

# meet the locals

Introducing the Aquarium of Niagara's Historic Expansion Through  
the Animals that Call the Region Home



# about the aquarium of niagara

- Opened in 1965
- Located just steps outside of Niagara Falls State Park
- Nonprofit organization
- Annual attendance: 200,000
- FTE employees: ~50
- Operating budget at the time of this project: \$5 million





# about great lakes 360

- First expansion in the Aquarium's nearly 60-year history
- Second building located 500 feet away from the Aquarium's historic building
- 16 living exhibits featuring animals found in Great Lakes ecosystems
- Located on New York State Park property – developed in direct partnership with Parks





# strategic challenges

- Position Great Lakes 360 as a meaningful addition to one of the world's most iconic natural destinations—Niagara Falls.
- Introduce Great Lakes 360 to two distinct audiences:
  - Western New York residents
  - Seasonal tourists





# goals & objectives

1. Drive traffic to the Aquarium's campus during a high-stakes attendance window.
  - Increase summer attendance (July–September) by 4% YOY
2. Increase awareness around the Aquarium's historic expansion, Great Lakes 360 and its significance within the broader Niagara Falls experience.
  - Boost QR code engagement on in-park A-frame signage by 10%
  - Generate 50,000 pageviews on the Great Lakes 360 landing page
  - Exceed benchmark KPIs for digital advertising

# big idea & creative strategy

## Big Idea:

**Local Wildlife, Personally Experienced**

## Strategy:

- Position the animals at Great Lakes 360 as individual beings, not abstract concepts
- Facilitate personal, one-on-one connections between animals and guests (active experience vs passive observation)





# big idea & creative strategy





# big idea & creative strategy

## Big Idea:

**Local Wildlife, Personally Experienced**

## Why it Works:

### **Cultivates WNY Pride Among Residents**

- Message: Great Lakes animals are Western New Yorkers, too! They are part of our story, found in our lakes, streams, and backyards.



# big idea & creative strategy



Courtesy: Niagara Falls USA



# big idea & creative strategy

## Big Idea:

**Local Wildlife, Personally Experienced**

## Why it Works:

### **Captivates Tourists Seeking Authentic Experiences**

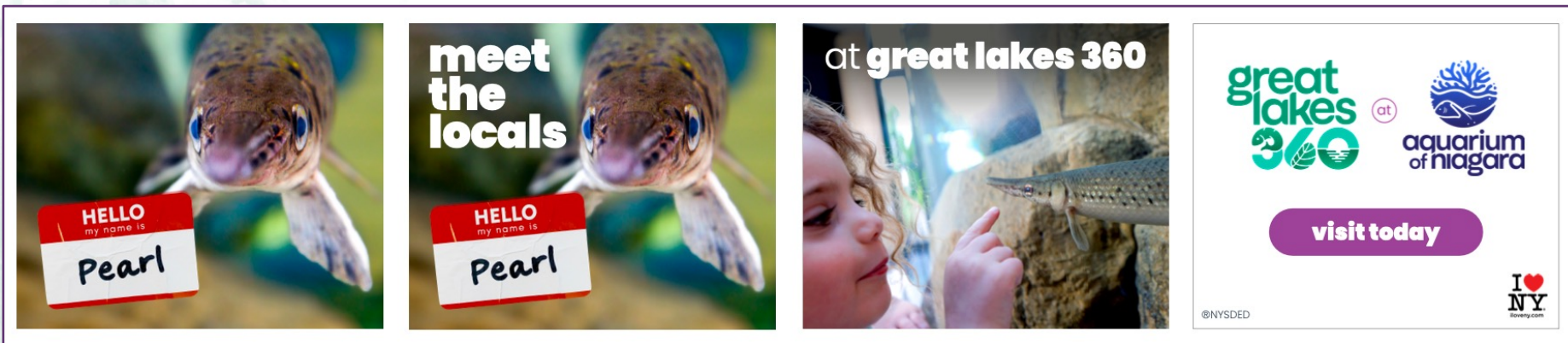
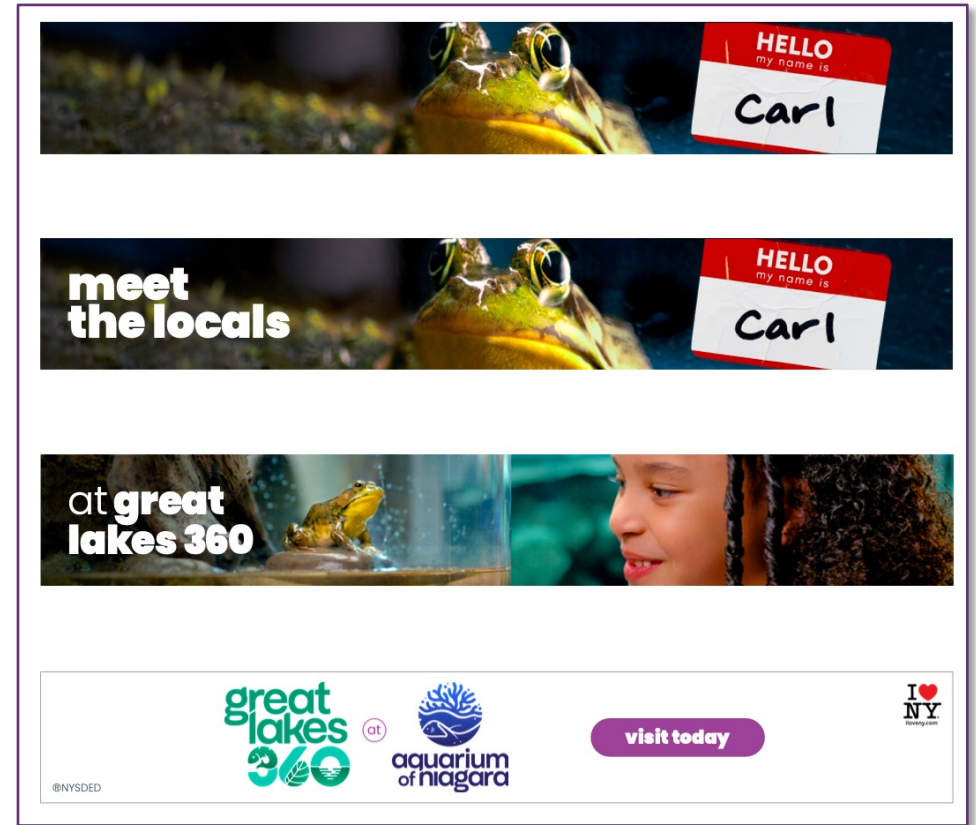
- Message: Great Lakes animals are integral to the region you came to explore – experience them in an entertaining and informative way.





