

CASE STUDY

THE WATERFRONT SHOPPING CENTER

INFLUENCER MARKETING CAMPAIGN



THE WATERFRONT SHOPPING CENTER INFLUENCER MARKETING & MEDIA RELATIONS CAMPAIGN



SITUATION ANALYSIS

The Waterfront Shopping Center is a super-regional open-air shopping complex located just outside of Pittsburgh. It sits on land once occupied by U.S. Steel's Homestead Steel Works plant, which closed in 1987. Its unique location along the banks of the Monongahela River, and eclectic mix of 88 shopping, dining and entertainment offerings, make it a central destination not only for those who live in the surrounding neighborhoods but also those on the outskirts of the city.

Though many locals recognize The Waterfront name, the team expressed concerns that existing external communications were not conveying the center's personality, especially on social media. Their previous partner had been sharing primarily stock imagery and retail sale information on social channels, and there was no unified tone to all communications. Plus, they were not reaching their audience targets (college students, young families, moms) on their preferred channels.

At a macro level, brick-and-mortar retailers have struggled to stay current. Online shopping will always be seen as the wave of the future, and consumers are skeptical of traditional marketing tactics – once the gold standard.

To combat these issues, the Waterfront engaged WordWrite in 2019 to showcase the center as a top choice for up-and-coming fashion trends and unique entertainment experiences, while also engaging local audience targets with fresh, cohesive content.



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GOALS

- ⇒ Drive awareness of The Waterfront's key offerings in the fashion, beauty and lifestyle spaces
- ⇒ Solidify The Waterfront as one of the top retail/entertainment complexes in the region
- ⇒ Give The Waterfront a voice in the region; highlight the center's personality, and share its story
- ⇒ Increase engagement on social channels and drive traffic to their website

TARGET AUDIENCE

- ⇒ **Local families:** Families, in particular moms aged 30-50
- ⇒ **College students:** Local university networks

RESEARCH

After several brainstorm sessions and a thorough market research project, the path was clear: devise an engaging, influencer-based media campaign that would bring a local face to the brand and give an interactive, trustworthy and organic feel to the center's content.

The center partnered with former fashion/lifestyle columnist at the Pittsburgh Tribune Review Kate Benz to develop a series of social media videos, posts and PR content promoting the center's retailers, sales and ongoing programs. Named "XO, KB," it's reminiscent of handwritten letters or text messages from long-lasting friends, symbolizing the direct communication from Kate Benz (KB) to the audience. The goal was to make the videos authentic – like a friend sharing the inside scoop.

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EXECUTION

Throughout the year, team created 70+ videos and several hundred promotional posts to share on Facebook and Instagram. Biweekly XO, KB videos showed Kate at The Waterfront sharing her style tips, information and recommendations about featured retailers. Each video post was boosted via paid advertising as well as a targeted display ad campaign to ensure content was in front of The Waterfront's target demographic.

The 2019 campaign culminated with a special holiday program called The Waterfront Wishmaker. Starting in November, a magic "wish box" was placed in Town Center at The Waterfront (a central gathering space in between the center's stores), inviting guests to fill out a Waterfront Wish Slip next to the box and drop it in the mail slot for a chance to have their request granted. Wishes could be big or small (up to a \$1,000 value), but each item had to be something The Waterfront could source from one of its retailers.

Each week through the end of December via scheduled video content, Kate invited guests to drop their wish list of items. Four special winners were selected throughout the holiday season and announced via Facebook LIVE.



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RESULTS

With Kate Benz as the face and spokesperson of The Waterfront, the XO, KB campaign successfully increased foot traffic and boosted engagement across social media and traditional media platforms while strengthening community goodwill.

- ⇒ The influencer campaign yielded strong results across Facebook and Instagram with video content that encouraged repeated engagement and audience participation. **Across both social platforms, content reached 2.7 million users.**
- ⇒ The XO, KB program gained media coverage on Pittsburgh TV news shows and online publications throughout the year.
- ⇒ [Pittsburgh Today Live](#) – Pittsburgh's local Today-show style morning program – featured Kate Benz and The Waterfront's XO, KB program during major retail seasons, promoting things like summer events, and The Waterfront Holiday Wishmaker Program. **These dedicated 15-minute segments on the CBS show reached 28,000 – 32,000 viewers each.**
- ⇒ During the holiday season, **1,500 wishes** were entered in the Wish Box from our campaigns. In addition, the targeted display ads **drove more than 800 shoppers** to the center during the month of December alone.

