



Cornerstone Initiatives and Events

American Advertising Federation Pittsburgh is dedicated to celebrating the rich history of advertising and marketing in our region. As a city best known as a manufacturing and industrial hotbed, Pittsburgh's important contributions to building brands often take a back seat to our reputation of building bridges and structures. The year 2023 gave AAF Pittsburgh an opportunity to mark our 100th year in existence while also bringing to life how Pittsburgh's creative economy has impacted our region and beyond. The year-long celebration began in April 2023 and culminated with the inaugural AAF Pittsburgh Advertising Week in October 2023. Our events, programs, and initiatives not only provided an opportunity to pay homage to our region's legacy, but also sought to engage and motivate young advertising professionals to build on what has been accomplished here and what will make Pittsburgh a go-to destination for the next century.

Goals:

- Increase awareness of the historical contribution of Pittsburgh-based advertising and marketing has made on the success of the region and beyond
- Re-engage our advertising community with in-person events following two years of mostly virtual gatherings
- Attract national speakers to Pittsburgh to share their knowledge and experiences with our community

Tactics:

- Launch the first-ever AAF PGH AdWeek, a series of events, forums and speaker panels focusing on topics relevant to the history and future of marketing, advertising and the greater cultural community.
- Engage and spotlight area firms that play a significant role in driving our industry with a Creating History Series on social media.
- Recruit top speakers with a national reputation for our AAF PGH AdWeek.
- Develop an aggressive marketing campaign for the club's centennial including new brand identity.
- Capitalize on the 100-year anniversary as an opportunity to increase sponsorship which had fallen off over the past decade.
- Utilize new venues throughout the city – including universities, cultural locations and corporate headquarters – to freshen our club's presence in the community.

AAF PGH AdWeek

The year-long celebration of our 100th anniversary culminated October 19-21 with our inaugural AAF PGH AdWeek. The week featured three days of panel discussions, networking opportunities and workshops at various venues throughout the city and showcased the dynamic advertising and creative communities Pittsburgh offers.

Speakers and Panelists

A major goal of the 100th anniversary committee was to make AAF PGH AdWeek a learning-rich experience for participants by enlisting high-quality speakers and stage provocative panel discussions. Board members embraced the challenge by reaching out beyond our normal pool of speakers to provide a more diverse and entertaining line-up.

In the end, 33 speakers were recruited to speak on a variety of topics on industry trends, creative process, using data and artificial intelligence, among others. Speakers included authors, influencers, founders and heads of agencies, media experts and corporate executives.

Each day also featured an engaging panel discussion featuring a diverse group of experts from local and regional firms. "Prolific in Pittsburgh " was the topic of our first group panel discussion that focused on how brilliant professionals in the advertising and marketing industry can tackle interesting challenges and creative solutions in Pittsburgh. The second day topic was on how gaming has become an essential part of both the media landscape and a vital tactic for even traditional marketing campaigns.

The speaker sessions in our main theater were all recorded. They have been used for additional content and have been curated for future use. *(See Exhibit 1)*

Creating History Series

Pittsburgh is home to many agencies, design firms, media companies and technology pioneers that have built strong reputations for marketing excellence and continue to push the envelope creatively. As a club, we've been fortunate to draw our support and membership from across agencies, production companies, clients, nonprofits, media and vendors. Our Creating History Series provided a multi-platform showcase for their achievements and distinct cultures. Throughout the year, AAF Pittsburgh posted short digital content, portfolios and leadership quotes from various firms. This specific initiative was supported creatively and helped to engage our diverse community.

The Creating History campaign kicked off with an animated video, and was used for direct mail, web, signage and to support events throughout the year on social media. The campaign not only generated buzz for the 100th year celebration, but it also provided an excellent platform for agencies, advertisers,

production companies and media outlets to be profiled on a regular basis. In all, ten (and counting) unique creative executions were posted across all platforms, some of which can be seen in the exhibits. Also, to highlight some “it happened here” chapters in Pittsburgh advertising history, we published a series of well-received Uncovering History posts. *(See Exhibit 2)*

New brand identity and creative

It was decided early on that to make this truly a year-round celebration, as opposed to a series of events, it would require a complete brand refresh for AAF Pittsburgh. The campaign did double duty by also transitioning our fairly new club logo into closer alignment with the national graphic standard.