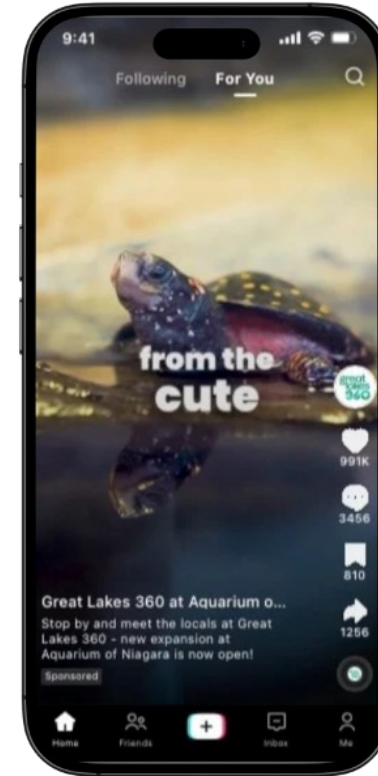
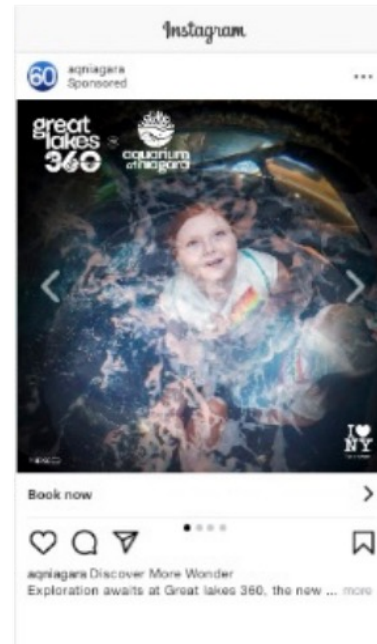
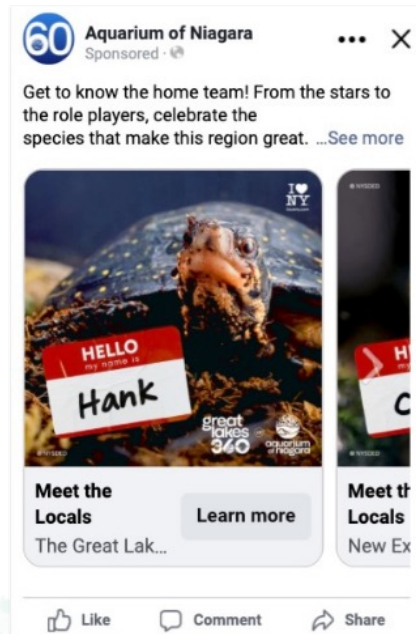


# creative execution





# creative execution





# creative execution



*Open on close-up of frog's eyes, nature sounds ambient in background, environment is vague*



*Cut to close-up of little girl's eyes*



*Cut back to frog, medium-wide shot revealing full frog*



*Cut back to girl, medium-wide shot, revealing her full face and smile*



*Cut to side view show girl is smiling at a frog just 10-15 inches away—camera pulls back to reveal we are actually indoors at GL360, and she is viewing the frog in an exhibit.*



