

## Intuit: Small business big game

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This case study explains how accounting software firm Intuit raised its profile amongst American small business by running a competition with a Super Bowl ad spot as the prize.

- Most people did not know what Intuit did and its customers felt under-appreciated; both of these needed to change.
- The Intuit Small Business Big Game was a social campaign targeted at small businesses to win the first-ever small-business Super Bowl commercial, funded entirely by Intuit.
- During the competition, participating businesses were given tools to help promote themselves and generate votes “building skills they could utilise to attract new customers.
- The campaign generated 12.9 billion impressions, exceeding all goals before the Super Bowl spot even ran, and in the first month the amount of positive comments on Intuit's social channels jumped from 37% to 93%.

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## Campaign details

**Brand owner:** Intuit Small Business Software Company

**Lead agency:** RPA

**Brand:** Intuit

**Country:** United States

**Industry:** Financial services (general)

**Channels used:** Earned media, buzz, Email marketing, Events and experiential, Internet - display, Internet - microsites, Internet - search, Magazines - consumer, Mobile and apps, Newspapers, Online video, Outdoor, out-of-home, Product placement, Public relations, Social media, Sponsorship - event, property, Television, Word of mouth, advocacy

**Media budget:** 3 - 5 million

## Executive summary

This case study describes how accounting-software firm Intuit raised its profile amongst American small business by propelling one of them to Super Bowl stardom.

Intuit faced the challenges that most people did not know what it did and that its customers felt underappreciated.

The Intuit Small Business Big Game was a social campaign targeted at small businesses to win the first-ever small-business Super Bowl commercial, funded entirely by Intuit; during the competition, the businesses were given tools to help promote themselves and generate votes – skills they could utilize to attract new customers.

The campaign generated 12.9 billion impressions (a 900% increase), outpacing even the loftiest goals before the Super Bowl spot ever ran, and in the first month the amount of positive comments on Intuit's social channels jumped from 37% to 93%.

## Market background and cultural context

Intuit makes QuickBooks, a small-business accounting programme utilized by nearly five million American businesses. But Intuit needed to address two issues – awareness and brand sentiment. When most people heard the name 'Intuit', they rarely associated it with small business and often mistook the brand for Intel. The small businesses that did know about Intuit and used QuickBooks did not believe the company cared about them. Intuit wanted to prove that it not only cared about small businesses but was willing and able to help them in a tangible way. Additionally, the company wanted to make a splash with small-business owners but also to sustain the buzz for more than six months.

## Insight and strategic thinking

We did not want to just tell the world that Intuit cares about small business. We wanted to prove it. We created a campaign to give one deserving small business a free ad during the biggest marketing stage there is, the Super Bowl. We created engaging social-video content, developed a site to collect entries, and encouraged entrants to share and earn business votes over the course of seven months.

The Intuit Small Business Big Game contest spurred massive growth in awareness and sentiment toward the Intuit brand. 15,000 small businesses entered the contest and activated their own networks to help spread the message.

## Implementation, including creative and media development

An online video and TV spot featuring Super Bowl coach Jimmy Johnson and display ads served as the launch and call for entries. Simultaneously, a PR campaign fronted by winner of *The Apprentice* Bill Rancic began. Following the initial push, a highly targeted Facebook ad campaign continued to solicit entries. All executions drove traffic to [SmallBusinessBigGame.com](http://SmallBusinessBigGame.com), where businesses could enter and learn about additional prizes.

Two more online videos re-engaged the target after entries were closed. There were multiple touchpoints throughout the campaign, and we made certain every piece of communication directly benefited a real small business. The field of 15,000 entrants was narrowed to 20, and then to four finalists.

Once the four finalists were announced, we ran an ad in *The Wall Street Journal* to promote them and created an out-of-home guerrilla campaign. The businesses were given tools to help promote themselves and generate votes – skills they could utilize to attract new customers.

GoldieBlox, a small toy company in Oakland, California that makes building toys designed specifically for young girls, won the contest. We created a brief, and conceived and produced a commercial for their specific brand.

Teasers debuted online prior to the Super Bowl and the winning spot debuted during the third quarter, to over 100 million people. Additionally, the PR campaign was ramped up again in the weeks surrounding the Super Bowl, partnering the winning small-business owner with Mr Rancic and Intuit CEO Brad Smith.

## Social effects

Intuit's goals were twofold: first, to get the Intuit name out there; second, to improve sentiment toward the Intuit brand among small-business owners.

The campaign and accompanying PR push generated 12.9 billion impressions (a 900% increase over the previous year), outpacing even the loftiest goals before the Super Bowl spot ever ran.

In the first month, the amount of positive comments on Intuit's social channels jumped from 37% to 93%.

## Business effects

The campaign created business lifts for the nearly 15,000 small businesses that entered.

The four finalists were:

- GoldieBlox (the winner), which signed a national distribution deal with Target and had to open a second factory to meet demand;
- Dairy Poop All-Natural Compost, which experienced a 705% increase in website traffic;
- Locally Laid Egg Company, which gained a 300% increase in feed sales and a 30% increase in egg sales;
- Barley Labs Dog Treats, which are now sold nationally and whose sales have increased 121%.

## Lessons learned

We did not want to just tell the world that Intuit cares about small business. We wanted to prove it. So we made them the hero. We created a campaign to give one deserving small business a free ad during the biggest marketing stage there is: the Super Bowl. In doing so, we leveraged the buzz of the Big Game, but stood out by shifting the conversation months earlier than everyone else.

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