

## SCIMARK REPORT

BY JORDAN PINE

### WHAT DID WE USE BEFORE TOILET PAPER?

**Description:** A book of fun facts

**Main Pitch:** “Over 200 curious questions and unbelievable answers that are sure to amuse anyone who reads it”

**Main Offer:** \$10

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

**Starring:** Art Edmonds

**Marketer:** TELEBrands

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

[WhatDidWeUseBeforeToiletPaper.com](http://www.WhatDidWeUseBeforeToiletPaper.com)

**Rating:** 2 out of 5 ★★☆☆☆



For those keeping score, this is TELEBrands’ 11<sup>th</sup> book. Assuming **Dump Dinners** will be a success (since it was the bonus for **Dump Cakes**) and two other recent books (**Ebola 911**, **Easy Baking**) will fail, their success rate is one in every three attempts. That’s significantly better than the industry average for products in general and especially great for a category most thought couldn’t work in short-form. As for this specific book, however, I don’t see it improving that track record. Thanks to great resources, such as Wikipedia, books are no longer our main source of reference knowledge, especially trivia and “fun facts.” Indeed, today’s children may one day read with curiosity a work titled, “What Did We Use Before the Internet?”

### DRYER SHEEP

**Description:** Dryer balls

**Main Pitch:** “The 100% all-natural way to soften fabrics and dry your laundry faster”

**Main Offer:** \$12.99 for a set of three

**Bonus:** Essential oil drops (free); second set of three (just pay P&H)

**Marketer:** Ontel Products

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

**Rating:** 3 out of 5 ★★★☆☆

Ontel’s **Dryer Balls** saw major retail success circa 2006. I maintain that seven-to-10 years is the right amount of time to wait before bringing back a hit, so this project is right in that “Old Gold” zone. However, I see two potential issues. First, the best “Old Gold” items come back new and improved. A classic example would be **The Moving Men** furniture movers, a 2001 TELEBrands’ hit that failed to come back “as is” in 2010. Allstar also tried to revive the concept but did so with some meaningful improvements. The result: **EZ Moves** became a 2011 **True Top Spender**. In this case, a wool version of **Dryer Balls** does not seem like much of an improvement. It may even be a step in the other direction. Second, this product was just tried by Lenfest last autumn under the name **Wooltastic**. I have it down as a “fast fail.” The only difference I can see between that commercial and this one (besides the cuter name and logo): Ontel makes a bigger deal out of the “dry laundry faster” benefit. As that was a secret to the success of **Dryer Balls**, the difference could be meaningful enough to turn a loser into a winner.



### WAVE HOOKS

**Description:** A bathtub wine glass holder

**Main Pitch:** “Enjoy your private bath time with a glass of wine”

**Main Offer:** \$14.95 for one (choice of five colors)

**Bonus:** Second one (just pay processing)

**Marketer:** Will It Launch

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

**Rating:** 1 out of 5 ★☆☆☆☆

This project is so bad the only value I find in reviewing it is for instructional purposes. Let’s begin, shall we? For today’s lesson, I’ll be using the SciMark Seven (see below) as a reference. Looking at that list, our case study fails four of the seven criteria: It’s not *needed*, it’s not correctly *targeted* and the commercial is neither *engaging* nor *motivating*. Not having a good place to put a wine glass when bathing is barely a nuisance, let alone a real problem. And who experiences this nuisance? It’s a segment of a segment of a segment. We’re talking about women ... who take relaxing baths ... who drink wine while in said bath. Unless there’s a Calgon Bath Channel I don’t know about, reaching that niche efficiently is going to be a challenge. As for the commercial, the nature of the product makes it hard to engage the viewer. Besides the fact that it’s a boring suction holder that doesn’t do anything visually interesting, the whole spot is about watching people relax — not exactly the Billy Mays method. To cap it all off, the spot ends with an equally lackluster offer that violates an old DR tenet: one color always outperforms several. Class dismissed!

### 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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