

By Jordan Pine

Anthony Sullivan has been on a roll recently. I've picked up six new campaigns starring the British-accented pitchman in the last few weeks, which leads me to wonder: Is this a "Pitchmen" preview? The Discovery Channel reality show returns Thursday, August 19 (9 p.m. ET/PT) without the late, great Billy Mays. Perhaps all or some of the episodes will center on these items.



BA'NOODLE

Pitch: "Your flexible friend that seals bags and keeps all your food fresher, longer."

Web site: www.BuyBanoodle.com

S7 Score: 5 out of 7 ★★★★★☆☆

This product is *different* and correctly *targeted*, and the commercial meets all of my criteria. I especially liked the demos. However, the campaign is unlikely to succeed because the product isn't *needed* given the category is *crowded* with "good enough" solutions, such as chip clips.

BOARDWALK TATER TORNADO

Pitch: "The hottest treat to hit the boardwalk this century."

Web site: www.TaterTornado.com

S7 Score: 6 out of 7 ★★★★★☆☆

Trendy items like this are hard to predict and even harder to manage. In the moment they seem great because they meet a lot of the criteria we look for in DRTV items. In this case, that's demonstrability and "wow factor." What makes them tricky is the variability of people's tastes. That's why I prefer problem solvers; *i.e.*, items that are *needed*. The odds of success are much easier to predict with at least some degree of accuracy.



GRILL GLOVE

Pitch: "The heat-resistant cooking glove that puts the power of the grill in the palm of your hand."

Web site: www.GetGrillGlove.com

S7 Score: 5 out of 7 ★★★★★☆☆

This is one of those "nice to have" items, but people don't jump off the couch and dial for things that are just nice to have. In other words, this campaign is unlikely to succeed because the product isn't *needed* enough to generate the impulse to buy. It's true: 'Ove' Glove was a success. But it tapped into an existing behavior (using an oven mitt) rather than trying to create a new behavior (using a glove instead of BBQ tools). This item is also unlikely to replicate its success because of the seasonality of grilling.

ONE SECOND NEEDLE

Pitch: "The needle with the built-in threader."

Web site: www.OneSecondNeedle.com

S7 Score: 4 out of 7 ★★★★★☆☆

There are two schools of thought when it comes to pitchmen. The first: A good pitchman can pitch anything. The second: Marketers should choose the right pitchman for the product. I adhere to the latter school. That is to say, I would have picked an older woman to pitch this product. As for the campaign, it is unlikely to succeed because the product isn't *needed* enough in the modern age and isn't *targeted* to a big enough buying group (people who sew by hand often). Also, the commercial isn't all that *engaging* because the product is just a sewing needle after all.



PINEAPPLE TWIST

Pitch: "The fastest and easiest way to core, peel and slice a pineapple."

Web site: www.PineappleTwist.com

S7 Score: 6 out of 7 ★★★★★☆☆

I love the "wow factor" of this item. However, I predict this campaign is unlikely to succeed because the product isn't *targeted* to a big enough buying group. There simply aren't enough people out there who love pineapple and eat it regularly. It might make a good bonus for something, though. As for the commercial, you can tell poor Sully was reaching for uses for this thing. Pineapple centerpieces?



SHAVE MATE

Pitch: "All-in-one razors ... combine six premium-coated, inline blades and thick, rich real shaving cream right inside the handle."

Web site: www.ShaveMate.com

S7 Score: 5 out of 7 ★★★★★☆☆

I predict this campaign will bomb. I know that's harsh, but it's a harsh world and Gillette and Schick dominate this particular corner of it. The fact is few people are going to trust a razor or even a shaving cream from an unknown brand. More to the point, this product isn't *needed*. I have never heard anyone express frustration with having to buy shaving cream apart from his or her razor. Also, generally speaking, all-in-one solutions don't work on DRTV unless the combo item performs a unique function or solves a painful problem. This item does neither.



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