

Little Bird

Case Study: Building a Press-Centric Launch System for Little Bird

Location: Portland, OR

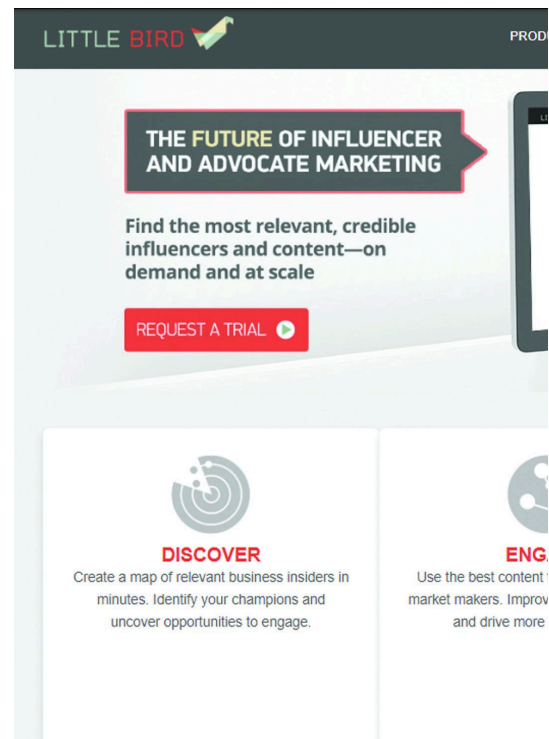
Industry: Technology

Function: Marketing research tech startup

CHALLENGE

Little Bird was an investor backed tech startup in a very crowded market. It had a lot of good things going for it, but it faced a lot of challenges - like a surprise trademark challenge that led to a name change a month before its big launch!

I lead the company as CEO and co-founder and this is how we made a big splash at launch.



SOLUTION

1. **Leverage our assets:** A history of personal online participation and connection building led to an inbound inquiry from the most famous angel investor in the world, Mark Cuban. His investment helped pave the way to Little Bird's acceptance into a high-profile startup incubator at Wieden+Kennedy (the marketing firm that coined "just do it" for Nike, and much more). All of this was helpful when we had to come up with a new brand (Little Bird) with just a handful of weeks before launch.
2. **Agency collaboration:** We worked with one of the world's most skilled boutique marketing and PR agencies, Austin's JDI, to get press ready and scale our launch. We did embargoed press briefings, a press kit, industry influencer engagements, and more.



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3. **Authentic storytelling:** In time, we ended up letting the world call Little Bird an influencer marketing startup, but at launch - I got as nerdy as my heart desired and described it the way I saw it. I always thought of it as an expert discovery tool. We had built, as the WIRED magazine headline reported, a Robot Librarian. We went on to publish data regularly on topics we were interested in - from a big list of women futurists everyone should know to some of the first data regarding the people Donald Trump was amplifying online. (Back when his connections with the far right was not widely known.)

OUTCOMES

- **Extensive press coverage at launch, including the Wall St. Journal, Fast Company, TechCrunch, The Verge, and more.**
- **Ongoing press coverage, as we repeated many of the steps from launch on an ongoing basis, including Time Magazine, Mother Jones, Travel Weekly, The Drum, Ad Age, Inc, PC Magazine, New York Magazine, Boing Boing**
- **Big customers like Microsoft, Walmart, Disney, Adobe, Oracle, IBM, and Adidas.**
- **Little Bird was named US Startup of the Year by Unilever and then acquired by the then most valuable B2B tech company in the world, Sprinklr**



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SUMMARY

This project demonstrated the effectiveness of strategic brand positioning and media relations in launching a tech startup in a competitive market. By capitalizing on high-profile connections, collaborating with top-tier agencies, and crafting an authentic narrative, we orchestrated a successful launch for Little Bird. This approach not only garnered significant media attention but also attracted major clients and led to industry recognition, ultimately resulting in a successful acquisition.

Keys to success:

- Strategic leveraging of assets
- Differentiated product positioning
- Extended press relations enabled just-in-time coverage
- Data storytelling that took risks



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