

By Jordan Pine

Although campaigns targeting children defy several of the usual criteria — when is a toy really needed, for example — and although I am far from an expert in the category, I chose to review two kids' DRTV projects this month. Since the huge success of **Pillow Pets**, most major short-form marketers and producers have been dabbling in the category, making a focus on kids the latest industry trend.

## TURBO PAK

**Description:** A backpack that converts into a scooter

**Main Pitch:** "Wear it ... ride it ... pull it."

**Main Offer:** Two payments of \$39.99

**Website:** [www.TurboPak.com](http://www.TurboPak.com)

**Rating:** 4 out of 5 ★★★★★☆

One of my favorite marketing quotes is from the great Al Ries. In it, he talks about the folly of trying to break the rules of advertising. He concludes: "You have a choice. You can either live by the rules and accept the possibility that you might miss an opportunity because you didn't break the rules. Or you can live a life of anarchy." I think that is especially true of the rules of DRTV advertising.

There is a higher level, however. Sometimes you become so familiar with the rules — so well versed — that you can go outside of the box while still somehow remaining within it. It seems producer Doug Fowkes has reached that higher level, a level of true creative genius within our genre. When I watched this *Back to the Future* homage, the critical part of my brain was ready. "Entertainment doesn't sell," it sneered. "They'll need to sell a half million units just to pay for that *Transformers* animation," it snorted. But the whole while, my inner child was absolutely delighted. Watch it for yourself. About the time you realize it all just *works* somehow, you also realize you would have done anything to own that backpack had it existed when you were small enough to ride it.



## WHAT MAKES UP THE SCIMARK SEVEN (S7)?

The **PRODUCT** should be:  
(1) needed; (2) targeted; and  
(3) different.

The **CATEGORY** should be:  
(4) un-crowded.

The **COMMERCIAL** should be:  
(5) engaging; (6) motivating; and  
(7) clear.



## PHANTOM SAUCER

**Description:** A flying saucer magic trick

**Main Pitch:** "Looks like it defies gravity" because it "floats and flies in front of your eyes."

**Main Offer:** \$10 for one saucer

**Bonus:** Second one and instructional DVD (pay additional S&P)

**Marketer:** TELEBrands

**Website:** [www.PhantomSaucer.com](http://www.PhantomSaucer.com)

**Rating:** 3 out of 5 ★★★★★☆

Speaking of the rules of DR, people often ask me if any one of my criteria is more important than the others. The answer is yes. If I were being 100-percent scientific, mine would be a weighted system. More interesting, there is one criterion that is not on any of my lists but that has been shown to trump all other criteria in certain cases — "wow" factor. It seems a real "wow" demonstration can overcome a multitude of DR deficiencies. I bring it up because this item reminds me of IdeaVillage's **Fushigi**, the "magic gravity ball" that did big numbers last year. The success of that campaign is a classic example of "wow" factor at work.

Will this campaign deliver similar results? Possibly, and I'll be watching closely to see if it does. My new rule: One is an outlier; three is a category. Let's see which one **Fushigi** was.



© Copyright 2011 SciMark Corp. These reviews represent the opinions of the author. Any inaccuracies are unintentional. To report an inaccuracy or provide other feedback, E-mail: [jordan@scimark.com](mailto:jordan@scimark.com). The SciMark Report is also a blog at [scimark.blogspot.com](http://scimark.blogspot.com). SciMark Corp. is a firm that specializes in short-form DRTV advertising. For more information and a full description of the S7 scoring system, visit [www.SciMark.com](http://www.SciMark.com).