

## SCIMARK REPORT

BY JORDAN PINE

## SOCK SLIDER

**Description:** A device for putting on socks

**Main Pitch:** “The pain-free, no-bend-over way to comfortably put on your socks everyday”

**Main Offer:** \$19.99 for one

**Bonus:** Second one (just pay P&H)

**Marketer:** Allstar Products

**Website:** [www.SockSlider.com](http://www.SockSlider.com)



**Rating:** 3 out of 5 ★★☆☆☆

Something strange has been happening. Some products that are not *targeted* to the mass market have been succeeding on DRTV... even ones that appeal only to the dreaded “segment of a segment.” This is just the latest example. At press time, this campaign was No. 5 on the AdSphere *Weekly Top 40*. That level of spending indicates the campaign is working — and in a broad way. Yet when you consider the market for this product — people who struggle to put on their socks — it shouldn’t make sense to use mass media to reach it. What’s going on here?

The prevailing hypothesis is that the market for such products is much larger than originally thought. That is, while this looks like one of a hundred assistance devices you might find in a catalog for senior citizens, its appeal actually extends to overweight people, the injured, and others with flexibility limitations. This hypothesis arose after the success of the last project that defied the *targeted* rule: Emson’s **Car Cane**. When it became a surprise hit, a few bright folks pointed out that overweight and injured people also have trouble getting into and out of cars, and that post-rationalization allowed the industry to move past the missed opportunity.

I wasn’t convinced, and I predicted the product would only do well at drugstores (where the customer skews older). I was later informed that my prediction was correct. The item didn’t do nearly as well at mass-market retailers. Emboldened, I am now predicting this project will follow a similar sales pattern. If it does, we should consider the prevailing hypothesis to be disproved — and we’ll need a new one.

Here’s my submission: These hits are outliers, plain and simple. Who knows why certain projects defy the rules? It could be timing. For instance, there could be some behind-the-scenes surge in awareness we couldn’t have predicted and can’t control. It could also be that an unexpectedly compelling demo has a special dose of whatever it is that makes things go viral. My understanding is that both factors might have played a role here.

If you think about it, though, the bar for DRTV success isn’t actually that high. You “only” need about 2 to 3 million people to buy your product for it to be considered a hit in this business. Meanwhile, there are about 250 million adults in the United States. That means the average TV product will capture a little more than 1 percent of its potential market. Even if we then narrow that market to people older than 65 (a rough approximation of the senior market), we’re still talking about 50 million people — that means you must reach just 6 percent for success.

Is it so strange then that, every once in a while, a niche product generates enough enthusiasm to capture that 6 percent?

## COPPER CHOPPER

**Description:** A veggie chopper

**Main Pitch:** “Super-strong copper titanium blades are like using 24 miniature knives at once”

**Main Offer:** \$19.99 for one with chopping and dicing blades

**Bonus:** Second set (just pay a separate fee)

**Marketer:** Ontel Products

**Website:** [www.BuyCopperChopper.com](http://www.BuyCopperChopper.com)

**Rating:** 2 out of 5 ★★☆☆☆

This is Old Gold with a new twist. The original hit is National Express’s **Chop Wizard** (2006-present). It also resembles **One Second Slicer** (2014-2015). Therein lay the two main problems I have with this project. One: it’s too soon after a similar item was on the charts. Two: the original product is still selling. Choppers represent the oldest and “goldiest” category in DR. We put at least a half-dozen through my product-verification process every year for this reason. Almost all of them fail. That’s because it has become practically impossible to find one that’s truly unique, and even the “hits” end up being modest successes at best. A played-out twist — such as copper blades — doesn’t have much of a chance of changing that. I do love the name, though.



## 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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