

SCVNGR: a location-based gaming platform that's Foursquare plus a lot of fun - and a great marketing idea too!

✖ [SCVNGR](#) is a location-based gaming platform -- there are challenges at every venue, and businesses can also "script" their own challenges. Customers can do challenges (take a photo, eat a certain dish) to earn points, which are redeemable for real-world rewards, such as a free drink or 10% off.

The Cambridge-based company launched in 2008, and was founded by a 22-year old Princeton dropout who wanted to add a game layer to the world - and that he did.

In January 2011, SCVNGR partnered with [Buffalo Wild Wings \(BWW\)](#) — at all 730 of its locations — for a 12-week campaign leading up to **March Madness**.

This campaign, Buffalo Wild Wings' second with SCVNGR's, was initiated based on the success of its first promotional effort called the "Home Court Advantage" that resulted in the completion of *1 million challenges*.

Thousands of unique users are said to have created and mastered challenges on mobile devices nationwide, resulting in increased visits to Buffalo Wild Wings locations.

"Buffalo Wild Wings has very social and progressive technology and [they were] looking for ways to show that," said Chris Mahl, senior vice president and chief brand alchemist at SCVNGR, Cambridge, MA.

"It's got a lot of play characteristics: it's a sports bar, it's a restaurant," he said. *"There's a lot of good opportunities for interactive media. When we showed them the potential for that, they were very responsive, and there's a great culture there."*

The competitive game layer of SCVNGR worked well with the BWW patrons, who thrive on competition, community and games.

SCVNGR's SVP of Marketing Chris Mahl says that what differentiates SCVNGR from other location-based services is that it's "not a checkin-based service, [but something] that goes further into brand goals [and] consumer goals."

The success of the campaign indicates that that may be true. BWW was the first national SCVNGR promotion, and in the first three weeks, the game accrued nearly 30,000 players. By the end, the campaign had 184,000 players at 730 BWW locations.

Interactive agency BFG drove the campaign and helped spread awareness of it via several avenues. BWW had several goals, including generating earned media and consumer engagement, improving customer return rates and, of course, driving revenue. By turning the act of watching games into a game in and of itself, these brand goals were accomplished in a fun, meaningful way.

Mahl attributes the success of the BWW promotion to a few things that created a sort of perfect storm for the campaign:

- **Good timing.** It revolved around March Madness, when there is a heightened interest in

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sports and school spirit, even for those who might otherwise not be interested.

- **Excellent staff training.** BWW staff played around with SCVNGR for a week before it launched to consumers, so they were invested and well-versed in the game once it launched. They could answer any questions about the app and encourage people to get in the game.
- **Prominent marketing.** The BWW campaign was well promoted via Facebook, Twitter, a tab on the BWW Facebook Page, web embeds on the BWW website, in-store television spots, menu inserts, table tents and SCVNGR window clings. These guerilla marketing tactics made it so that when you walked in the door at BWW, there was no way you didn't know what was happening. Plus, the March Madness-obsessed fans are a captive audience, and they were targeted in a comfortable, laid-back environment where they were already hanging out and drinking with friends, so it didn't take much to get them involved.

Via [SCVNGR](#) and [MobileCommerceDaily](#)