual work in terms of

transmedia. Therefore, the results yielded in this research, as well as the methodological approach implemented may act as a benchmark for future studies on this communicative trend.

RESULTS

Context

The chocolates and confectionery brand Wonka was created by the author of children's stories Roald Dahl, specifically for his novel *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (1964). It tells the story of a mysterious entrepreneur called Willy Wonka who holds a competition for children all over the world to inherit his factory and business. This is considered to be one of the finest works by the author and of twentieth century British children's fiction. It was also made into a movie several times, outstanding among which are *Willy Wonka & The Chocolate Factory* (1971), with a script by Dahl himself, and *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (2005), directed by the American Tim Burton. In short, it is a famous work of fiction which we have focused our research on, has given rise to and is the context for the Wonka brand.

This fictional brand of chocolates was physically produced for the first time at the premiere of its first movie adaptation in 1971. To do so, the company "Quaker made a few limited-edition candies for the launch on the big screen, which I think were chocolate candies" (Marnell, personal communication). Later, and in light of the fame the fictional brand was gaining:

Breakers Confections (Itasca, IL) bought the rights to the Wonka name and made sugar confectionary in the 1970's and the start of the 1980's and later became part of Sunmark Confections (St. Louis, MO). At the start of the 1980's Round Tree Confections (United Kingdom) bought Wonka (Marnell, personal communication).

This corporate trend for the brand culminated with the investment by one of the largest confectionary producers in the world. Nestlé bought "Round Tree Confections (in around 1988) and created a sales line called Willy Wonka" (Jendricky, personal communication). Therefore,

a significant multinational company focused their efforts on reverse branding whose main trademark was its fictional origin.

Adapting the brand to the real world

In fiction, the chocolate brand, Wonka and all its products are represented in a special and unique way. When the protagonists consume it they have a kind of sensorial experience including different flavors and textures. It is almost a highly exclusive delicacy even though it is sold in stores all over the world. For Jendricky, this brand represents “fun, whims and the imagination of Willy Wonka and his factory” both in fact and fiction (personal communication). Here we have the narrative materialization of a work in which “the discourse of Wonka is composed of an ambiguous behavior which may portray him as a villain” (Loveday, 2018, p. 98). As regards his role in the original novel, his importance in the plot is stressed. The golden tickets hidden in several chocolate bars are the vehicle with which Willy Wonka contacts the children who might inherit the factory.

This fictional brand is very famous, largely due to the adaptations of the literature it stems from. It has a very marked identity which makes it popular. So, it is essential to keep these concepts when adapting it to the real world. This tangible development means that “the packaging appearance must match the personality of the product and meet consumer expectations by means of communication. This product must be colorful, interesting and attractive” (Jendricky, personal communication). These decisions must be made in connection with other points such as developing flavors and textures which satisfactorily fulfil expectations of the experience. The client must instantly recognize the hallmarks of the brands and its products in fiction.

Lastly, the manufacture and distribution of these chocolates mainly targeted Americans. The United States is where Nestlé had a factory which could produce this confectionary. Moreover, it had a larger market and one that was more used to these kinds of actions. Even so, little by little, and due to the intervention of participative culture, this brand spread to other continents. This was especially true in Europe, where it was rolled-out in the United Kingdom (Jardine, 1999), and

Asia, where a Japanese adaptation of the brand was made.³ Thus, it became an internationally visible consumer product, especially after its debut appearance in 2005 after the latest movie adaptation in which eating Wonka bars was part of the movie experience (Downing, 2005).

Nature of the project

Adapting this brand and its products from the fictional world to the real one was natural and viable from the story. As stated above, from the start, the aim was to provide a transmedia experience for fans of the story and consumers of the product (Scolari, 2013). In this way, this brand “attempts to make its products stand out by providing a large range of high quality products, with different colors, flavors and textures, thereby providing a delicious and different culinary experience” (Pereira Parente de Andrade, 2012, p. 9). This is an experience which conveys the fiction to consumers and connects them to “the fantasy world of Willy Wonka” (Reading & Jenkins, 2015, p. 164). Thus, we have an experiential marketing action based on *eatertainment*: foods characterized by being “enjoyable and providing entertainment which satisfies consumers in a more holistic fashion” (Bharath & Henry, 2014, p. 188). The range of Nestlé candy has for Wonka aims to be something more than just chocolate bars: unique products on the market whose purpose is to be part of a narrative and experiential context.

