

SCIMARK REPORT

BY JORDAN PINE

CONFESSION. I hate writing reports about random, unrelated DRTV projects. I much prefer themes, so I work hard to find commonalities among recent projects when it comes time to fill this page. This month, my theme is *chasing outliers*. That is, all of the projects below are inspired by a hit that was likely a one-off. One of my rules of thumb is that, “One is an outlier; three is a category.” With that in mind, each of these projects represents another attempt to find that elusive No. 2.

MAGIC PUZZLE

Description: A jigsaw puzzle you color
Main Pitch: “Put together, flip over, and color”
Main Offer: \$14.99 for one
Bonus: 10 Magic Pens (free)
Marketer: Ideavillage Products Inc.
Website: www.GetMagicPuzzle.com

Rating: 2 out of 5 ★★☆☆☆

This project follows the surprise TELEBrands hit *Colorama*, a 2015 *True Top Spender*. TELEBrands itself has been trying to turn that winner into a new category. In recent months, they've tested **Magic Path**, **Dot-To-Dot**, and **Cats & Kittens** — just to name a few. Now, Ideavillage is joining the effort. Just like TELEBrands thought connect-the-dots for adults might have the same appeal as coloring apparently does, Ideavillage seems to believe another childish pursuit — assembling jigsaw puzzles — can tap the trend. Color me skeptical. Just because one crazy trend catches you by surprise,

**SMART SWAB**

Description: An ear swab
Main Pitch: “The best way to clean your ear while providing the utmost in comfort and safety”
Main Offer: \$10 for two handles and 20 heads
Bonus: Double the offer (just pay a separate fee)

Marketer: TELEBrands

Website: www.SmartSwab.com

Rating: 2 out of 5 ★★☆☆☆

This one looks to repeat the success of Lenfest's **Wax Vac**, a 2013 *True Top Spender*. The item was a monster seller, but the question of why is what's most relevant here. Was it the *needed* criterion, or the equally important *different* criterion? This project is betting it's the former. Like **Tag Away** did with skin tags, **Wax Vac** alerted the industry to a significant problem few knew existed before. But that doesn't necessarily mean any solution to that problem will be successful. My guess is that the different criterion was more important. **Wax Vac** was a rare example of something truly unique being introduced into a commodity category that hadn't seen an innovation for decades. Because such items are so hard to find, I tend to think it will prove to be an outlier. I can make up a name for the hypothetical new category — *e.g.*, non-manual ear cleaners — but it's finding items to populate that category that's the trick.

BRIGHTER VIEWER

Description: A magnifying screen
Main Pitch: “Guaranteed to enlarge any object up to three times”
Main Offer: \$14.95 for one
Bonus: Second one (just pay S&H), compact viewer (free)
Marketer: Hampton Direct
Website: www.BrighterViewer.com

Rating: 3 out of 5 ★★★☆☆

Believe it or not, this concept has yet to hit the point where “three is a category.” In 2005, TELEBrands had the **OWL**, which is the wallet version of this idea. In 2010, Spark Innovators had **Page Brite**, which is this product without the stand. That's two — and the relationship between No. 1 and No. 2 is a bit tenuous. Age-related vision deficiency (called “presbyopia”) affects about 1 billion people worldwide and can start as young as 42, according to the American Academy of Ophthalmology. However, just because you can define a market size in numbers doesn't mean a market actually exists. Product pushers consistently miss this point. They routinely spout absur-



dities such as, “If we capture just 1 percent of that market, we'll all be rich!” Those billion people are only *prospects*, and your market size is exactly zero until you figure out how to turn even one of them into a *customer*. That said, this one has a halfway decent chance of accomplishing that.

WHAT MAKES UP THE SCIMARK SEVEN?

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.

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