



The Next Hit Brand DRTV Product is Already on the Shelf. Why Can't It Be Yours?

By Doug Garnett, Atomic Direct

Over the course of my career in DRTV, I've watched many brand marketers seek to leverage DRTV's retail power for their brand and fail miserably. While it's true that DRTV will invigorate retail sales, equally important is knowing how to identify the right product.

The Simple Truth

There is a surprising, simple and powerful truth in DRTV - *the next mega-hit is already on the store shelf.*

The George Foreman Grill, the Popeil Showtime Rotisserie, the Drill Doctor, and even the acne treatment ProActiv are based on products that existed well before TV brought these products to life.

Each of these campaigns added smart packaging, merchandising and communication to existing solid products and turned sleeper products into compelling consumer mega-hits.

What should brands do differently?

Once we accept that the next product is already on the shelf, the DRTV equation changes dramatically — and becomes less risky. There are thousands of products on the shelf that lack only the vision, savvy, and investment needed to drive massive retail sales with DRTV communication.

To find those products, here are five key guidelines:

- Look for products that have lackluster sales, but are *passionately loved* by consumers. This behavior indicates a disconnect between what consumers “think” a product will deliver and its value— a disconnect that DRTV communication can bridge.
- Look at products that only sell when consumers walk into the store looking for them. DRTV can be the engine that drives traffic seeking the products.
- If you think your product message is “old”, **challenge your assumption**. Marketing teams often dismiss products because “that’s been tried by our competitors” or “we’ve already done that”.
- If a product was the belle of the Housewares show and the entire industry was talking about that idea in 1994, that “buzz” probably never made it to consumers. DRTV supplies the communication that makes the difference between success and failure.
- Look for products with important and complex benefits. When these benefits are successfully communicated, the result is high margins and long life at the retail store.

An example is the ProActiv acne treatment. ProActiv's active ingredient is common in acne products you find in about any store. But, Guthy-Renker had the vision to package it right and the savvy to build DRTV that drove that message to the market.

The result? Another lackluster retail product reached massive market penetration on the shoulders of DRTV.

Remember that DRTV Leads to Surprising Success

Few brands can imagine the power of DRTV to radicalize their markets. Short-form reaches out to consumers with basic communication that drives retail and supports it with TV sales to off-set media costs.

Even better may be the long form opportunity. Long form offers the chance to radically change the market with high margin products that have long market lives. These products can lift a brand and company onto an entirely new economic plane.

Go for it. Look through the lackluster products sitting on retailer shelves. Then take a risk. Find the right brand DRTV agency, research the “winning” products, and take them to market. It’s hard work and you’ll find it challenging. But, be ready to ride the rocket that only DRTV can add to your brand.

About the author:

Doug Garnett is president of Atomic Direct — a boutique DRTV agency with a unique vision of how to build brands through DRTV. Atomic’s clients include Rubbermaid, DuPont (Teflon), Alberto-Culver, AAA and the Drill Doctor. He also teaches advertising in the School of Business Administration at Portland State University.