# **Research SciMark Report**

### By Jordan Pine



#### **FLEX SHAPER**

**Description:** A portable exercise device

Main Pitch: "Target your worst body issues with just a few

simple exercises"

Main Offer: 2 payments of \$19.99

Bonus: Exercise chart, workout DVD, meal planner and

weight-loss guide
Marketer: TELEBrands
Web site: www.FlexShaper.com

#### S7 Score: 5 out of 7 ★★★★☆☆

Whether or not this campaign repeats the success of the 1990s classic it resembles, one thing is clear: It will have repeated its biggest mistake. As Peter Bieler explains in "This Business Has Legs," his famous fitness item was originally called the "V-Toner" and positioned as a "gymin-a-bag." To quote Bieler, the results "were dismal." He decided it was because they "had promised too much" and "should focus on a single part of the body" instead. He then asked himself an important question: What part of the body "do women most want to improve?" Somehow, he decided the answer was "thighs," which is how the V-Toner became the ThighMaster.

The point is that going narrow was the key. Today, we see the same strategy bearing fruit. Fitness IQ could have positioned its "dynamic inertia" dumbbell as broadly as a regular dumbbell. But someone asked herself Bieler's question and decided the answer was "underarms." The result: Shake Weight is the newest fitness sensation.

And here is an interesting historical footnote: In his book, Bieler writes that one of the questions he asked himself about the V-Toner was, "Are women concerned about dangling underarms?" His answer: "Yeah, but not enough to go running to the phone." It seems he was wrong ... or perhaps just ahead of his time.

# THE LITTLE RED CHEF

**Description:** A handheld chopper **Main Pitch:** "The fastest, easiest way to chop fruits, vegetables and much, much more"

Main Offer: \$10 for one, plus a whipping

blade and ceramic peeler

Bonus: Double the offer (just pay separate

S&H)

Marketer: American Direct

Web site: www.TheLittleRedChef.com



## S7 Score: 5 out of 7 ★★★★☆☆

It seems DRTV buyers have an endless appetite for slicer/dicers, making this another reliable category for hits. It's also a category where old items tend to recycle — the "Phoenix" phenomenon I wrote about in *Response*'s April issue. But this consistency doesn't mean any old slicer/dicer will do well. In fact, more such items fail than succeed. So what will it be this time?

I predict failure. This item is an attempt to bring back Smart Inventions' **Twist Chopper**, a bonus item and retail success in 2005. The big problem now, though, is **Slap Chop**. It's still out there, and it does most of the demos this does, which means this product won't seem *different* enough to DRTV viewers. More to the point, Slap Chop has the big added benefit of being pitched by the quirky and popular Vince Offer. Sorry "Chef Kelly," but you aren't as *engaging* as Vince.

## **HEAR KITTY**

**Description:** A lost cat locator **Main Pitch:** "Instantly locate your cat with the push of a button" **Main Offer:** \$10 for one with bat-

teries and ID tag

Bonus: Laser Kitty cat toy (just

pay S&H)

Marketer: TELEBrands Web site: www.BuyHearKitty.com



One of the few DRTV categories that consistently delivers hits is the pet products category. Even during the worst months of the recession, pet items continued to sell well on TV. So this item has higher-than-average odds of success from the start.

It also happens to meet most of the SciMark Seven (S7) criteria. My only concern here is the same one I expressed for **BarkOff**, TELEBrands' ultrasonic pet training device. To wit, this is



another attempt to segment a segment. The primary segment is cat owners, and we know there are enough of those who buy from DRTV to sustain a rollout (see Allstar's **Emery Cat**). But the secondary segment is cat owners with a cat-finding problem — and we have no idea if there are enough of them to sustain a rollout. Or to put it in S7 terminology: "Is the product needed *enough* to generate the impulse to buy?" The answer will make all the difference here.



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