

Culturalizing the Brand

How Royal Purple used Product Placement to Drive Brand Affinity

Royal Purple (RP) is a manufacturer of high-performance synthetic lubricants. After fourteen years of successfully growing its industrial business, RP made the decision to expand into the mature and highly competitive consumer automotive aftermarket. RP positioned itself as a premium brand in the category and intentionally priced its product line as the highest-priced brand of consumer automotive lubricants.

RP initially focused its efforts on push-marketing to grow its sales and distribution. As sales grew, it expanded its marketing strategies to include traditional advertising and PR tactics. In five years it went from having no retail distribution to approximately four thousand retailers in the US.

Company leadership hoped to expedite brand growth and began researching alternative marketing tactics. The goal was to “culturalize” the brand and maintain top-of-mind awareness in the same way Apple had done in the consumer electronics market. Review of academic research into product placement affirmed its efficacy and the decision was made to expand RP’s marketing efforts to include product placement.

RP pursued in-kind (unpaid) placements, paid placements, and placements predicated on promotional partnerships of targeted theatrical releases. RP successfully secured placements in numerous blockbusters such as *Salt*, *Real Steel*, *GI Joe*, *Transformers* and others. RP amplified the value of its placements with both PR and social media.

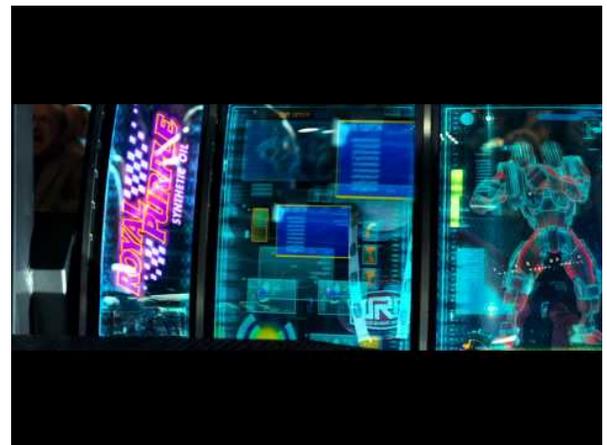
RP used various techniques to track the impact and effectiveness of its efforts including:

- Media impressions
- Website tracking and landing page conversion rates
- Social media traffic, mentions and engagement
- Sales results

Results varied by project with all showing at positive ROI.



Angelina Jolie on a Royal Purple truck in *Salt*



Royal Purple ‘fight deck’ in *Real Steel*



Royal Purple in *World War Z*

Findings from RP's experience with product placement in movies include:

- Placements and activation increased top-of-mind awareness of RP among its primary target audiences. Action and automotive-specific content over-indexed compared to other content.
- Paid placements were more cost effective than expected with CPMs* that were lower than other advertising and PR tactics, and CPMs actually decreased over time.
- Promotional partnerships significantly increased results of all key performance indicators, and most importantly provided a direct link to sales. An overview of RP's promotional partnership on Ironman 2 is included later in this document.

*CPMs calculated using cost of placement(s) divided by number of tickets sold for each film. Box office results are publicly available at boxofficemojo.com.

RP's success with product placement in movies led leadership to broaden into product placement in music videos. Placement opportunities in this medium were found to be fewer and were limited to paid placements only. Good opportunities were identified, such as RP's placement in the music video for the song "Drive By" by the popular band Train. The music video has been viewed on YouTube more than 184 million times as of May 15, 2022.

In ten years in the consumer market, Royal Purple had grown to more than 25,000 retailers in the US with a growing international presence as well. It became the third best-selling brand of synthetic motor oil in the US in what was a long-established and highly competitive market. RP attributed part of that success to the success of its product placement strategy.



Social and digital activation
Click on photo to see video



Does Lautner Stay In Touch with 'Twilight' Cast?

By ROBERT PACE August 14, 2013

ET caught up with Taylor Lautner on the set of his upcoming character-driven action drama Tracers

Royal Purple as seen in publicity from Tracers



Royal Purple in Train music video "Drive By"
Click on photo to see music video