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.

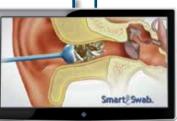
Website: www.GetMagicPuzzle.com

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

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,



that doesn't mean all bets are off. In fact, it's that way of thinking that leads to chasing outliers in the first place.



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 $\star \star \Leftrightarrow \Leftrightarrow \Leftrightarrow$

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 $\star \star \star \star \Leftrightarrow \Leftrightarrow$

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. <u>The **COMMERCIAL**</u> should be: (5) engaging; (6) motivating; and (7) clear. © Copyright 2016 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*.

