

## SCIMARK REPORT

BY JORDAN PINE

Early in my career, I'd watch in frustration as affluent men living near New York City tried to guess what middle-class women living in Middle America would think about a particular product idea. At best, they'd call in a few random office clerks or executive assistants and ask their opinions — as if a sample size you could count on one hand was an accurate representation of anything. Now, thanks

to an explosion of cheap and powerful Internet tools, it's easy to find out what real consumers think before making costly decisions. This month, I experimented with applying one of those tools to my column. Before writing the reviews below, I created an online survey and showed a group of more than 100 consumers the commercials in question. I will reference some of the findings from that survey throughout.

## DUELING BODY ART

## HOT JEWELS

**Main Offer:** \$10 per collection

**Bonus:** Buy three, get the fourth free

**Marketer:** Allstar Products Group

**Website:** [www.HotJewels.com](http://www.HotJewels.com)

**Rating:** 3 out of 5 ★★☆☆☆



## SHIMMER JEWELRY TATTOOS

**Main Offer:** \$10 for a set of 25

**Bonus:** Double the offer for free

**Marketer:** Ideavillage Products

**Website:** [www.BuyShimmer.com](http://www.BuyShimmer.com)

**Rating:** 2 out of 5 ★★☆☆☆



This is a true duel in that both of these marketers launched their projects at the same time — no followers here. It's an interesting product to battle over given the target demographic is (presumably) much younger than the average DRTV buyer and that DR typically doesn't work for trendy fashion items. That said, these are both brand extensions for a reason. Ideavillage's *Shimmer Body Art* was a *True Top Spender* in 2012, and Allstar has had no less than three hits under its younger-skewing "Hot" brand (*Hot Buns*, *Hot Huez* and *Hot Designs*). Considering the latter fact, I give Allstar the edge in this battle. As for the commercials, my survey showed no significant difference in purchase interest between the two. Some women saw the Hot Jewels commercial and some saw the Shimmer commercial in a randomized split. Both groups were equally uninterested in buying the product, with more than 85 percent expressing a lack of enthusiasm in both cases.

## BIG VISION

**Description:** Magnifying eyewear

**Main Pitch:** "Makes everything bigger, clearer and easier to do"

**Main Offer:** \$10 for one pair with carry case, lanyard

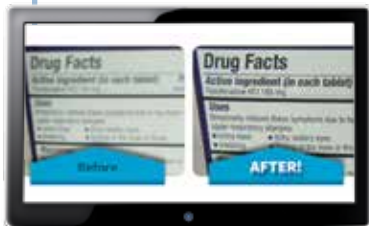
**Bonus:** Double the offer (just pay P&H)

**Marketer:** Ontel Products

**Website:** [www.BuyBigVision.com](http://www.BuyBigVision.com)

**Rating:** 2 out of 5 ★★☆☆☆

I would probably be on the fence about this item if I didn't have some consumer research to guide me. On one hand, magnifying devices as a category have a decent track record. TELEBrands' card-size magnifier, the *OWL*, was a 2005 hit. Five years later, Spark Innovators' jumbo version,



*Page Brite*, made the annual top 50. On the other hand, this pitch for magnifying eyeglasses sounds a lot like a pitch for reading glasses to me, and those haven't had any success on DRTV. Even Joy Mangano failed to convince TV watchers to buy her *Joy Readers* in spring 2011. From

a *SciMark Seven* perspective, I expected to find that people didn't think this product was *different* enough (too similar to reading glasses) and that it wasn't *needed*. I was wrong on the first count — more than three-quarters of respondents thought the product was unique — but correct on the second. The bigger issue: market size. More than half of respondents rated their vision OK or better. Vision tends to decline with age, but 51 percent of respondents older than 40 also rated their vision OK or better. Hence, nine of 10 survey-takers showed no interest in buying the product.

## SECURITY SLEEVES

**Description:** An RFID-blocking sleeve

**Main Pitch:** "Prevents thieves from making off with your information"

**Main Offer:** \$19.99 for four sleeves

**Bonus:** Four additional sleeves (free)

**Marketer:** TELEBrands

**Website:** [www.GetSecuritySleeves.com](http://www.GetSecuritySleeves.com)

**Rating:** 2 out of 5 ★★☆☆☆



Do you carry anything in your wallet with an RFID chip? If you're honest, your answer to this question is probably, "What's an RFID chip?" In my survey, nearly 20 percent of respondents picked that answer. Another third settled for "no," but I suspect many of those people were just guessing. Regardless, that combined stat doesn't bode well for this project. Neither does the purchase interest number, which did not make it out of the teens overall and only improved slightly among older respondents who tend to be the most paranoid about electronic theft. In DR, there are two multisyllabic dirty words. The first is "installation." The second is "education." Any time you have to educate people before you can sell to them, your odds of closing a sale go way down. Any time you have less than two minutes to do that educating, your odds probably aren't worth calculating. So why try? I blame "the delusion of single explanations," a phrase coined by IMD professor Phil Rosenzweig in his book *The Halo Effect*. Here's how this delusion works in a DR context: In 2011, TELEBrands' *Aluma Wallet* ended the year in the Jordan Whitney top 20. One of its key selling points was RFID-blocking technology, so DR marketers started believing that feature must be the secret to its success. I had the chance to disprove that idea the next year when I helped Ideavillage test *Credit Safe*, the first security sleeve to be tried on DRTV. The results weren't close.

## 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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