**AVO: What makes any place special...are those who call it home.**  
*a few quick semi-close-up shots of some key creatures/exhibits of GL360 (ex: sturgeon touch tank, sport fish tank, etc.)*



**From cute and charismatic**  
*close-up of "cute" creature, ex: salamander, frog, pumpkinseed fish, emerald shiners*



**to wacky, weird, and wonderful—**  
*close-up of people at tank of "interesting looking" creature(s), ex: sea lamprey, praying mantis*



**—there's a whole bunch of fascinating characters waiting to say "hi" at Great Lakes 360—**  
*\*\*\*will be shot of child popping up into "bubble" underneath sport fish tank\*\*\**



**a new addition to the Aquarium of Niagara.**  
*wide shot of sturgeon touch tank area with surrounding nature visible in background*



**So stop by, and meet the locals.**  
*close-up of turtles looking at camera with family out of focus smiling in background, OR a child smiling through the tank at them*



# creative execution



[music and frog ribbits]



# media strategy – paid

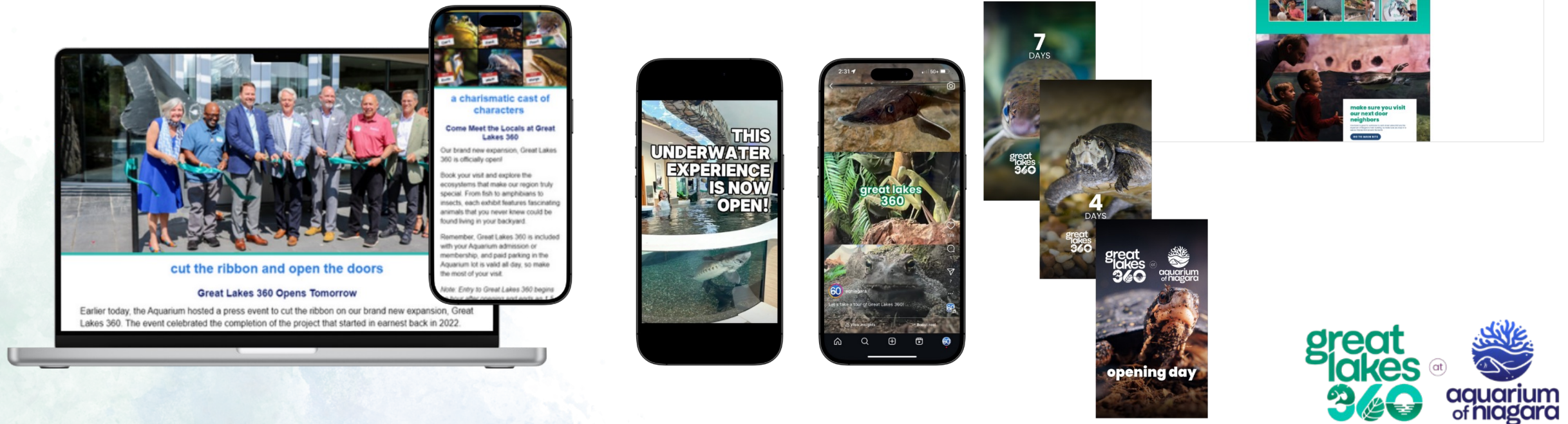
- Out of Home
  - State Park A-Frames
  - Billboards
  - Airport
- Broadcast
  - Linear TV
  - CTV/OTT
  - PBS
- Digital
  - Display
  - Social Media
- Guerilla
  - Posters in local businesses
  - Coffee sleeves at local cafes
  - “Chalking” on park trails





# media strategy - owned

- Landing page and custom domain
- Aquarium email newsletter
- Organic social media posts





# media strategy – earned

- \$34,000 in PR value
- 1.18 million impressions
- Coverage across four linear TV networks and two radio stations



WKBW

## Aquarium of Niagara expansion gives visitors hands-on experience with animals from the Great Lakes region

Great Lakes 360 is a new expansion at the Aquarium of Niagara dedicated to the diverse ecosystems of the world's largest freshwater system.



Buffalo News

## 'It's a pretty exciting time': Great Lakes 360 exhibit opens at Aquarium of Niagara

An indispensable Niagara Falls attraction is getting the attention and upgrades it deserves...





# timeline





# results

Objective	Goal	Actual
Increase attendance over PY	4%	11%
Drive visits to the campaign landing page	50,000 pageviews	62,000 pageviews
Boost QR code scans of in-park signage	10% increase	70% increase
Exceed benchmark digital ad performance	Industry benchmarks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Digital Display (CTR) – 0.31%</li><li>• YouTube (VCR) – 90%</li><li>• Meta (CPC) – \$0.76</li></ul>	Actual: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 0.34% CTR</li><li>• 96.88% VCR</li><li>• \$0.37 CPC</li></ul>

Platform	Page Visits	New Followers
Facebook	Up 61%	665
Instagram	Up 91%	449



# thank you!



## Get in Touch

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