Adapting this brand to the international physical market seems to have entailed ensuring the same quality and product designs were maintained. In both scenarios there are articles and chocolate confectionery which maintain the look of the brand. To bring them to fruition, companies such as Nestlé “have a formal process for creating a document to position the brand. This creates the images, personality and emotions the consumers see and experience every time they see or touch the brand” (Jendricky, personal communication). It is produced in-house and specifically defines the aspects which may influence the end experience by following on from what is known in the fiction.

Thus, it is essential that clients must feel they are consuming the same product. For this reason, collaborative work was carried out with

³ Nestlé Wonka website in Japan: <https://nestle.jp/brand/wonka/>

the adaptations in which this brand appears. For example, “the majority of Wonka products seen in Burton’s Charlie and the Chocolate Factory have identical wrappings to the merchandise” (Downing, 2005, n.p.) which at the time were coming onto the market.

Brand identity

Reverse products and brands, such as this one, mainly stand out from the competition in which “no other brand has the legacy of a book and a movie we are as fond of as *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* or *Willy Wonka*” (Marnell, personal communication). This entails the brand having a previous position on the market, which is prolonged in its physical counterpart. In fact, having a brand with these features gave Nestlé a large competitive advantage which enabled it to bring out other brands and products under the Wonka name. This concerned the sub-brands of candies known as Wonka Exceptionals. Among these were SweeTARTS, a brand of candies that belonged to Sunmark, but were in a different division. Once Nestlé bought Sunmark, “the smaller divisions of Sunmark were eventually consolidated and all the sugar confectionery targeted at children were labeled as Wonka” (Marnell, personal communication).

The same occurred with the Nerds Rope brand, which was created by the interviewee Glenn R. Jendricky. Here the Wonka umbrella was used to launch “a gummy rope with tiny candies embedded in it. You can play with our food and eat it in different ways. It is different because you can play with it and customize it” (Jendricky, personal communication). In this way, the personality and fantasy features of the Wonka brand became something less conventional and aimed at engaging with the playful side of consumers.

Target market

The target market of the Wonka brand in Nestlé was defined as “preadolescents between 8 and 14 year olds and mothers” (Jendricky, personal communication). These two target markets were directly related to the brand for different reasons. Firstly, the former were the main consumers of this type of confectionery and that which were more aware about its entertainment value. The latter, were defined as parents,

which were firstly the ones who bought this product for their children and, secondly, they admitted recognizing the brand from the time the original book came out in 1964 or from subsequent movie adaptations.

Marketing dimensions

Pereira Parente de Andrade (2012) considers Wonka “to be a fictional brand which provides a great deal of engagement with its target market” (p. 6). It is a name with great potential which identifies the values of the experience with the magic of the fictional story (Mathew, 2020). The consumer chooses these chocolates over other ones as a result of the story they know and reverse product placement (Bertrand Zárate, 2012). There is an interesting integration of a brand defined within a fictional framework which leads us to these type of “findings about the effects of product placement on the attitudes” (Olsen & Samuelsen, 2012, p. 141) of the consumers and their commitment to the brand and the associated narrative.

Creating brand content by means of food products such as this is one potential reverse product placement has (Edery, 2006). Wonka is a fictional brand closely associated with its chocolate manufacturing. It is known internationally and fulfils the same role as its licensee Nestlé in the fictional world it comes from. Its consumption enables “the imaginary experiences of the children evoked by ‘playing’ with the food brands in advergaming settings to be adapted to the real world. This helps create positive attitudes about these brands” (Lee et al., 2009, p. 137). In this respect, these products constitute a case of branded content which help establish an emotional bond between Wonka and their consumers while remaining a sensorial experience.

Previously, we mentioned the capacity a brand has for consumers to enjoy it and be entertained by eating it. This concept is known as *eatertainment*. This term includes “the potential role advertainment has in strategic communications” (Russell, 2007, p. 12), which depends on how far the brand is integrated into the entertainment contents. Fun is part of the personality of the brand, but it is also what the client expects: to experience consuming this candy and having the same sensations the protagonists in the story had.

Advertising and communication for the real world

Producing these items is linked to their fictional depictions seen in the adaptations of this work. Not only are the visual and tangible aspects important, but also is maintaining the creative spirit of the brand. For this purpose, “the Dahl family were very strict about recreating the candy directly from the book” (Marnell, personal communication). The descendants of the author Roald Dahl own the brand,⁴ so they ensure all adaptations are truthful and rigorous. In practice, the pains taken to make an exact materialization of the brand constitutes a promotion focused on replicating points such as the corporate look, packaging or advertising, apart from the quality of the product itself.

