

URL: <https://stvp.stanford.edu/clips/scrappy-advertising-efforts>

Debbie Sterling, founder and CEO of GoldieBlox, discusses the initial shock of seeing her small startup's toys on retail shelves, as well as how crowdsourcing helped her overcome a lack of resources. She recalls turning to GoldieBlox supporters on Kickstarter to film a commercial and win a contest for an advertising slot during one of America's most-watched events, the Super Bowl.



Transcript

- We invited our Kickstarter backers to the Toys R Us parking lot.. And we said, "Hey, we're gonna film a video together." And our idea was, if we're gonna tell the world that we're in Toys R Us, let's film a shot of a bunch of girls running through the pink aisles screaming.. So we invite our Kickstarter backers to the parking lot.. About 50 people showed up, kids and their parents.. We're getting ready to kinda get this stealth shot, and then the security guard starts circling.. I'm like, "Oh my God, we're gonna like get arrested." So the manager of Toys R Us comes out with his clipboard, and they say, "What's going on here?" And so I told a little white lie.. Said we were the Lovelace Girls Club on a field trip to the girls' favorite place in the world, Toys R Us.. (audience laughs) And he says, "Oh my gosh, why didn't you call me? "I hope we have enough gift bags." He runs in, comes back out with Geoffrey the Giraffe, handing gift bags out to the girls, announcing us, welcoming us in.. We set up our video equipment, get the shot, posted the video on YouTube.. And we got about a million views and the story broke that GoldieBlox broke into Toys R Us..

And it went viral.. And all of a sudden sales started to pick up.. And so we kept trying to figure out ways like how do we, even though we're this teeny tiny team, we're only five people, like how do we get the word out? And we found out about a contest being run by Intuit where one small business had the chance to win a free Super Bowl commercial.. So, I'm like, "Okay, there's our national TV advertising.. "We gotta win this." And so, again, it sounds crazy, like how could we win a Super Bowl commercial? But we just put it on the wall and we said, "This is our goal." And our team of five people, every single day, tried to get creative of how were we gonna win this? And so we emailed our Kickstarter backers.. We emailed our fans, just begged every day, "Vote for us, vote for us, vote for us." And sure enough, out of 30,000 small businesses who applied, GoldieBlox was the grand prize winner.. And so we had a commercial in the Super Bowl...