

SCIMARK REPORT

BY JORDAN PINE

For the first time in this space last January, I shared my list of good categories and bad categories for DRTV. That list was based on about five years' worth of historical data from my blog. Now, I have another year's worth of data to consider, and there have been some notable shifts.

Below is this year's list, along with an explanation of the changes I've noted. The period covered includes fourth-quarter 2014 and ends before 4Q 2015 to account for any hits that haven't rolled out yet. Included in my analysis are nearly 300 projects from known marketers. For hits in a category, I only counted projects that I know to be true winners — a somewhat flawed methodology, I readily admit.



GOOD CATEGORIES BAD CATEGORIES

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|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Cooking/Kitchen | 1. Phone/Tablet Accessories |
| 2. Foot Care | 2. Lights |
| 3. Automotive | 3. Household |
| 4. DIY/Hardware | 4. Pets |
| 5. New/Miscellaneous | 5. Apparel |

BREAKING DOWN THE 5 GOOD CATEGORIES:

- **COOKING/KITCHEN:** This was the No. 1 category from my five-year study, and it remained dominant this past year. Successful items include **Egg-Tastic**, **Perfect Bacon Bowl**, **Swiftly Sharp**, and **TouCan**. Side note: this was also the most active category in the industry by far.
- **FOOT CARE:** Two of the biggest items in DRTV history bear the name **PedEgg**, so this category's place on the list should be no surprise. This past year saw a three-way duel in foot care take over the ASOTV section of retail for a while.
- **AUTOMOTIVE:** This category can be up and down, but this past year it produced a healthy one-in-four hit rate last year thanks to Emson's **Car Cane** and **Clever Grip** and InvenTel's **Dash Cam Pro**.
- **DIY/HARDWARE:** Another category that can be up and down, this one also went one-for-four. Hits include **Bit Shooter**, **Master Wrench**, and **5-Second Fix/Lazer Bond**.
- **NEW/MISCELLANEOUS:** TELEBrands introduced two new DR categories this year with the success of **Colorama** (adult activity books) and **Star Shower** (holiday lighting). Meanwhile, Ideavillage did the same with waist



trainers **Miss Belt** and **Genie Hour Glass**. I include this as a top category to show that discovering new opportunities for DRTV is still a key part of what we do. It's not all knockoffs, folks!

ANALYZING THE 5 BAD CATEGORIES:

- **PHONE/TABLET ACCESSORIES:** This was the worst category from my five-year study, and it remained terrible this past year. I counted 10 attempts and not a single success. A significant percentage was made up of gadgets for holding a phone (e.g., **Flexy Pop**, **Fone Ring**) for some reason.
- **LIGHTS:** This category was No. 3 on my list from the five-year study and continues to be one of the worst categories for DRTV, going zero for eight in the past year. Thankfully, marketers have realized LED lanterns are a "Siren": only one was attempted (**Pop-Up Lantern**). It has also become clear that flameless candles are a "Siren." The one attempted (**Glow Candles**) was at least the fifth flop I have noted.
- **HOUSEHOLD:** This is a bit of a catchall. I put almost two-dozen products in this category. Only one of them is a rollout: **Furniture Feet**. Of the remainder, a developing "Siren" is the outlet-related product category. At least two flopped during the period (**Handy Plug**, **Twist-A-Plug**), demonstrating that Allstar's **Swivel Socket** was probably an outlier.
- **PETS:** Previously No. 5 on my list of good categories, this one flips to the other side and demonstrates why annual updates are so important. Last year, pet projects went one for 18 with only Allstar/Lenfest's **Knot Out** breaking through.
- **APPAREL:** This is another category that changed sides. Copper compression was the only thing going on last year, and it was all line extensions. Take that out and this category went one for 16. The lone highlight was **Jeaneez**, which ended up as a four-way duel at the end of 2014.



A few other categories from my five-year study didn't make it on to these lists. From the original good list, **Garden/Yard** was excluded because only one product out of nine attempted (**Hydro Mousse**) advanced to retail. Interestingly, four of the flops were sprinklers (**Point Perfect**, **Spyder Sprinkler**, **Sprinkler 360**, **Watering Willy**). **Hair Removal** also missed because I excluded **Finishing Touch** and **MicroTouch** brand extensions. Of the original projects attempted, none succeeded.

From the previous bad list, **Cleaning** stayed out of the bottom five because of a single item: Allstar's **My Cleaning Secret**. With a track record of one in 14, though, it was a close call. Likewise, **Hair Styling** (formerly **Hair Accessories**) also missed the bottom five because of an Allstar item: **Hot Stampz**. Otherwise, that category went zero for seven. Finally, I was glad to see **Plush Toys** move out of the bottom five, but that was largely due to a lack of attempts — another "Siren" slain!

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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