# **Research SciMark Report**

#### By Jordan Pine

## MIGHTY THIRSTY

Description: A PVA sponge Main Pitch: "The superabsorbent vacuum block that drinks up over eight times its own weight in liquid"

Main Offer: \$19.99 for 4 large and 4 mini

**Bonus:** Jumbo size and Mighty Thirsty Towel **Starring:** Anthony Sullivan

Marketer: Media Enterprises/Plymouth Direct Producer: Hutton-Miller

Website: www.MightyThirsty.com



DRTV products are like the mythical Phoenix. They burn brightly, burn out and then rise from the ashes to burn again. How long is the life cycle? Generally speaking, about 2-to-3 years. How long is the death "cycle"? This is harder to answer, as there is no consensus in the industry. And so, we see product introductions like this one.

This product targets a **need** that is currently being met by ShamWow!. Enough of the key demos are the same that people will make that connection. (There's even a towel given as a bonus to make up for the fact ShamWow! is more versatile.) The problem is that ShamWow! isn't dead yet, and while there is disagreement about how fast you can resurrect a Phoenix, I'm sure every DRTV marketer would agree that you have to let the ashes settle first.

So what is the rationale for launching this product at this time? I can think of several, but none is particularly convincing. I am not a fan of brand extensions (the recent history of this brand's extensions being a case in point), and to say this category is *crowded* at retail would be an understatement. It's also way too late in the game to compete with ShamWow! for market share. That only leaves the Phoenix argument, or possibly the delusion that this product is *different* enough from ShamWow! to attract buyers who already own a ShamWow! But then why use ShamWow!'s key demos?

Speaking of which, the big creative challenge for this product was showing people this is more than just a sponge. Some of the demos were sufficiently inventive, but many weren't more exciting than what a regular sponge could do. Watching the product suck the liquid from three bottomless glasses was the best demo. The worst demo was the old "soda on the carpet" trick, mainly because it cut away too soon. By now people will expect to see there's no soda underneath that rug. Cutting away gives the impression the product doesn't work as well as a shammy.

Sorry, guys, but I think this Phoenix is going to fizzle.

### **ROBO STIR**

Description: An automatic pot stirring device Main Pitch: "It stirs so you don't have to" Main Offer: \$19.99 for one with Booster Bonus: Scoop 'N Strain (just pay separate S&H)

Starring: Anthony Sullivan Marketer: Ideavillage Producer: Sullivan Productions Website: www.RoboStir.com

S7 Score: 6 out of 7 \*\*\*\*\*

The idea for this product has been around for a while, but every execution I've seen has been clunky or unsound from an engineering standpoint. Kudos

to the product developer who came up with this design. It turned me from a skeptic into a believer. Now I like this product's chances for success, and I liked the commercial even better. It's the Sullivan team at the top of their form.

My only reservation, and the reason I didn't give this a perfect score, is I'm not convinced such a gadget is *needed* enough to generate the impulse to buy. The best argument Sully presents is: "You finally have that third hand in the kitchen, so you can get two things done at once." Otherwise, he is forced to repeat: "It stirs so you don't have to." As John E. Kennedy of Lord & Thomas explained nearly a century ago, every successful advertisement needs a "good, strong, clearly expressed reason why a person should buy." That latter one just isn't cutting it for me



### **SPILL DADDY**

**Description:** A paint can designed to prevent spilling

Main Pitch: "The patented paint system that's guaranteed never to spill"

**Main Offer:** \$19.95 for one with 10 liners **Bonus:** Double the offer (just pay separate S&H)

Starring: Adam Jay

Marketer: IdeaNation Television Brands
Producer: IdeaNation with Bruce Dworsky

Website: www.SpillDaddy.tv

S7 Score: 6 out of 7  $\star\star\star\star\star\star$ 

After an infamously awful start as the pitchman for Doc Bottoms Aspray, Jay is back with a much classier spot for a much better product. Its only shortcoming: it may not be **needed** enough to motivate people off the couch. After all, haven't most people figured out how to get this job done without spilling paint everywhere? And isn't most painting done with a tray and roller, instead of a brush and can, anyway?

As for the commercial, the only thing I don't like is the corny "Who's your daddy?" catch phrase. But who knows? Maybe that little bit of cheese will help this commercial cut through



the clutter. It will certainly get the product free publicity in the form of YouTube parodies and latenight jokes.



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