

By Jordan Pine

MIYASHI

Description: A massaging cushion

Main Pitch: "The soothing pleasure of a Japanese spa massage any time, anywhere"

Main Offer: \$14.99 for one

Bonus: Second one (just pay S&H)

Marketer: IdeaVillage Products Corp.

Website: www.BuyMiyashi.com

Rating: 4 out of 5 ★★★★★

Am I the only one who thinks the whole Japanese-name thing is a bit played out? It seems ever since **Ginsu**, our industry has been obsessed with Japanese names. In recent years, they've been tried on everything from footpads to coffee mugs. (Many have also tried to recreate that classic Ginsu tomatto-chop opening with some amusing results.) Once you get past the name, however, this product has a lot to offer. It combines several successful product ideas from the past and present. Pain relief has a great track record on DRTV. Pillows are on a hot streak. (Witness Hampton Direct's **Total Pillow** and Plymouth Direct's **Sobakawa Pillow**.) And personal massagers have also been hot. (This being a family magazine, I'll leave it at that.) Put them all together and what have you got? A product that seems destined for success.



GREENBEAM

Description: A self-charging flashlight

Main Pitch: "Will charge itself in any light, inside or out"

Main Offer: \$10 for one

Bonus: Second one (just pay processing)

Marketer: TELEBrands

Website: www.GetGreenBeam.com



Rating: 3 out of 5 ★★★☆☆

Ever since the **Everlife Flashlight** rose to No. 7 on the Jordan Whitney top 100 in 2005, DRTV marketers have been searching for the next battery-free flashlight. I've seen all kinds of flashlights since then, including the ones portrayed negatively in this commercial. There are ones you shake, ones you crank and ones you twirl. Every alternative power source has also been explored. This one has a better pitch than most of these, but I still think it is unlikely to succeed. My first issue is the product's promise: It isn't believable. Although the creative team went out of its way not to call this flashlight "solar powered," people will naturally assume that's how the product works. Solar power is perceived to be weak and unreliable, the opposite of what this commercial is promising, and what you'd want in an emergency flashlight. My second and greater concern is the *category*. DRTV marketers weren't the only ones paying attention to Everlife's success. Since then, many brands have launched their own emergency flashlights. The most common is the plug-in variety, which doubles as a nightlight and goes on automatically when the power goes out. For example, Wal-mart has one from **Energizer** that retails for less than \$20 and currently has a five-star consumer rating online. That kind of competition makes a retail rollout a lot less attractive.

LIPSTIX REMIX

Description: A kit for recycling lipstick

Main Pitch: "Recolor, recover and repair your lipstick leftovers"

Main Offer: \$19.95 for one kit

Bonus: Second kit (just pay S&H)

Marketer: Divine Innovations

Website: www.LipStixRemix.com



Rating: 2 out of 5 ★★☆☆☆

This is one of the few truly *different* products I've seen in a while. However, once the glow of originality wore off, I quickly saw several problems with the campaign. It began when I asked the first of my **SciMark Seven** questions: "Is the product needed enough to generate the impulse to buy? For example, does it solve a problem?" When asking this question, I envision a scale of one to 10. At the low end are minor inconveniences and annoyances. At the high end is intense pain, whether physical or emotional. Although I've never done a study, I think a problem needs to register a "7" or higher on this scale to be considered painful enough for DRTV. Do women get frustrated about the lipstick stuck in the bottom of their lipstick tubes? I'm sure they do. Do they get upset when their expensive lipstick breaks? No doubt. But are those "level 7" problems? More to the point, would any woman have the patience or inclination to break out a special kit and try to solve these problems by cooking up reconstituted lipstick in her microwave? It's one of those odd solutions that actually creates a new problem, especially if one were to attempt their primary suggestion — remixing lipstick remnants into new and exciting shades. Even an artistic chemist would have difficulty with a challenge like that.



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