

SCIMARK REPORT

BY JORDAN PINE

If there is “one ring to rule them all” in DR, it’s this: visual interest. Some call it “Wow.” Some call it “magic.” But all should understand that it’s a powerful force that can defy criteria and turn past losers into surprise winners. Each of this month’s entries is a case in point.

RUST-OLEUM RECOLOR

Description: A color-restoring liquid and protectant

Main Pitch: “A factory finish in minutes without ever painting”

Main Offer: \$19.99 for one bottle

Bonus: Application kit with gloves, sponge, clothes, and tiny applicator

Starring: Beau Rials

Marketer: Rust-Oleum

Website: www.GetReColor.com

Rating: 5 out of 5 ★★★★★

I’m a little late to this party, having first noted this project at the beginning of the year. Now that it’s firmly established as a rollout, it’s time to give the campaign its due. I think the secret to its success is that it puts two types of magic in one bottle. The first is the amazing instant-restoration powers of the original **Wipe New**. In 2012, that single, transformative demo propelled the auto product to the top of the “As Seen on TV” charts and launched a new brand. The second is the stain-shedding wonderment of another Rust-Oleum product: **NeverWet**. While the concept never caught on with DRTV buyers, it got plenty of attention in other channels. Rials demonstrates both magical properties with expert ease and manages to fit more visual interest into a two-minute spot than I’ve seen in some 28-minute infomercials.



BELL+HOWELL TACLIGHT

Description: A tactical flashlight

Main Pitch: “Can do things no ordinary flashlight can do”

Main Offer: \$19.99 for one, with free shipping

Bonus: Second one (just pay a separate fee)

Marketer: Emson

Website: www.TryTacLight.com

No Rating (author performed services on campaign)

This product violates two of my published criteria for DRTV products. The *SciMark Seven* dictates that categories must not be *crowded*, yet there are myriad flashlights for sale. Meanwhile, the *Fabulous Five* advises product-seekers to consider DRTV history and avoid chasing items that have failed many times before. Lights have been such a problematic type of product over the last few years that they came in at No. 2 on my list of bad categories for 2016 (*Response*, January). Yet here we are. Our conclusion must be that a strong point of difference and compelling demos can trump typically fatal product weaknesses. There are many flashlights, but how many can stun an attacker, stay on after being frozen in a block of ice, and survive getting run over by a Humvee?



FLIP-A-ZOO

Description: Transforming plush toys

Main Pitch: “The toy that flips for you”

Main Offer: \$19.99 for one of six characters

Bonus: Little FlipZee

Marketer: Jay At Play

Website: www.FlipaZoo.com

Rating: 3 out of 5 ★★☆☆☆

While we’re on the topic of bad categories, plush toys were No. 2 on my 2015 list. Even then, however, I had carved out an exception for this marketer. Following the overstock fiasco that developed during the latter portion of the **Pillow Pet** years, it became apparent that only someone from the toy business could properly manage the intricacies of these campaigns. That doesn’t stop pure-play DRTV marketers from continuing to try, but I have seen a noticeable decline in their attempts over the years. That might also have something to do with a drop-off in demand. The novelty of transforming plush toys has certainly worn off. Why might this time be different? It’s the way this plush toy magically “flips” into something completely different. As I have shown in this column, that sort of “wow” moment is a secret to DRTV success.



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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