

By Jordan Pine



GENIUS AIR

Description: A refrigerator air purifier and deodorizer

Main Pitch: “Keeps all your foods in the refrigerator fresher, longer ... saving you money”

Main Offer: \$19.95 for one

Bonus: Second one (just pay separate P&H)

Starring: Anthony “Chef Tony” Notaro

Marketer: Merchant Media

Website: www.BuyGeniusAir.com

Rating: 3 out of 5 ★★☆☆☆

In 2007, HSN’s Debbie Meyer partnered with Allstar Marketing to bring a successful live shopping product called **Green Bags** to DRTV. The result was a major hit that came in at No. 17 on the Jordan Whitney annual list the following year. Now Tony Notaro is hoping to repeat this happy story with a Genius product he has been selling on QVC. However, it has basically the same pitch as Debbie’s item, which means it is likely to meet the fate of all other items that have tried to replicate her success: frustrating failure.

I should know. In 2008 I helped launch **Fridge Balls**, green plastic balls filled with minerals that absorb the same produce-spoiling gas Green Bags do. Soon thereafter, everyone and their mother also took a turn. I logged everything from a high-end, expensive gadget called **Vacu Dome** (three payments of \$19.95) to a standard \$20 gadget called **Fridge Buddy** that went after all possible competition with the pitch, “replaces baking soda and green bag technology.” That’s not to mention the many food-storage containers that tried the “fresher, longer” pitch, including one by Sharper Image launched shortly before the company went bankrupt (there is no connection, as far as I know). Even **Arm & Hammer** took a shot, testing a stick-up device with its brand of baking soda and a fan inside. Nothing worked.

Can Tony break the curse? He certainly is a skilled pitchman — as those who saw his live pitch at Response Expo can attest — and he knows this pitch inside and out. But past history gives this one long odds.

KITCHEN CANDU

Description: A 6-in-1 kitchen opener

Main Pitch: “Quickly and easily opens any size can, bottle or jar ... and more!”

Main Offer: \$19.99 for one with Candu Peeler

Bonus: Double the offer (just pay P&H)

Starring: Darlene Cahill

Marketer: PITRFA Inc.

Website: www.BuyCandu.com

Rating: 2 out of 5 ★★☆☆☆

As I’ve written before in these pages, “Swiss Army Knife” products don’t work on DRTV. Narrower is better. This has been demonstrated many times, the best comparison here being package openers. In 2005, Allstar Marketing had some success with **Package Shark**, a tool focused narrowly on opening those impossible clamshell packages. In 2008 the “Swiss Army” version of the tool — **Open It!** — failed. The corollary here would be ARM’s **One Touch Can Opener** (ironic given the marketer), or if you want to go way back, TELEBrands’ **Safety Can**. Both focused narrowly on opening cans. This is the “Swiss Army” version, and I predict it will follow the same pattern.



SHED MONSTER

Description: A de-shedding tool

Main Pitch: “Reduces shedding by up to 90 percent”

Main Offer: \$19.99 for one

Bonus: Paw Monster Mitt (just pay P&H)

Marketer: Jarden Consumer Solutions

Website: www.ShedMonster.com

Rating: 2 out of 5 ★★☆☆☆

It’s too soon to bring back a product that does the exact same thing as Ontel’s **Shed Ender** (No. 23 on the Jordan Whitney annual charts in 2006). Plus the **FURminator**, which also had its DRTV moment, is still on QVC with a formidable 95-percent customer rating. As for the creative, I think it hits all the right notes, and the technique used for the testimonials is excellent. I have admired it since I saw Jarden’s spot for the **Whoa Buddy** dog bowl. The way the testimonials are shot (with a person in front of a giant demo) is VH-1 reminiscent, which gives them a great modern feel. Kudos to whoever is responsible.



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