

By Jordan Pine

OLD GOLD?

On my blog (scimark.blogspot.com), I post commentary under the title above whenever someone tries to bring back a former DRTV hit. Such activity used to be more common. Every seven-to-10 years, the greatest hits of yesteryear would rise from the ashes like the mythical Phoenix. But these days? Not so much. That's probably because, more often than not, the answer to the question "old gold?" is a resounding "no." This month, I take a look at a few new gold diggers.

PERFECT PANCAKE



Original Hit Year: 2002 (No. 2 on the Jordan Whitney Annual Ranking)

Marketer: Allstar Products Group

Original Marketer: Merchant Media

Website: www.buyPerfectPancake.com

Rating: 4 out of 5 ★★★★★

This commercial is a faithful, frame-by-frame recreation of the original creative — right down to the classic “doorknob analogy.” That’s right: “If you can turn a doorknob, you can use the Perfect Pancake pan!” The only changes are the addition of Marc Gill (always a plus) and a modification to the product. It now makes four smaller pancakes instead of one big one. The painstaking duplication of the original pitch is a great way to control the variables here and find out if the market is ready for a repeat. Because this pan has been off the air for nearly a decade, and because it rose so high on the charts the first time around, I think success is likely.

BACK RELIEF BELT

Original Hit Year: 2006 (No. 55 on the Jordan Whitney Annual Ranking)

Marketer: TELEBrands

Original Marketer: Allstar Products Group

Website:

www.BackReliefBelt.com

Rating: 3 out of 5 ★★★★★

Whenever I have a conversation about a new back-pain solution, this old campaign comes up and usually sways the argument in favor of the item. However, after seeing how far down on the 2006 list the original Back Relief Belt appeared, I’m not sure that’s a good thing (*see below*). It was also on the air just six years ago, which may make this revival a bit premature if there is anything to that old “7-10 years” rule I mentioned above. That said: this project meets all of the other **SciMark Seven** criteria, especially the first. Back pain continues to be a major problem in America today. Even better, a more expensive version of this solution is selling well in catalogs, and that points toward favorable results here if the timing is right.



WHAT MAKES UP THE SCIMARK SEVEN (S7)?

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.

FOOL'S GOLD

When someone tries to bring back an item that was never really successful in the first place, I call that chasing “fool’s gold.” A recent example was **Paint Pad Pro**, an attempt to bring back IdeaVillage’s **Point ‘N Paint** (from 2009). As I wrote in my August 2012 review: “This could have been another ‘Old Gold?’ feature — if not for the fact that it isn’t very old and it wasn’t really gold (more like silver).” Add a twist to the mix and the problem is compounded. Believing **Save-A-Blade** was a big hit in 2008, several marketers have chased products that sharpen disposable razors (**Razor Rx, Blade Buddy**) or extend their life (**Razor Smooth, Magna Blade**). But all have failed because the original “hit” was a mediocre success at best.

Fool’s Gold is especially dangerous because it short-circuits logical arguments like my “third time is never the charm” rule. Even if other marketers have failed with similar items, there’s always that first time to cite as a precedent for success. And so, these items become a special kind of Siren — I love my mythology! — that is just too alluring to resist. To avoid shipwreck, marketers need to be extra vigilant and properly validate their information before falling in love.



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