



# IN THE BLACK

Leveraging networks to raise awareness of government debt



CLIENT:  
Millennial Debt Foundation

**IRON LIGHT**

Case Study

# The Challenge

Government debt is a serious problem at every level, threatening the stability of the American economy and every American's ability to continue our way of life.

The Millennial Debt Foundation was formed to address government overspending and debt by convening Millennial business and political leaders to devise solutions to this growing problem.

Founded in 2019 by Millennial entrepreneurs based in Tennessee, their approach is to spark a conversation of optimistic stewardship in a nonpartisan fashion.



# The Solution

The campaign used blacked-out license plates as a simple, catchy symbol to grab attention and spread its message about fiscal conservatism. This simple visual cue, easily recognizable and prestigious, acted as a starting point for deeper engagement with the campaign's broader goals.

In just nine months, the campaign saw significant success, selling 20,000 specialty plates quickly and engaging a large percentage of its audience in its fiscal conservative message, indicating a broadened political awareness among purchasers.



# The Solution

The campaign smartly balanced between simple network contagions (blacked-out plates) and complex network contagions (detailed fiscal discussions on its website) to cater to different audience engagement levels. It encouraged participants to share images of their plates online, turning them into advocates and spreading the message wider.

Utilizing both centralized networks (influencers and leaders) and decentralized networks (social media and community outreach), the campaign achieved widespread visibility and support. It also managed the dynamics of strong and weak ties within its audience, using the plates to attract initial attention and then deepening engagement through more detailed discussions and content.





# The Results

The "In the Black" campaign demonstrates the power of combining effective messaging with strategic dissemination methods. By leveraging visual symbols for immediate attraction and fostering deeper discussions for sustained engagement, the campaign not only spread its message effectively but also fostered a sense of community and awareness around fiscal responsibility.

This case study serves as a valuable example for future advocacy efforts, showing that a well-executed combination of simple and complex contagions can significantly amplify a campaign's reach and impact.



# IRON LIGHT

Solving Wicked Problems