

Primetime Ready

Is your product right for direct response or infomercial marketing?

I get calls every day from people wondering if their product is right for direct response TV advertising. Unfortunately, there is no short answer, but there are a lot of clues that we look for to help find the right answer. Although a product may not have every attribute we look for, the more of them it has the more likely it is to make it.

The following are a few of the many areas we look at when considering a product's DRTV viability:

Pricing

As a rule, most as seen on TV products have at least a 5 to 1 cost structure. This means that a product that sells for \$24.95 actually costs 5 dollars to make. There are certainly many exceptions to this rule. Some products run a much higher retail price-to-cost ratio, such as educational and how to videos, while some have a lower mark up due to being a high priced item. A home gym is a good example of a product with a lower mark-up.

Problem/solution

The standard of TV selling is that a new product or gadget solves an everyday problem. For instance, a hair growth problem would follow the following problem/solution structure: the problem "I am losing my hair" is met with the solution, "Your product grows new hair."

Demonstrable

Demonstration is everything on TV. Can I see it remove a stain, catch a fish, grow hair? Think of all of the best infomercials and direct-to-consumer ads you have seen. There is always a "wow" factor, with a demonstration that makes you say, "I want that."

Wide appeal

Does your product have a wide appeal, if not for the nation at large, then at least for a specific type of network? The more people your product appeals to the more potential exists for a sale.

That said, “broad appeal” can be focused within a group. For instance, there are a lot of outdoor shows that would attract fishermen where we could sell a new fishing lure. A lure may not appeal to the nation at large, but for the viewers of those shows or networks a fishing lure has great potential to sell.

This is due, largely, to the fact that cable TV allows us to target specific groups of consumers better than ever before. We have networks for all kinds of interests and lifestyles: sports, home improvement, cooking, golf cars, etc. This makes marketing a specific product easier, but it still needs a broad appeal, even within a specific subset.

Unique

This is very important: your product has to be something that I have never seen before, or it must be a breakthrough in the technology making an old product easy to use or more affordable. If your product is just like something else that I can buy at retail, then your TV spot will just support someone else’s sales.

These are just a few of the many key areas we look at when evaluating whether or not a product is right for DRTV. While these are basic guidelines, and while there is more to the story, they are a good starting place for anyone that wants to take a product to TV.

To take the next step with your product, read, “Just DR, or DR to Retail?”