The Wonka brand has been worked on from the narrative in response to its brand image. Aspects such as colors, logotypes or the handwriting style, are respected to give it an air of exclusivity. It has carried out specific promotional activities directly linked to the fiction. This can be seen with the famous golden tickets in the story which for years were found “inside the wrappers that could be exchanged for prizes. Once this was a visit to the Willy Wonka’s chocolate factory which was promoted on packets, TV, printed and digital advertisements, and on screens in the stores” (Jendricky, personal communication). They are a series of practices focused on stretching the experience even more and blurring the frontier between fact and fiction.

Moreover, it must be remembered that a brand such as Nestlé is behind this development, so it always appears in its communications. For example, the presence of the parent company can be seen to the extent that the “Wonka website used a similar small logotype to show it was commercial, albeit on this space the logotype was located on the top right part of the screen” (Dahl et al., 2009, p. 186). This company is aware how popular Wonka is. Therefore, it must, likewise, communicate that this materialization from fiction is a result of the effort and investment they have made. They thereby obtain their communicational yield in this reverse implementation which consolidates their brand image.

⁴ Information provided by e-mail by Tricia Bowles, Head of Communications at Nestlé.

Specific technology developed for production

Multinationals such as Nestlé “need to grow every year. The most striking growth occurs when a new product is added. Every year retail buyers expect Nestlé to display new products for them to consider” (Jendricky, personal communication). To fulfil these expectations, constant research and technology development is required. This helps to make cutting-edge, quality products which are ever more competitive. At the same time, Wonka is an example of how reverse branding “must bring the precession (the aura it has in the fantasy world) of the brand to real life and be accepted by the consumer” (Pereira Parente de Andrade, 2012, p. 77). In this scenario, the constant evolution and different tasks undertaken by Wonka at this company can be explained.

There must be a constant flow of “creative marketing professionals, consumer research and as much profit as possible” (Marnell, personal communication). This way the sub-brands created under the Wonka Exceptionals umbrella brand make sense. At the same time, they help to develop a fictional brand defined by its fantasy. They feed the narrative world of Willy Wonka, while there is product innovation in the real world.

Contribution from participative culture

The intervention of participative culture was not essential to launching it, but it was developing and consolidating it subsequently. The first bars were a marketing gimmick to go with the movies premiere. Shortly afterwards, a company as important as Nestlé bought the license to maintain and extend this product line based on reverse product placements.

For Patwardhan and Patwardhan (2016), “the effect of planned reverse product placement on attitudes to the brand is strong and positive, and is an opportunity to influence consumer responses” (p. 362). This way, this corporate move, cannot be understood without the collaboration between the audience and the brand (Méndiz Noguero, 2007). In fact, “product placement travels via the cultures in the movies, and the members of the audience from different cultures which see and interpret it” (Eisend, 2009, p. 16). This chocolate brand would not have lasted if, since 1971, the audience had not bonded with

it and were clearly consuming it. For example, on the Internet there are innumerable videos about *unboxing* these chocolates to search for the golden tickets.

Transmedia evaluation of the brand

The aim of consuming any product from the Wonka range is to lead the consumer to a fictional, fantasy world where any quality candy imaginable is possible. Nestlé made great efforts to adapt these virtues to the real world in order to convey the same values. In fact, Pat Marnell himself admits that faced with product development, a narrative-based matter was posed. “This concerned creating products which matched what would Willy Wonka think next?” (personal communication).

Large licensees for these types of brands related to stories “are learning to see themselves as narrators, thereby embracing the concept of storytelling transmedia as the most effective way of communicating concepts and ideas” (Kerestegian, 2017, p. 103). In this way, the consumption experience of Wonka has become a transmedia attitude (Llorca, 2015). It is a way of rounding off our understanding of the story by actively consuming these reverse candies.

Advantages and disadvantages

The launch of these reverse products such as Wonka candies and chocolates has the great advantage of having a previous position in fiction. Before it came onto the market, the novel and its different adaptations helped “put it in the public eye and the brand in the popular imagination” (Jendricky, personal communication). Nestlé decided to build up the brand before manufacturing it. In this respect it had a competitive advantage which came from the story and so it was already in the mind of the consumer.

Moreover, there is an uncertain legal situation with this trade mark. Nestlé “licensed the brand name, but is not the owner. If they lose the license, they will no longer own the brand” (Jendricky, personal communication). In fact, the company has had this status since 2018, when it was sold and came into the hands of the Italian chocolate manufacturer Ferrero. This severed the link between Nestlé and Wonka and all the communication and brand development work would then

pass to the new license holder. This new status quo left the fictional brand in a limbo which could be detrimental to its personality and reputation if a coherent line is not maintained.

