

SCIMARK REPORT

BY JORDAN PINE

FIDGET BALL

Description: A stress toy

Main Pitch: "The perfect solution to your fidgeting problems"

Main Offer: \$10 for one

Bonus: Second one (just pay a separate fee)

Marketer: TELEBrands

Website: www.BuyFidgetBall.com

Rating: 2 out of 5 ★★☆☆☆



I believe that expertise should trump information when the two conflict. I recognize that some industry veterans don't agree with me, and that they have good evidence to support their point of view. We can all name hits the so-called experts thought couldn't possibly work. Indeed, this happens to me at least once per year.

This has led some in our industry to abandon their expertise completely and just follow the information. That strikes me as a dangerous mistake. There is so much information out there, and much of it is of low quality. We can all name items that had great live shopping or international sales information behind them, and yet ended up being total dogs. So what to do?

One answer is to favor information over expertise when it is really strong. But this is where the quality issue comes into play. Does it matter if an item blows out on QVC if the translation rate between QVC and DRTV is one for 50? This brings me to Kickstarter and the item in question. From what I've seen, Kickstarter fundraising numbers have close to zero correlation to DRTV metrics. However, the information here is very strong. A version of this product raised \$6.4 million on Kickstarter. Yes, you read that right: \$6.4 million. If any Kickstarter project is going to translate into a DRTV hit, this is the one.

Of course, expertise says this product is all wrong for our business. Its obvious flaw is that it's too narrowly *targeted*. How many hard-core fidgets could there possibly be? Of that small segment, how many will find this odd solution appealing? Finally, unless there is a channel for fidgets I don't know about, how will a mass-media marketer efficiently reach these folks with advertising? These questions are why I ultimately had to give this one a two-star rating (a.k.a. "unlikely to succeed").

Before you reach your own conclusion, I should probably balance that impressive Kickstarter number with an equally impressive number: 60 million. That's the number of times a particular pet washer's video was viewed on Facebook in just two weeks in the summer of 2015, according to *Entrepreneur* magazine. Yet when this viral-video success became an "As Seen on TV" product, it did not live up to the hype.

We'll see what happens this time. In fact, we'll have two chances since Ontel is also testing the item under the name **Fidget Fun Block**.



MISTER BUTTER

Description: A butter sprayer

Main Pitch: "From solid butter to spray in seconds"

Main Offer: \$39.99 for one

Bonus: Free shipping

Marketer: Allstar Products

Website: www.GetMisterButter.com

Rating: 3 out of 5 ★★★☆☆

From the data I've seen, consumers have a strange affinity for butter — approaching that of eggs or bacon. Yet while there have been several near misses, there has never been a true butter hit. The closest would be Ontel's **Butter Butler**, which skimmed the bottom of the Jordan Whitney annual for two years (2001-2002). A similar item tested three times from 2014 to 2015 but never rolled out (**EZ Butter**, a.k.a. **Butter Express**). Will this be the one that finally makes it big?

I'm not so sure. Despite the affinity, I find it hard to believe people love butter enough to spend \$40 on this contraption. In addition, most of the problems in this commercial seem contrived to me. At least, they are easily solved with a little care and a switch to spreadable butter.

On the other hand, sometimes an item is so cool, people skip the logic and just "gotta have it." Watching this product in action, I think this could certainly be one of those times.

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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