



## **WINDOWS** **Restaurant Re-launch – Case Study**

**The Task:** Following the tragic 1992 terrorist attack on the World Trade Center, the legendary restaurant atop the north tower on the 101<sup>st</sup> floor closed due to severe damage. Four years later, after an extensive \$20 million dollar renovation, the new Windows on the World was set to re-open. The complex now called – WINDOWS, included the fine dining restaurant – Windows on the World, a high energy bar – The Greatest Bar On Earth, the exclusive wine and dining restaurant – Cellar in the Sky and the Windows Suites – a full floor of private dining space.

To re-open and re-launch WINDOWS, there were many stories to be communicated to the public. First, the messaging around how absolutely safe the building was for guests was a major focus. Once this was communicated – the next goal was to bring WINDOWS back to its prestigious position as the world’s highest grossing restaurant complex. To do this – each restaurant needed it’s own media and marketing plan – focused individually on becoming one of the most desirable drinking and dining destinations in New York City for locals and visitors from around the world. In short – with the new WINDOWS and each of its venue – there was truly something for everyone. It was destined to become the see and be seen attraction for many years to come.

**The Approach:** Comprehensive public relations and marketing strategies were created for each venue and the project as a whole. In addition to the safety plan and the spectacular renovation, the restaurant complex would open on its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary giving extra weight to the great story line. Exclusive opportunities for press previews and placements as well as a six month launch timeline were developed. Partnerships with key city organizations and charities were established and an aggressive event schedule was developed. The buzz would build from six months prior to the opening and go for a full two years post opening.

**The Activities:** All the relevant angles and corresponding target media were developed and exclusives (New York Magazine and the New York Times covers) were secured. The angles included – the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary; building the safest restaurant in the world; and the dream team of operators including chefs and renowned master mixologist, Dale DeGroff. Every element of this project presented a press opportunity from the Hugh Hardy design to the custom crafted uniform program developed by a renowned Broadway designer. Of course, the most significant angle was the return of the legendary restaurateur Joe Baum, the original creator of Windows on the World, who was brought back to recreate his masterpiece.

Large ads in all the major city dailies were placed and direct mail pieces to targeted American Express cardholders announcing opening day were mailed – the reservations lines went crazy.

A series of sneak previews and hard-hat tours for media and influencers led up to the mega opening night party. Two thousand of New York's finest were in attendance – from the society crowd, to the young up-and-comers, as well as media from around the world. They gathered for a magical night as one of the jewels in New York City's crown came back to life.

The opening party featured a different experience, menu, entertainment and energy in every venue. From a city high school marching band to the cast of Stomp – there was something for everyone that evening. Fireworks cascaded off the side of the building at midnight and the dancing went on till four in the morning. The press coverage was overwhelming. In addition to the two exclusives – every major daily across the country, monthly magazines (food and lifestyle), trades, and major news stations such as CNN covered the opening and this amazing night.

Immediately following the opening and hot on the heels of all the press coverage – a series of charitable and media worthy events were scheduled. One of the most memorable included a “mass wedding” at which forty two couples were wed on Valentine's Day in the restaurant, followed by an unforgettable reception created by New York's top party planners and florists. Again, the press was incredible and Lifetime Television did an exclusive dream-wedding special about the event.

For an opening this big – management of the media was crucial. The follow-up lasted for six months and unique angles were created to insure that every journalist was satisfied with their coverage opportunity.

**The Results:** WINDOWS and all its venues enjoyed tremendous success during the five year period from the time of the re-launch until the unfortunate events of September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001. During the second year, Windows on the World achieved its goal of once again becoming the highest grossing restaurant in the world.

For the five years they were open, the restaurants and bar all received critical acclaim. Dale Degroff went on to become the country's most well known bartender. Andrea Immer launched her wine career at Windows on the World, and the restaurant produced notable chefs such as Waldy Malouf and Michael LaMonaco, who both went on to create their own award-winning restaurant projects across the country.

The launch of new WINDOWS and the life it had generated world-wide press that created a permanent place in modern history for this one of a kind wining and dining complex in the sky. Gone but not forgotten – Windows on the World will remain the most celebrated restaurant in history.