Another problem with this type of brand is that it is consumed occasionally to try it out, but not as a habit. The client may buy these chocolate bars to look for the golden ticket or as a collector might. Therefore, to ensure it is not bought for just as a craze by consumers with previous knowledge about the brand there needs to be a commitment to innovation and making a high quality product (Jenkins, 2013).

Finally, another disadvantage posed is as it comes from fantasy, it cannot be replicated in the real world. In the work by Dahl, this brand and the products have important fantasy features which stem from the imagination of the protagonist. Although efforts to faithfully adapt the experiences associated with the fictional chocolates to real life can be seen, there are other candies in this work that can never be brought to life. In response to this situation, we also saw how this company reacted by developing specific technology and innovation plans in order to meet these fantasy expectations as far as possible.

DISCUSSION

Reverse practices such as the one analyzed here are worth researching for future studies and by researchers of this advertising practice. An important company such as Nestlé could detect a business opportunity and offer this brand realistically. Therefore, its commercial potential was demonstrated as well as the reverse product placement actions taken insofar as:

This profession progresses in relation to technology in a way that it transcends superficial crazes for new products in order to engage in a more significant and meaningful way with their target markets and even to create new added value products and services (Caro-Castaño & Selva-Ruiz, 2020, p. 36).

Likewise, it enjoys a competitive advantage due to its previous, position on the market and in the minds of consumers, thus, there is less risk (Jendricky, personal communication). In this way, the use of

techniques will depend on future consumer trends, therefore brand development is affected by different stakeholders (Alzate Sanz & Orozco Toro, 2018). In any event, Wonka is one of the most successful cases of using this tool whose aim is to adapt part of the fiction to the real world.

Today, after almost 30 years, Wonka no longer belongs to Nestlé.⁵ During this research, the brand was sold to another chocolate multinational which so far has not announced its plans for it. However, despite being in a limbo, this fictional brand is clearly present in different cultural and commercial settings. In London and New York there is *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* the musical, and Warner Bros. has announced a new saga of movies which follow on from the original ones with Willy Wonka (Martínez, 2018). In light of this context and the effect of Dahl's work, it is highly probable that Wonka products will soon return to the market to compliment and promote these works.

Finally, it should be noted how this brand also popularized the work by Roald Dahl in a reciprocal way, bringing it closer to the target market. Wonka has been a vehicle between the story which has strengthened relationships with the audience, the story and Nestlé itself. As an example of reverse product placement, this is a cutting-edge case for understanding the potential this advertising technique has and for product development.

CONCLUSIONS

The study carried out in this text has enabled us to reflect on the use of reverse product placement. In the study on Wonka it can be seen that, effectively, these types of brands may have a long track record and that their strategy is largely based on the relationship they have with their audiences. For this reason, and in response to the main aim of this research, we can state that the communicative actions used when adapting Wonka to the physical world have been used to define and expand the brand in the real world. Its existence and consumption helps

⁵ Information provided by e-mail by Tricia Bowles, Head of Communications at Nestlé.

us gain an insight into this fantasy world by way of transmedia, making the target market participate in it. In this respect, we may consider this type of advertising actions advertise the original story from where it came, which in this case, is a work by Roald Dahl.

This analysis has also helped us fulfil our first specific objective which is to explore the transmedia side of the brand. We have seen that almost from the start audience participation was relied upon in order to promote it. Whether this was by product placements in movie adaptations or by tangible actions such as searching for golden tickets inside chocolate bar wrappers, audience participation was required. This lead to a special bond between the story and the consumer which was unique in these types of brands as a result of being transmedia. Consuming it is essentially due to the identity of the story and fictional features. As a result, we can think of reverse product placement as a more integrated and participative way of establishing a loyal relationship with the target market.

Also, we likewise ran through the history of the brand, from its origin up to the present, thereby fulfilling the second specific objective of this research. This brand was created from a piece of literature in 1964 (which came to light for the first time in 1971) in order to make the first adaptation of the work for a movie. Regarding these dates, here is a pioneering, hitherto unknown, case of reverse product placement. As a result, we are studying a fictional brand whose history spans over half a century. It seems evident that, it has been successfully adapted to the real world, the audience have accepted it, and it has proved to be valuable for studying this type of brands; as well as research on reverse product placement.

Considering the results obtained in this research and the current audiovisual context, there is no doubt that this advertising tool will be ever more studied in the academic world. It contemplates several dimensions which can easily be seen in our current consumption models and which are conducive to marketing activities. Insofar as Wonka may be considered as a benchmark for reverse branding, we hope that this research will pave the way towards future work on reverse product placement.

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