

BUZZ

BE THE NEXT RON POPEIL

Who hasn't seen the late night shows promising thinner thighs or better golf game—all for \$19.95? Infomercials are a bona fide marketing tool that can turn products into household names, but can entrepreneurs get in on the act?

Sure, if you've got the right product and some money to invest in the infomercial medium. Infomercials work best for weight-loss products, fitness items, business opportunities and housewares. Automotive and golf products are gaining popularity as well, according to Tony Kerry, senior vice president of marketing for Script to Screen, Inc., an infomercial producer in Santa Ana, California. And while the classic half-hour infomercial can be expensive, short-form infomercials (about 2 minutes in length) can be made for \$22,000 to \$124,000. "[But] don't use infomercials if you want to be small," warns Kerry. "If you succeed, you succeed on a grand scale."

Gregory DeBenon, 32-year-old CEO of the Trinity Golf Co., knows that all too well. He manufactures high-end golf equipment from his Tustin, California location. His infomercial, advertising the Stiletto Beta Titanium Driver, has been airing since August 2000 and has driven sales from \$200,000 to more than \$12 million.

—Nicole L. Torres