Our creative committee developed a campaign that bridged the history of marketing in Pittsburgh with the new and exciting digital landscape which local firm’s are at the forefront. The campaign used the iconic black-and-gold colors to place advertising on an equally prestigious footing as some of our local sports teams. This brand identity was woven into all communications leading up to the event, while at the event and following the event to create consistency. *(See Exhibit 3)*

Proclamation from the City of Pittsburgh

In an official ceremony in council chambers, the Pittsburgh City Council declared October 16 through October 22, 2023 to be “Pittsburgh Advertising Week” in the City of Pittsburgh. The proposal was sponsored by Councilman Bruce A. Kraus and co-sponsored by eight other members of the council. During the proclamation, important club milestones and accomplishments were read into the official record including AAF Pittsburgh’s successful thePitchstudent competition, our scholarship program, and our Pittsburgh Advertising Hall of Fame. Fifteen members of our club board were on hand to be recognized by the council and receive the proclamation. *(See Exhibit 4)*

Strong sponsor support

The centennial anniversary provided an excellent opportunity for AAF Pittsburgh to revitalize our sponsor network. Over the past decade, our club has seen our sponsorships drop off due to a variety of factors including budget tightening, the pandemic, and fewer “big tent” events that attracted larger, in-person audiences.

Thanks to strong board participation, we secured thirteen sponsors for various aspects of our 100-year anniversary and AAF PGH AdWeek. The sponsors included some of our dependable sponsors but also some new companies who had not participated in a significant way with AAF Pittsburgh before.

The club reciprocated our sponsors’ support by spotlighting each of them in unique social media postings throughout the event. These thank-you posts became some of our best engagements of the campaign. (*See Exhibit 5*)

AAF District 2 Participation

AAF Pittsburgh was proud to also host the annual AAF District 2 Conference in Fall 2023. Rather than conflicting with events supporting our 100th anniversary, the conference dovetailed nicely with the overall structure and theme of AAF PGH AdWeek. Club-level and district topics were integrated through the week and allowed us to provide a full slate of events, attract top speakers and scale our efforts.

Board Participation

One of the strengths of AAF Pittsburgh is our diverse and active board of directors. We recruit and work to retain individuals who are in the prime of their careers or on the cusp of achieving their legacy. They are active participants in the evolution and growth of Pittsburgh, ready to dig in to get things done.

The 100th year celebration provided a unique opportunity for each and every member of our 20+ board to play a role in its success. Board members hosted events, recruited speakers, created excellent materials, cultivated sponsors, worked the room, and occasionally took the microphone themselves to share their insights and experience. *(See Exhibit 6)*

Our Ad2 board members, as always, brought fresh ideas and were essential to the success of Pittsburgh AdWeek.

Results

- AAF PGH Ad Week drew 156 registrants from not only the Pittsburgh region, but also Columbus, Rochester, DC, Buffalo, Scranton/Wilkes-Barre, Chicago, New York City, Fredericksburg, and Atlanta
- Promotion of various events produced over 88,000 social media impressions with an average engagement rate of 5.4%
- Ten local firms were featured in our Creating History Series which helped expand and galvanize support for AAF Pittsburgh with current, past, and prospective corporate sponsors
- The [landing page](#) for the event saw over 17,000 page views
- Fifteen sponsors invested \$32,000 cash in the overall effort, plus multiple in-kind sponsors
- AAF PGH AdWeek was held in a variety of venues including Point Park University, which offered an excellent opportunity to connect with students
- In a follow-up survey sent to members and sponsors, we received high marks overall for relevance, participation and subject matter

