

We have a tendency to focus on successes and ignore failures, but I've always found that failure is a better teacher than success. At the very least, I like to know about — and try to learn from — other people's errors. With that in mind, I present a round-up of three recent flops and what I think they have to teach us.



Swivel Shine

Description: A motion-activated light

Main Pitch: "Swivels to point its light exactly where you need it"

Main Offer: \$19.99 for one

Bonus: Second one (just pay P&H)

Marketer: Allstar Products

Rating: 3 out of 5

with one of my own "fast fails." Despite a great commercial, this one didn't make it. My takeaway continues to be that lighting is a very tricky category. Lights are always popular and usually sell great online, which tends to skew pre-DRTV testing in a favorable direction. It makes all of these projects "worth a shot." Yet roll-out CPOs are very rare without some other advantage (e.g., a tactical trend). Ultimately, it's important to remember this is a crowded category with long odds of breaking through.

To accept my fair share of any shame, I'll start



California Charcoal Deodorant

Description: A deodorant with activated charcoal

Main Pitch: "All-natural ingredients to keep you dry and odor-free for up to 12 hours"

Main Offer: \$10 for one

Bonus: Second one (just pay a separate fee)

Marketer: TELEBrands

Rating: 1 out of 5

super-competitive categories dominated by big brands that have decades of brand loyalty behind them. In almost every case, it's a fool's errand. It's especially difficult when you are trying to change consumer behavior and get people to believe some new technology from an unknown brand will actually work better than their trusted favorite. Let's just say having people sniff other people's sweaty armpits — the technique used in this commercial — isn't going to do it.

DRTV marketers keep trying to enter huge,



Furniture Socks

Description: Chair leg protectors

Main Pitch: "The slip-on solution that prevents scuff marks and streaks"

Main Offer: \$19.99 for eight (black or brown)

Bonus: Furniture Fix markers (free); second set of eight (just pay P&H)

Marketer: Emson Inc.

Rating: 2 out of 5

This type of project could be called "chasing Old Silver." I see it a lot. There's a tendency to

assume every item that made it onto an annual chart or went to retail was a hit (*i.e.*, gold) worth revisiting. If you weren't on the inside, though, you don't know that for sure. In this case, the first and only indication this could be an item was Lenfest's Furniture Feet, a 2015 *True Top Spender*. However, the backstory is that the item failed with one marketer before being given a second chance, and some TLC, from another marketer (Ontel). That's when it finally found its footing (pun intended). I don't know the ultimate accounting, but most items that struggle to generate consumer demand in the beginning end up being singles or doubles at best. Resurrecting a modest hit, especially after just three years, isn't likely to be a winning strategy.