BY JORDAN PINE



BANANALICIOUS

Description: A banana filling kit Main Pitch: "Turns an ordinary banana into a scrumptious treat"

Main Offer: \$10 for the corer and filler bottle Bonus: Recipe guide (free), second kit (just pay P&H)

Starring: Taylor Baldwin

Marketer: Top Dog Direct

Website: www.TryBananalicious.com

Rating: 3 out of 5 $\star \star \star \star \Leftrightarrow \Leftrightarrow$

A veteran DR marketer I spoke to recently proposed a new category name for items such as this: "cooking novelty." In this category he puts hits such as the Blooming Onion (1998) and Bacon Bowl (2014), as well as misses such as the **Boardwalk** Tater Tornado (2010). I would add at least one other hit - Perfect Tortilla (2012) - and one other miss — the truly bizarre Happy Hot Dog Man (2011). Considering these projects, my hypothesis is that food novelties typically don't succeed unless someone else has done the work of making them catch on nationally (blooming onions, tortilla bowls). Bacon Bowl would be an exception, but then — it's made of bacon! Such a hypothesis suggests the project in question is going to fail, but I'm officially on the fence. A few reasons: The creative is fun and made me want one. The appeal is to kids, and they respond in unpredictable ways. And finally: I really want to believe that a product this cool can defy any DR rules of which it may run afoul.

COPPERWEAR ANKLE

Description: A copper-infused compression sleeve

Main Pitch: "Helps reduce ankle and foot fatigue"

Main Offer: \$12.99 for one set

Bonus: Second set (just pay P&H)

Marketer: Tristar Products

Website: www.CopperWearAnkle.com

Rating: 3 out of 5 $\star \star \star \Leftrightarrow \Leftrightarrow$



For those who haven't been following the "copper wars" on my blog, this is the fourth entrant and also a direct attack on TELEBrands' **Ankle Genie**, which is in rollout. It's also technically a line extension, or line addition, to **Copper Wear** (Knee & Elbow) — the second copper project I noted after IdeaVillage's **Copper Flex**. This is unusual because, as far as I can tell, none of these copper garments are working. Marketers don't usually extend lines/brands that don't yet exist. Speaking of TELEBrands, they were the third player to enter the fray with **Copper Hands**, a new twist on an old item that failed under the name **Miracle Hands** last spring. At press time, there was no complementary version of Ankle Genie with copper, but I'm sure that's coming. In short: Everyone is falling all over themselves to steal **Tommie Copper**'s thunder, but with so many marketers and so many products involved, this 'war' is looking more like a melee — and that means no one is going to win.

WALLET NINJA

Description: A flat multi-tool **Main Pitch:** "18 reliable, functional, everyday tools in [something] the size of a credit card"

Main Offer: \$9.99 for one Bonus: Ninja Light (free) Starring: "Justin Credible"

Website: www.WalletNinja.com

Rating: 2 out of 5 $\star \star \Leftrightarrow \Leftrightarrow \Leftrightarrow$



How much does creative matter? I have seen great creative take a mundane product — *e.g.*, the tortilla pan mentioned above — and make it exciting enough to sell on TV. But can it take what is almost literally a Swiss Army tool and make it a winner? I think not. It doesn't help that the target here is young men who are into gadgets, a segment of a segment and quite a bit off-center for DRTV. The creative is excellent, however, hitting all the right comedic notes and pulling off the Stephen-Colbert-meets-Vince-Offer approach it is attempting. That's an achievement since most attempts at DR humor end up eliciting groans instead of laughs as they descend into self-parody. There's still a high risk people will view this commercial as a "Saturday Night Live" (SNL) skit and, to paraphrase the great Claude Hopkins, people don't buy from SNL comedians. But the product is the real problem, so even if people want to buy from this clever pitchman, they just won't.

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. © Copyright 2014 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*. The SciMark Report is also a blog at *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*.

