



## **CBS Cuts Deal To Track Product Mentions In Its Programming, Marks New Level Of Rigor**

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CBS, a leader in the burgeoning practice of product placement with reality shows such as "Survivor" and sitcoms like "Everybody Loves Raymond," has struck a deal to begin tracking when, where, for how long and how prominently branded products and services pop up in its programming. The deal with fledgling iTVX, makes CBS the first major television network to use the Nielsen-like ratings, which monitor all product mentions in the network's programming, not just those that were proactively sold as an overt product placement.

As such, the deal marks a new level of rigor and accountability for product placements, and may signal a more aggressive position by CBS, which has been alluding to an expansion of product placement sales for several years, though it so far has exploited it only judiciously.

"I do think it takes away from the purity of the comedy or the drama," Leslie Moonves, president-CEO of the Viacom unit told reporters a year-and-a-half ago during the summer 2002 Television Critics Association press tour. "When you're dealing with a 'Survivor' or an 'Amazing Race' or a 'Big Brother,' it sort of fits in. ... It works."

CBS' deal with iTVX covers both the CBS and UPN television networks.

New Rochelle, N.Y.-based iTVX utilizes a computer modeling system that measures the value of product placements and sponsorships. The firm, which employs eight people, was started by veteran marketer Frank Zazza. Zazza, who has 20 years of product placement experience, has been marketing the product--and several improvements and updates--for the past few years to advertisers, agencies, and networks.

A CBS spokesman confirmed that the network had entered into an arrangement with iTVX, but declined to discuss specifics. Zazza wouldn't discuss terms of the deal either, but said it "starts immediately."

The Viacom-owned network doesn't offer product placement during its prime time comedies and dramas. Some daytime dramas on CBS do offer product placement, most recently a turkey promotion with a soap opera. And the reality programs on CBS, from "Survivor" to short-run series like "Big Brother" and "Amazing Race," do feature product placements.

Even so, the placement of Mike and Ike candy in an episode of prime-time comedy "Everybody Loves Raymond," ranked among the top 10 product placements airing during the November sweeps, according to IAG, another product placement measurement service.

Zazza said that in many cases, the networks don't control the product placements. That belongs to the production companies that develop and own the programs, and the marketing firms that help them sign up product placement sponsors.

"Since 97 percent of product placements are not done by network nor agency, but rather done by the product placement company, the agencies and the networks have an ability to capitalize on the placements--to add dollars," Zazza said.

He said CBS could use iTVX's system to evaluate product placement on the network, proving value and measurement data. It could also be used to alert advertisers to the existence of a product placement so the advertisers could buy the first position in the commercial pod after the product placement during first runs and reruns, adding value to the client and the network.

He pointed to an example when Fox would package AT&T's placement within "American Idol" with a 30-second commercial in the pod following it.

"The combination of the two adds tremendous commercial recognition," Zazza said.

The network partnership is only a part of iTVX's business. Zazza has enlisted a number of companies, from Kraft, Unilever, and Verizon to ad-agency Deutsch.

On the Net: [www.itvx.com](http://www.itvx.com).