



MMA CASE STUDY



Gold Rush Season 3

Campaign Summary

To promote the third-season premiere of the show *Gold Rush*, the Discovery Channel created the “Pan for Gold” contest to energize existing fans and to generate new viewers. Mobile and tablet ads prompted users to pan for gold on their own devices for a chance to win \$100,000 in gold.

Strategy and Execution

Viewers of the Discovery Channel in general and *Gold Rush* in particular are associated with outdoor pursuits, adventure, and travel. The challenges in promoting the third-season premiere of *Gold Rush* were generating excitement for an already existing brand and driving new viewers to the show.

Gold Rush follows a group of out-of-work men risking everything in hopes of striking it rich in Alaska, as they mine for gold. Because of uncertain economic times, the “Pan for Gold” contest sought to bring the thrill of treasure hunting from the TV screen directly into the hands of the viewers.

Since the series launch in 2010, *Gold Rush* viewers have accessed and engaged with entertainment content in new ways; simply put, they want content when and where they want it. To reach them in their own environment, the contest’s mobile platform immersed viewers in the wilds of Alaska through their phone. “Pan for Gold” brought a sense of discovery and exploration to the user by encouraging millions of fans to engage in the first-ever mobile gold rush.

Users were given a way to search for their own chances to win \$100,000 in gold. Accelerometer technology on smart-phones and tablets encouraged users to shake their devices as if they were actually panning for gold to discover the riches buried underneath a simulation of swirling dirt and clay.

Users unearthed a prompt to enter Discovery’s “Strike Gold” sweepstakes as well as a *Gold Rush* commercial promoting the upcoming season. Fans who entered the sweepstakes had to tune into the season premiere to see if they had won real Alaskan gold. By partnering with top U.S. mobile network partners, the campaign turned gamers into gold rushers while generating a significant volume of sweepstakes entries at the same time.

Results

The “Pan for Gold” campaign delivered the results that mattered most to Discovery: actual tune-in. On October 26, the *Gold Rush* third-season premiere episode became Discovery Channel’s highest-rated premiere in almost three years, and was the network’s highest-rated primetime telecast in 2012.

In terms of campaign participation, within just one week over 600,000 U.S. users panned for gold on their mobile devices, yielding over 52,000 sweepstakes entries. Mobile entries accounted for approximately 17 percent of total sweepstakes registrants, and innovative campaign execution generated engagement rates over 12 times the mobile benchmark. The mobile program alone accounted for a 30 percent lift in program and premiere date awareness and a 26 percent lift in intent to tune in, significantly surpassing desktop performance.

Source

“*Gold Rush* Season 3.” 2013 MMA Smarties Silver Winner Brand Awareness. Brand: Discovery Channel. Lead Agency: OMD.