

# Branding the Story: Avoiding Ad-Product Detachment in Narrative Ads

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## **Abstract**

This research assesses whether the observed practice of creating story-based (narrative) advertisements, which detach the product from the storyline in comparison to centering the storyline on the product is advantageous in terms of ad attitude formation. We call this phenomenon narrative product centrality which, when low, refers to product-storyline detachment, and when high, refers to product-storyline connection. We identify two competing effects caused by narrative product centrality which are distinct from plot-integration effects of product placements. The positive effect of product centrality can be traced back to congruity between story and product. In contrast, its negative effect is conditional on the immersion of the viewer in the ad narrative (transportation). We outline the conceptual arguments for the expected effects of narrative product centrality on ad attitude, implement a scale and test the developed model. The results support the hypotheses empirically.

**Keywords:** *Narrative Product Centrality; Narrative Advertising; Ad Attitude*

**Track:** Advertising & Marketing Communications