Conclusion

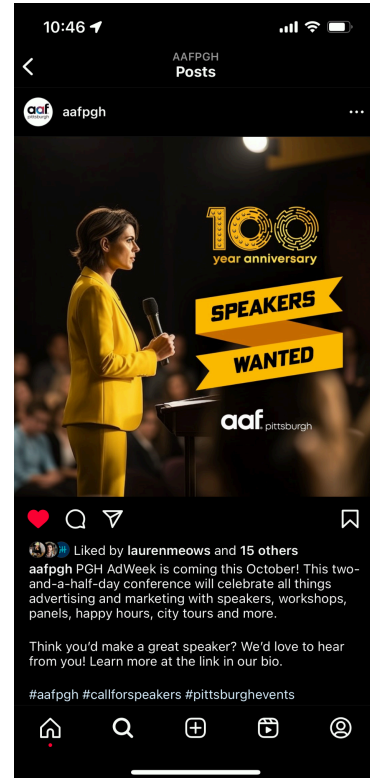
Not that we could have scheduled a milestone such as this for the time of our choosing (centennial anniversaries only come along once in a lifetime at best), but for AAF Pittsburgh, our 100th-year

anniversary could not have come at a better time. First, our club and community – like so many others – were still trying to shake off the effect of Covid-19 on our businesses and lives. AAF PGH AdWeek occurred exactly a year after our Hall of Fame, the first in-person event in almost two years, and signaled to our members and our constituents that we were back and we were growing. Second, an undertaking of this scale requires leadership that can be both practical and idealistic. Our board and our executive committee came together to make this happen.

Ultimately, our goal is to raise the profile of our industry and the people who make it their passion.

EXHIBITS

Exhibit 1: Speakers and Panelists



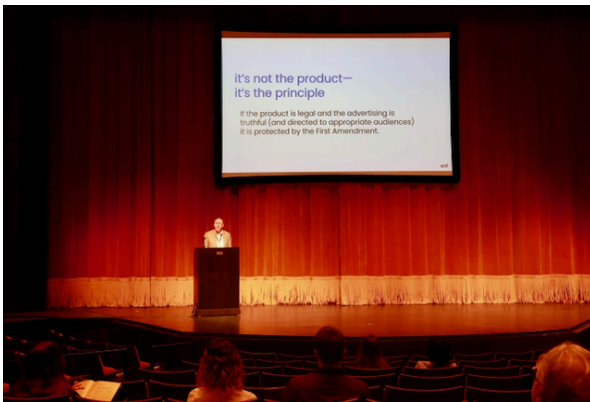




Exhibit 2: Creating History Series

acf American Advertising Federation Pittsburgh
July 18 · 🌐

Covalent, a creative video production company born in Pittsburgh, is celebrating 10 years in business!

How is Covalent creating history in Pittsburgh?

By taking the spirit of Pittsburgh and its people everywhere from our city and beyond to places like Denver, Portland, New York, Miami, Houston, Orlando, Minneapolis and more to create meaningful videos.

What does Pittsburgh mean to the folks at Covalent?

"The always evolving neighborhoods of our city have represented the ways we have evolved and grown as well over the past 10 years."

Thank you, Covalent, for creating history in Pittsburgh!

Creating HISTORY

0:06 / 1:14

You, George Potts, Darice Nagy and 2 others

acf American Advertising Federation Pittsburgh
August 24 · 🌐

Untitled Content, a creative and production studio founded in Pittsburgh, reps the city proudly.

"From Smiley, Sydney, and the Pittsburgh Steelers to world-class health, finance, and corporate trailblazers, Pittsburgh has always been a hub for makers and doers. We serve as partners, connecting the area's top creative talent with the companies, organizations, and non-profits producing quality products and providing critical services."

Untitled's work for clients in Pittsburgh has propelled us into other markets. Pittsburgh always proves to be a magnet for innovation, industry, and entrepreneurship; that's the value you get from working with a Pittsburgh agency."

Thanks, Untitled, for creating history in Pittsburgh!

Creating HISTORY

Dawn Butler, Michael Giunta and 1 other

1 share

Like Comment Share


American Advertising Federation Pittsburgh
November 9 at 3:02 PM · 🌐

GH Advertising recently went through a rebrand. But one thing that hasn't changed is their commitment to the Pittsburgh region and their pride in being a part of the talented local advertising community.

How is GH Advertising making history in Pittsburgh?

