

By Jordan Pine



EZ SMOKER

Description: An electronic cigarette

Main pitch: "An all-new easy alternative to smoking cigarettes that you can smoke virtually anywhere."

Main offer: Free (just pay S&H) when you buy 15 refill cartridges for \$69.95

Marketer: Smoke Anywhere USA

Producer: Dynamic TV Marketing

Web site: www.EZSmoker.com

S7 Score: 5 out of 7 ★★★★★☆☆

Electronic cigarettes are a great innovation, most commonly found selling like hotcakes at mall kiosks. Because they create water vapor instead of smoke, they're healthier than cigarettes and can even be used indoors. It was just a matter of time before someone tried one on DRTV.

There's just one problem: E-cigarettes deliver nicotine, and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has already expressed deep concern over this. The agency has yet to take any official action, but all that means is it's waiting for some advertiser with deep pockets to help "clarify" its position (read "pay fines"). No doubt aware of this risk, this company took the easy way out and removed the nicotine from the product.

In doing so, it also removed the key to selling the product. Marketing doesn't happen in a vacuum. For years, brands (such as Nicorette) have been conditioning people to believe nicotine is what's **needed** to solve the problem of smoking. So a smoking alternative without nicotine is going to be perceived as a waste of money. In other words, this is a classic Catch-22 — one that I've encountered many times in my career. When legal rips the heart out of your pitch, you must have the discipline to move on.

Then there's the price. This product is "free" only if you spend \$69.95 for 15 refill cartridges and sign up for a continuity program that charges you that same amount every 30 days. In this economy, that offer just won't be **motivating** to most people.



HANDY DRYER

Description: A magnetic drying rack for laundry

Main pitch: "Attaches right to your washer or dryer to give the extra space you need to air-dry your clothes with ease."

Main offer: \$14.95 for one

Bonus: Touch-Up Topper roll-up ironing surface and magnetic Handy Bin

Marketer: Allstar Marketing

Producer: Blue Moon Studios

Web site: www.HandyDryer.com

S7 Score: 6 out of 7 ★★★★★☆☆

There's a lot to like about this campaign. The product is a clever idea for saving space in the laundry room. Laundry solutions have a great track record on DRTV. And the commercial is everything I've come to expect from the talented team that brought us Snuggie, among other top TV hits of 2009. I have only one reservation, and it has to do with whether this is **different** enough to motivate people off the couch. A quick search of Bed Bath & Beyond's Web site turns up four laundry-drying racks ranging in price from \$14.99 to \$29.99. Wal-Mart has eight, including the Cadillac of magnetic drying racks for \$39. Many of these are marketed as "compact" or "space saving," and one boasts you can "hang it almost anywhere." When similar solutions are already available at major retailers, the odds of success decrease significantly.

SLIM Ts

Description: Shapewear for men

Main pitch: "Can instantly drop you up to two pants sizes and give you a slimmer, firmer and younger looking appearance."

Main offer: \$19.95 for one

Bonus: None

Marketer: PoliBrands

Producer: Intellivision

Web site: www.GetSlimTs.com

S7 Score: 4 out of 7 ★★★★★☆☆



When I saw this commercial, I immediately thought of *Lethal Weapon 3*. Quick plot synopsis: After causing the demolition of a downtown office building, Riggs (Mel Gibson) and Murtaugh (Danny Glover) get busted down to patrolmen and have to go back to wearing their police uniforms. In the locker room, Riggs discovers Murtaugh is wearing a girdle. A classic exchange ensues:

Murtaugh: It's not a woman's girdle; it's a man's girdle!

Riggs: They make girdles for men?

Murtaugh: Yeah, they make girdles for men!

Riggs: They do, huh?

Murtaugh: Yeah, they do! I haven't worn this uniform in 15 years. The cleaners must've shrunk it!

And therein lies the problem with this product. Shapewear (the fancy term for girdles) is for women. A guy would only wear it out of desperation. And, if discovered, he would be teased mercilessly for doing so. Moreover, men don't care about their appearance the same way women do. Some are quite proud of their beer guts, in fact. TV shows would even have us believe chubby guys attract sexy women (e.g. *King of Queens* and even *Family Guy*).

About the only kind of shaping undergarment that's acceptable for men to wear is Under Armour, and you have to be an athlete to pull that off. To sum up, this product isn't really **needed**, and the limited market for men's shapewear means it's also incorrectly **targeted**. Last, at \$19.99 for one with no bonus, the offer isn't very **motivating**, either.



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