

SCIMARK REPORT

BY JORDAN PINE

I thought it would be good to start off the year with a refresher. For the past eight years, I've made it my mission to catalog every short-form DRTV project attempted (scimark.blogspot.com). This has allowed me to maintain a list of good categories and bad categories based on DRTV history.

Good Categories

1. Cooking/Kitchen
2. Apparel
3. Garden/Yard
4. Hair Removal
5. Pets

Bad Categories

1. Phone/Tablet Accessories
2. Plush Toys¹
3. Lights
4. Cleaning²
5. Hair Accessories³



**Beware
of the
Siren!**



Copper apparel was hot in 2014.

Here's a list of winners from the past five years in each of the five "good" categories:

- **Cooking/Kitchen:** AeroKnife, Bacon Wave, Bake Pop, Chef Basket, Chop Magic, Dump Cakes, Edge of Glory, Eggies, Miracle Grill Mat/Yoshi Grill & Bake Mat, Orgreenic, Pasta Boat, Perfect Pancake/Flip Jack, Perfect Bacon Bowl, Perfect Brownie, Perfect Meatloaf, Perfect Tortilla, Pop Chef, Potato Express, Samurai Pro, Slap Chop, Slice-O-Matic, Stone Dine, Stone Wave, Stufz, Yoshi Blade, Yoshi Blue
- **Apparel:** Cami Secret, Cami Shaper, Forever Lazy, Genie Bra, Genie Zip, Jeaneez/Slim Jeggings, Pajama Jeans, Slim Ts, Style Snaps, Tommie Copper/Copper Wear/Copper Fit, Trendy Top
- **Garden/Yard:** Cutting Edge/Grassology, HydroMousse, Pocket Hose/Flex-Able Hose/X-Hose, Live Butterfly Garden, Topsy Turvy, Water Jet
- **Hair Removal:** Depil Silk, Finishing Touch Diamond, Finishing Touch Yes!, Micro Force, MicroTouch One, MicroTouch Max, MicroTouch Switch Blade, no!no!
- **Pets:** Bark Off/Sonic Pet Trainer, Cat's Meow, Crazy Critters, Pet Command, Potty Patch, Shed Pal, Thundershirt



As for the "bad" categories, there are plenty of struggles to point to from the past five years:

- **Phone/Tablet Accessories:** Armor Guard, eFiltr, Book Genie, iBall Tablet System, Co-Z Cushion, Finger Charger, Flip n Easy, Gwee, Lappy, Lap Pro, Life Link, LinQ, Maxxable, Mighty Shield, Nano Charger ZT, Ninja Guard, Pad Pivot, Phone Slicker, PicStand, Plug Purse, Pocket Shot, Power Up, R2L, Reef Case, Screen Egg, StickO, Stick Stand, The Smart Phone Clip, Toku, Wonder Case, Zoom Tech
- **Plush Toys:** Ball Pets, Blankid Buddy, Bubby My Buddy, Chatter Pals, Cloud Pets, Crazy Clingz, Dream Team Pets, Get Me Out Pillow, Glow To Bed, Gobblers, Dream Waves, Tummy Lites, Harry the Happy Birthday Hyena, Hug Rugs, Loudmouth Leo, Piggyback Aliens, Plusharoos, Pocket Pets, Stem Friends, Storytime Pets, Wildflowerzz
- **Lights:** Blow Lantern, Catch-A-Light, Ever Light, Flashlight Man, Flexi-Brite, Flex Light Pro, Handy Lantern, Hex Light, Hug Light, Remark-A-Bulb, Sun Genie, Liberty Lantern, Light Headed, Literoo, London Railroad Lantern, Maxini, Neck Brite, Pocket Lantern, Super Nova Lantern, Ultra Bulb, Widget Light
- **Cleaning:** Broomy, Clean & Green, Clicker Mop, DissolvAway, Dropps, Easy Dish, Gorilla Green, Hog Wash Scrubber, Magic Bristle Gloves, Magic Glove, Magna Clean, Mighty Blast, Point and Clean, Pure Logic, S20 Laundry, Science Clean, Scrub Glove, Super Clean, Tiger's Tail, TriWipe, Whip It, Wisp
- **Hair Accessories:** 30-Second Styler, Beverly Hills Twist, Blingee Bands, CeramaBrush, Curlicue, Curl Girl, Curl Secret, ExStatic Hair Brush, Glamour Curls, Hair Bean, Hair Glider, Hot Bob, Hot Glowz, Hot Ponez, PoniLox, Rockin' Knot, Snap Curls, Style Streams

Interestingly, a few of the bad categories were established after a major winner (or two) inspired dozens of followers in a classic "One is an outlier, three is a category" proving exercise. Such was the case with plush toys (Pillow Pets) and lights (Olde Brooklyn Lantern).

I close with a caveat: These lists don't mean a product in a good category is guaranteed to work, of course, or that a product in a bad category is sure to fail. There have even been a few hits in some of my bad categories! If you think you have the best thing since sliced bread, I say ignore the category history and go for it. Besides, neither good categories nor bad categories last forever. The plush toys category was great during the Pillow Pets craze, but quickly reached peak saturation and turned sour. Conversely, cleaning may very well flip from bad to good this year if three promising new campaigns live up to their potential. For me, it's all about playing the odds, learning (for free!) from other peoples' mistakes and, above all, resisting the call of the Siren.

¹ Since the Pillow Pets craze peaked, and with the notable exception of Jay At Play, a DR-driven toy company that continues to enjoy success in this category.

² Specifically, the cleaning sub-categories that are crowded at retail and dominated by big brands. Certain niche cleaners (e.g., Stream Clean) have found success by thinking outside of the box.

³ With the notable exception of Allstar Products, a DR marketer that has consistently defied the odds for this category with three successes in just the past two years (Hot Buns, Hot Huez & Secret Extensions).

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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