



## The 2016 True Top 50

By Jordan Pine

It's time to announce the **2016 True Top 50**, courtesy of [DRMetrix](#). Below you will find the campaigns with the highest cumulative Spend Index in the calendar year. Click [here](#) to see the entire list. Then read below to learn about some exciting upcoming awards and review my analysis of the year.

### NEW AWARDS

Exciting news this year: My unofficial and informal **True Top Marketer** and **True Top Producer** "awards" are being replaced by real awards that come complete with a fancy awards ceremony! They're called [The AdSphere™ Awards](#), and they will take place at Response Expo this April. All of the awards will be announced soon, and I'll be sure to post a link to them at that time.

### THE BIG FIVE

Can't wait to find out who was the best short-form marketer last year? I have some stats just for you. There are five major players that dominate the airwaves and retail shelves. I call them the "Big Five." Below is a ranking of this group based on number of hits they have in the **True Top 50**. (The number in parentheses is the number of hits.)

1. Ideavillage Products (10)
2. TELEBrands (6)
3. Allstar Products (5)
4. Ontel Products (4)
5. Emson (2)

Of course, this simple analysis doesn't tell the whole story. The size of a campaign is also relevant. So let's narrow the list to get a sense of who had the biggest campaigns. Since the **True Top 50** is ranked according to Spend Index, we can simply cut off the bottom of the list to narrow it to campaign size.

### TOP 25

1. Ideavillage Products (5)
2. Allstar Products (3)
3. Emson (2)
4. Ontel Products (2)

5. TELEBrands (2)

## TOP 10

1. Ideavillage Products (3)
2. Allstar Products (1)
3. Emson (1)
4. Ontel Products (0)
5. TELEBrands (0)

The bottom line: In all cases, Ideavillage is clearly dominant and would surely have earned the *True Top Marketer* award for 2016. Second place, on the other hand, would have been a little more tricky. TELEBrands would have won based on the raw number of hits, but Allstar would have won based on the size of its campaigns. It's also noteworthy that Emson, Ontel, and TELEBrands were all tied for third on the Top 25, especially since the two items Emson and TELEBrands had were versions of the same products. Finally, it should be mentioned that Emson appears in the Top 10 this year while Ontel and TELEBrands do not.

## HIT RATES

One other stat has always interested me and, thanks to DRMetrix, I can now measure it more accurately than ever before. It's an evaluation of marketer efficiency I call "hit rate." How efficient were the Big Five at finding hits? That is, how many TV tests did they have to fund (at a rough average cost of \$50,000 a pop) to find their hits? Some believe this business is just a numbers game, so understanding how hit rates change with increases in testing volume is important.

To measure hit rate, we need two numbers: attempts and hits. Here's the first number for the Big Five, courtesy of [AdSphere](#):

## ATTEMPTS

1. TELEBrands (109)
2. Allstar Products (47)
3. Emson (32)
4. Ideavillage Products (29)
5. Ontel Products (29)

Now we need to know about hits. Since that takes us beyond the Top 50 into somewhat controversial territory, I'll be transparent about our methodology. For this exercise, we defined a "hit" as any attempt that reached \$100,000 or more in estimated spending across the national cable networks monitored by AdSphere. It's highly unlikely a marketer would spend that much on testing alone, so it's safe to assume in most cases that passing

\$100,000 in estimated spending indicates good enough results (for that marketer) to roll out in some way. In my view, a rollout is the least debatable proxy for a “hit.”

Anyway, here are those stats for the Big Five:

## **HITS**

1. TELEBrands (15)
2. Ideavillage Products (9)
3. Ontel Products (8)
4. Emson (6)
5. Allstar Products (5)

Simple math will now give us what we’re after.

## **HIT RATE**

1. Ideavillage Products (1 in 3)
2. Ontel Products (1 in 4)
3. Emson (1 in 5)
4. TELEBrands (1 in 7)
5. Allstar Products (1 in 7)

I’ll let you draw your own conclusions, but here is a basic one: Hit rates don’t scale proportionately. You may be able to go one-for-three or one-for-four if you only attempt a couple dozen projects per year, but ramp that up to 50 or 100 and you’re going to regress to the mean, which looks like it’s somewhere around one in seven for the most experienced players. Incidentally, that mean has either improved significantly from what the Big Five players used to say it was (*i.e.*, one in 10), or those players were underrating themselves.

## **TOP PRODUCERS**

Although I am unable to discover the producer of every campaign, I have most of the DRTV-to-retail players covered. That’s enough to analyze the **True Top 50** and give you a top-five producers list. (Again, the number in parentheses is the number of hits.)

1. Blue Reef (6)
2. Schwartz (4)
3. Paddock (3)
4. Blue Moon (3)
5. Cole (2)

Congratulations again to Blue Reef Productions for a killer year. Incidentally, all six of their commercials were for Copper Fit products. If there were a **True Top Brand** award, that would certainly be the one for 2016!

Kudos also to The Schwartz Group, which had four campaigns to its credit, and to Paddock Productions and Blue Moon Studios, both with three.

Finally, many producers had two campaigns in the True Top 50 besides Cole Media Group. These include: Kerrmercials, Concepts TV, Opfer Communications, Sullivan Productions, and Monte-Brooks. However, Cole had the bigger campaigns to its name and thus took the No. 5 slot.

## TRENDS

I just completed a comprehensive analysis of good categories and bad categories based on the 2016 data, so I won't rehash it here. If you're interested, you can check it out [on the Response Website](#).

Otherwise, I have a pair of random observations to round out this post. First, short-form fitness is back! Thanks to Lori Greiner, we have our first top-10 hit in the fitness category in a long time: the Simply Fit Board.

Second, it has become axiomatic that every hit item from the Big Five will face at least one competitor. However, it seems many of these competitions shake out to where one brand is the clear winner. That was true of six campaigns in the **True Top 50** by my count: Copper Fit, Dutch Glow, Pocket Hose, Simply Straight, Star Shower, and Lazer Bond. Two duels defied the trend, however. The "pan wars" did it in spades with four campaigns on the list from three different marketers. The other duel that survived the year was Emson's Bell+Howell TacLight (No. 11) vs. TELEBrands' Atomic Beam (No. 21).

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Once again, visit <https://www.drmetrix.com/truetop50-annual2016.html> to see the most-aired DRTV campaigns for all of 2016 in rank order.

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