

The Fab 50

CASE STUDY



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CAMPAIGN: WENDY'S SAILGATING STUNT
CLIENT: THE MARKETING ARM
EXHIBIT BUILDER: ASV

THE PROJECT

Our clients at The Marketing Arm had the idea of building a Wendy's restaurant on the water in Union Bay, right in front of the University of Washington in Seattle, so that they could provide free food to all the fans that would be "sailgating" before the big game against USC on Sept. 28th, 2019. Not sure if such a thing was even possible, they turned to ASV to see if we could make it happen . . . and make it happen we did!

THE CONCEPT

While this concept did hold some aspects of a more traditional experiential event, the Wendy's Sailgating Project fell more under the category of a PR stunt, which is an entirely different animal but, luckily, one we know well. Before most UW games, Husky fans anchor their boats in the bay outside of Alaska Airlines Stadium to "sailgate," so the idea was to surprise and delight fans by providing some fresh, hot food in a most unexpected place, while generating organic buzz and media attention.

Originally the concept was to put the Wendy's food truck on the water and deliver food directly to the boats anchored in the bay. But then our clients at TMA updated that idea to a full restaurant facade, with the food truck inside, and wanted to also allow fans to pull their boats right up to our display to pick food up, like a drive-thru. And at the end of the day, the goal was to amaze fans but more importantly, garner some media attention.

THE COLLABORATION

With an incredibly tight 3-week turnaround, we had to work simultaneously on just about every aspect of this project. While our design team was creating 3D renderings of the final look and feel for client approvals, our engineer was developing build plans. While our account team was trying to secure barges, tugboats, docks and shuttle boats, our production team was building the restaurant facade and fitting graphics in our facility in Los Angeles. And while we organized things like transportation, equipment rentals and production schedules, we were also jumping through countless hoops trying to get an event like this insured on such short notice.

A true collaboration, we contracted with 2 great local tugboat companies who provided our main event barge and also a 2nd, smaller rear docking barge, and also helped us with transporting our display from the dock to the event site and back again. We managed to secure 2 long floating docks for fans to pull up to, created 3 little red Wendy's food delivery dinghies, with logos and custom Wendy's sails, and rented a pontoon boat for shuttling staff/clients to and from.

Our 60'x20' physical build started with a robust truss skeleton, covered in wall panels and huge fabric graphics. We had large D-rings welded to the deck and secured our structure from every angle down to the barge; we wrapped the exterior barge deck in Wendy's graphics and even created a reflective glass effect for the restaurant doors per our client's request. Additional elements included a huge generator, porto-potty, the Wendy's food truck, extra refrigerator/freezer, anchors, chains, tugboats and, of course, the challenge of Seattle weather in early fall.



THE RESULT

With a Fox News media hit scheduled for 7:30am, one team picked up the camera crew at the UW docks while another tugged in the barge at exactly the right time, successfully capturing the footage that Fox needed for an 8:30am live broadcast.

As the bay filled up with boats full of Husky fans eager to fill the 70,000 person stadium, faces lit up at the sight of our towering Wendy's restaurant on the water, peaking at roughly 26' tall. For a non-stop 3 hours prior to kickoff, we cranked out as much food as we possibly could. Our docks were constantly full of boats and our dinghies made non-stop food deliveries. Wendy's got the Fox press hit they were looking for and a received a myriad of organic social media!