

By Jordan Pine

Although campaigns targeting children defy several of the usual criteria — when is a toy really needed, for example — and although I am far from an expert in the category, I chose to review two kids' DRTV projects this month. Since the huge success of **Pillow Pets**, most major short-form marketers and producers have been dabbling in the category, making a focus on kids the latest industry trend.

TURBO PAK

Description: A backpack that converts into a scooter

Main Pitch: "Wear it ... ride it ... pull it."

Main Offer: Two payments of \$39.99

Website: www.TurboPak.com

Rating: 4 out of 5 ★★★★★☆

One of my favorite marketing quotes is from the great Al Ries. In it, he talks about the folly of trying to break the rules of advertising. He concludes: "You have a choice. You can either live by the rules and accept the possibility that you might miss an opportunity because you didn't break the rules. Or you can live a life of anarchy." I think that is especially true of the rules of DRTV advertising.

There is a higher level, however. Sometimes you become so familiar with the rules — so well versed — that you can go outside of the box while still somehow remaining within it. It seems producer Doug Fowkes has reached that higher level, a level of true creative genius within our genre. When I watched this *Back to the Future* homage, the critical part of my brain was ready. "Entertainment doesn't sell," it sneered. "They'll need to sell a half million units just to pay for that *Transformers* animation," it snorted. But the whole while, my inner child was absolutely delighted. Watch it for yourself. About the time you realize it all just *works* somehow, you also realize you would have done anything to own that backpack had it existed when you were small enough to ride it.



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.



PHANTOM SAUCER

Description: A flying saucer magic trick

Main Pitch: "Looks like it defies gravity" because it "floats and flies in front of your eyes."

Main Offer: \$10 for one saucer

Bonus: Second one and instructional DVD (pay additional S&P)

Marketer: TELEBrands

Website: www.PhantomSaucer.com

Rating: 3 out of 5 ★★★★★☆

Speaking of the rules of DR, people often ask me if any one of my criteria is more important than the others. The answer is yes. If I were being 100-percent scientific, mine would be a weighted system. More interesting, there is one criterion that is not on any of my lists but that has been shown to trump all other criteria in certain cases — "wow" factor. It seems a real "wow" demonstration can overcome a multitude of DR deficiencies. I bring it up because this item reminds me of IdeaVillage's **Fushigi**, the "magic gravity ball" that did big numbers last year. The success of that campaign is a classic example of "wow" factor at work.

Will this campaign deliver similar results? Possibly, and I'll be watching closely to see if it does. My new rule: One is an outlier; three is a category. Let's see which one **Fushigi** was.



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