

Transformer Research Paper

The Transformers films directed by Michael Bay tell a story of alien robots coming down to earth after their planet is at war. These robots obtain the ability to transform into vehicles such as; cars, motorcycles, and planes. In the films the robots most commonly transform into cars. As the movies were made, the Transformers turned into the most recent model of their vehicle. In addition to the movie as a whole, the use of this ability advertises many different vehicles. This paper will breakdown the use of these advertisements in the form of product placement in films and how they affected the camaro in car culture. These effects may be seen in sales and popularity of certain vehicle models and designs.

The first Transformers film directed by Michael Bay in 2007, highlights many cars. A couple of which are the Chevrolet Camaro and Saleen Ford Mustang. In the start of the film, the protagonist, Sam Witwicky, is bought a car. The car he gets is a 1977 Chevrolet Camaro. The car appears to be old, beat down, and to have low functionality. Additionally, the car Sam now owns is a transformer called Bumblebee, so it can change the appearance of the vehicle. Later in the film, Sam complains about Bumblebee and it drives off and returns as a brand new Chevrolet Camaro 5th generation concept. The new car has a new yellow wrap with black stripes and appears freshly clean. In the film, the camera captures the camaro in many different angles. In doing so, the Camaro is highlighted as a powerful sports car.

The way the camaro was highlighted and portrayed was a form of advertisement known as product placement. Product placement is advert placement of an item meant to advertise. This may be more concealed or out in your face. Michael A. Wiles & Anna Danielova point out in their article, “The results provide new guidance for firms as they consider product placement opportunities, encouraging firms to consider audience absorption, the film's violence, and the

film's critical acclaim in their placement decisions” (Wiles & Danielova, 59). To do this, Bay employed a variety of camera angles which Noël Carroll states, “Even more important is the use in movies of variable framing. Through cutting and camera movement, the filmmaker can rest assured that the spectator is perceiving exactly what she should be perceiving at the precise moment she should be perceiving it” (Carroll, 89). Bay showed the camaro in a flashy scene and showed the vehicle off from many different angles on slow motion action shots. In doing so, Bay appeals to audience absorption as his camera work makes the scene more memorable.

This is supported by Huan Chen and Ye Wang’s article suggesting, “The promotional environment is increasingly cluttered. Therefore, marketers should have more controls of their brand placements by carefully designing and strategically placing their brands in a more innovative way. Second, automobile, electronic equipment, and media and entertainment companies should take full advantage of this promotional technique to make connections with consumers” (Chen & Wang, 13). Bay makes connections with the consumers by showing the transition from a beat up car to a brand new model of car. It appeals to the eyes of the watcher and draws in their attention.

Noël Carroll in his Piece, “*The Power of Movies*” claims that films require many mental states for viewers in order to fall under the illusion of film (Carroll, 79). One of these states is having a relationship with the characters. In the Transformers franchise, the viewer sees Bumblebee demonstrate his fearlessness and bravery for those he loves. He is always there when the other characters need him, whether robot or human. His actions in the movies create a relationship between him and the viewer. This draws attention to him and also the vehicle he transforms into. Implying that the product placement and advertisement in the film is working.

Michael Bay’s first Transformers

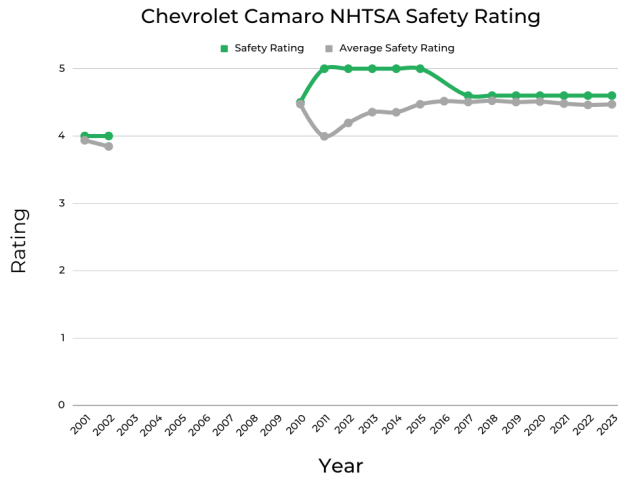
Movie was made in 2007. At that time, the Camaros had not been in production.

It would not be until 2009 where they would go back into production. This is demonstrated by the first graph on the right. There is a gap between 2002 and 2009 which indicates there were no

Camaros to be tested for safety. Additionally, in 2009, Bay’s second Transformers film, “Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen”, would release in June. when the 2009 models of the Camaro originally released, not many sold.

Following the release of the second Transformers film, the sales skyrocketed. Going from 5,000 all the way up to 9,000 in one month. After the second movie, the sales increased in the months building up to the release of the later movies.

Furthermore, the highest total sales from 2009-2018 occurs in June. This is the month which each Transformers sequel released indicating a relationship between the films and the sales. After Michael Bay no longer made Transformers movies, the sale of the camaro significantly decreased. The sales went from about 68,000 to about 30,000 in three years.



Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2009	-	-	-	614	5,463	9,320	7,113	8,680	7,961	8,082	6,867	7,548
2010	5,371	6,482	8,904	9,150	8,931	7,540	7,486	6,321	6,323	5,013	4,164	5,614
2011	4,763	6,245	8,964	10,852	9,451	8,486	7,671	6,823	6,994	6,119	5,127	6,754
2012	5,709	13,846	9,292	9,627	9,023	9,123	6,926	6,675	5,670	5,122	4,464	5,837
2013	4,925	6,171	8,102	7,949	7,929	7,236	7,696	8,875	5,659	5,669	5,068	5,015
2014	4,733	6,211	8,624	9,043	10,340	7,721	9,961	8,134	5,111	5,406	4,385	6,628
2015	4,991	6,373	5,956	6,909	9,753	8,611	7,469	6,236	5,246	5,289	5,303	5,366
2016	5,551	6,151	6,879	7,457	5,827	4,969	5,520	5,604	6,577	6,277	4,893	7,000
2017	3,588	4,658	7,052	8,737	7,841	4,691	4,713	5,017	7,430	5,674	4,737	3,802
2018	2,867	3,680	5,245	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	42,498	59,817	69,018	70,338	74,558	67,697	64,555	62,365	56,971	52,651	45,008	53,564

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The data within the graphs above implies that Bay's advertisements and product placement of the Camaro was successful. Upon each of his films, the sales of the Camaro increased. Especially in 2009 which saw the largest increase demonstrating its huge increase in popularity. This can also be seen when viewing the sales of yellow Camaros, the same color as Bumblebee. According to Marc Graser in Variety, after Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen released along with the 5th generation Camaro. Graser States, "GM saw a 10% gain in sales for yellow Camaros" following the Transformers film. With the liking towards the Bumblebee character along with product placement, yellow Camaros significantly increased in popularity and sales.

To conclude, product placement and advertisements are crucial in a movie. Within the Transformers Franchise directed by Michael Bay, he used both of these. In doing so, he helped increase the sale and popularity of yellow Camaros and Camaros in general. This was indicated because upon the release of his films, the sales of the Camaro would increase. He was able to do this by giving the audience an enjoyable character which draws their attention in and is easy to make connections with.

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