

## SCIMARK REPORT

BY JORDAN PINE

## VISITATION CROSS

**Description:** A commemorative cross**Main Pitch:** "Celebrating the very first visit of Pope Francis to the Americas"**Main Offer:** \$19.99**Bonus:** Portrait of Pope Francis, keepsake box, certificate of authenticity (included)**Marketer:** Top Dog Direct**Website:** [www.VisitationCross.com](http://www.VisitationCross.com)**Rating:** 3 out of 5 ★★☆☆☆

According to the most recent data from the Pew Research Center, 21 percent of the American population is Catholic. Meanwhile, Protestants account for 40 percent, and all Christians, including the unaffiliated, total 71 percent. That's why a product like the 2009 hit **Prayer Cross** could find success, while a project like this one is less likely to succeed. It's a simple matter of demographics.

The counter-argument is the **Royal Heirloom Ring**, a 2011 TELEBrands rollout. How many Anglophiles could there possibly be in America? I'd be surprised if the number exceeded 21 percent. And that suggests a niche item can work if people are passionate enough about the topic.

From a SciMark Seven (S7) perspective, we're talking about a shortcoming of the *targeted* criterion. This one also has an obvious weakness in the *needed* area, which is typical of commemorative items.



## POLAR POOCH

**Description:** A cooling cushion for pets**Main Pitch:** "Stays cool for up to three hours, keeping your pet happy and comfortable"**Main Offer:** \$19.99-\$29.99**Bonus:** Second one (just pay a separate fee)**Marketer:** TELEBrands**Website:** [www.PolarPooch.com](http://www.PolarPooch.com)**Rating:** 2 out of 5 ★★☆☆☆

Enough pet mats with temperature-adjusting benefits have been tried for this to be labeled a category. But is it a viable one? DRTV history suggests not. I've logged one mat that cools pets down in



hot weather (**Chillow Pet**), three mats that warm pets up in cold weather (**Kitty Shack**, **Kitty Cushion**, **PetZZZpad**) and one mat that does both (**Perfect Pet Mat**). Chillow Pet, which is the closest to this product, did not make the cut in 2013 despite the human version (**Chillow**) being a chart-topper that year. That's not a good sign for this project. Besides cost/price, which gets tricky with any pet mat, the issue here is whether such products are really *needed*. If it's true that pets are treated like children, it's probably also true that they get to enjoy the same creature comforts (get it?) that children do — *i.e.*, air conditioning, fans, toasty fireplaces, and down comforters.



## COPPER WEAR TENSION

**Description:** A pain-relief device**Main Pitch:** "Combines the breakthrough of TENS pain-relief technology with the properties of copper"**Main Offer:** \$29.99**Bonus:** Second one (just pay P&H)**Marketer:** Tristar Products**Website:** [www.CopperWearTens.com](http://www.CopperWearTens.com)**Rating:** 2 out of 5 ★★☆☆☆

There are lots of reasons not to like this project. It's another example of the copper trend being taken too far. It's \$10 more expensive than impulse pricing typically allows. It involves bold claims that have gotten marketers in trouble before. It is yet another attempt to follow a hit with a big head start (**BeActive**) when we know there's usually only room for one in the marketplace. But I want to focus on TENS. What is it? According to the website for this project, it stands for "Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve Stimulators." Apparently that means something that "sends pulses across the surface of the skin along the nerve strands, ultimately blocking pain transmissions to the brain." From a marketing perspective, this just went from bad to worse. First, you never want to have to educate people before you sell to them. There just isn't enough time in a two-minute commercial. Second, if you do choose to educate people in a short-form commercial, you don't want the explanation to make your product sound scary and dangerous. (Maybe it's me, but messing with my nerves in a way that blocks transmissions to my brain doesn't sound especially safe.) Third, and perhaps most important: if you are going to ignore these first two points and go for it anyway, you probably don't want your complex, scary product to be "As Seen on TV."

## 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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