"We make history one great idea at a time for local clients, including UPMC, Heinz History Center, First National Bank, The Pittsburgh Foundation, and PPG. We value collaboration and communication. And because of that, our clients consider us partners. We focus on long-term results while being fun to work with day-to-day. And while we are certainly proud of our award-winning work, our ability to attract very talented and friendly people is our greatest achievement."

Thank you, GH Advertising, for creating history in Pittsburgh!
#AAFPGH #PGH100



Dawn Butler, Michael Giunta and 1 other · 2 shares

Like Comment Share

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You, George Potts, Darice Nagy and 2 others

Like Comment Share

10:28

AAFPGH Posts

aafpgh



Liked by laurenmeows and 10 others

aafpgh Did you know that the first U.S. public TV station was launched right here in the Steel City in 1954? Cheers to @wqed for paving the way for our binge-watching sessions! 🍷🍷🍷 #PGHAdWeek #UncoveringHistory #PGH100years #AAFPGH

September 1

aafpgh

Home Search Add Post Tag Profile

10:28

AAFPGH Posts

aafpgh



Liked by madonnaroon and 14 others

aafpgh When your Creative Chair is amazing, and hungry, the hints are, well, obvious. @primantibros

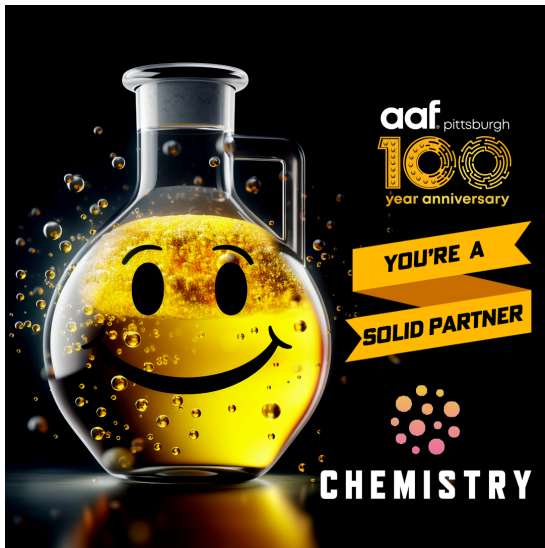
October 12

aafpgh

Home Search Add Post Tag Profile

Exhibit 3: Brand Identity and Creative

Social posts & graphics:



Website:



Event Signage:





Exhibit 4: Proclamation

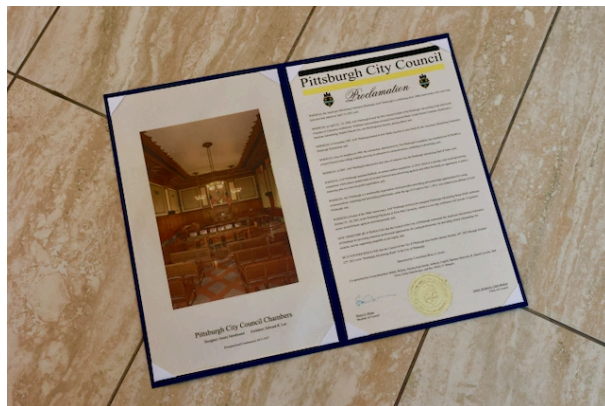


Exhibit 5: Sponsor Support

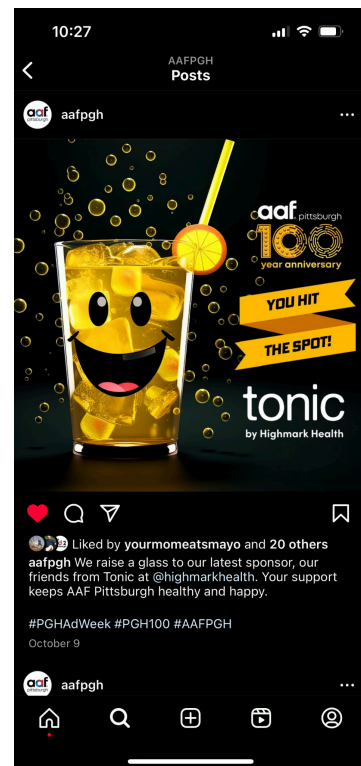


Exhibit 6: Board Participation



