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One of the biggest challenges for any new startup is growth: increasing the size and reach of the company in terms of employees, customers and visibility. Another major challenge is validation: What makes yet another startup actually worth noticing?

This was definitely a hurdle for Cambridge-based HubSpot, Inc., an Internet marketing company founded in 2006 whose vision is to provide a (killer) marketing application and provide great advice to small businesses, enabling them to leverage the disruptive effects of the Internet to "get found" by more prospects and convert a higher percentage into customers. And HubSpot's [inbound marketing](#) system does just that by incorporating tools that allow professional marketers and small business owners to manage search engine optimization, blogging and social media, as well as landing pages, lead intelligence and marketing analytics.

When the HubSpot Inbound Marketing System was awarded the [MITX Technology Award](#) in 2008 for Innovative Business Strategy, little did HubSpot know it was bound for an impressive display of growth. Yet in the year since its MITX award win, HubSpot has grown from fewer than 35 employees to over 85 employees.

From a recruiting standpoint, HubSpot's award win was pivotal. Especially critical for a startup, awards can serve to validate the company's worth. "When I considered joining HubSpot a little over a year ago, one of the first things I did was check out the website's awards page," said HubSpot Inbound Marketing Manager Rick Burnes. "Seeing that MITX award win badge proudly displayed on the page was like a stamp of approval. It proved that HubSpot wasn't just your run-of-the-mill startup, but that it was innovative and had something to be proud of. It helped convince me that this was a company I wanted to be a part of."

The MITX award-win did a little something for company morale, too. "When employees learn about an awesome award win like the one from MITX, the level of company pride goes through the roof," said Mike Volpe, VP Inbound Marketing at HubSpot. "And we all know how much more productive employees can be when they're proud of their work and their company."

The validation didn't only help from an internal standpoint. Recognition of HubSpot's achievements from MITX, a reputable outside organization, did wonders for HubSpot in terms of customer acquisition. MITX boasts 7,500 members from over 250 member companies, so its network is far-reaching. Since the 2008 MITX win, HubSpot's customer base has almost tripled, growing from 500 to its current 1,400 customers. HubSpot also witnessed a significant increase in its website visitors (from fewer than 25K/month to over 80K/month) and its blog subscribers (from fewer than 6K to over 17K). The trust associated with the MITX brand translated to trust in HubSpot's brand and products.

