



Game Changer Communications

## Case Study: Tom's Watch Bar

# TOM'S

## WATCH BAR

### Background

Headquartered in Denver, Tom's Watch Bar (TWB) is a fast-growing national chain of upscale sports bars founded and led by food industry legend Tom Ryan. With more than 100 televisions in each store and 360-degree viewing for everyone, TWB is the ultimate sports entertainment experience; it's the perfect place for fans to cheer with other fans, follow their fantasy players, play more than 10 sports in a TopGolf Swing Suite and generally enjoy any sports occasion. In addition, its menu features high-quality versions of traditional sports bar fare along with contemporary and local-to-store options, dozens of taps, great craft cocktails and an approachable wine list. For more information, visit [www.tomswatchbar.com](http://www.tomswatchbar.com).

### Situation

In the fall of 2022, TWB decided to open its sixth store location in downtown Minneapolis. The company implemented its normal store-opening marketing strategy, which included hiring a PR firm based in market to help execute in several important areas.

There were a few primary marketing and PR goals as part of the opening:

- Establish relationships with key local leaders, VIPs and influencers in business, government, restaurants, sports and social media. TWB is proud to actively participate in and contribute to civic life where it operates, and these relationships are essential to those efforts.
- Plan and execute a series of grand opening events – at least one for each key constituent group described above – so people could meet Tom Ryan, sample the menu and experience the store concept for themselves.
- Help generate buzz and awareness for the opening, and ultimately drive visits and sales.

There also were some secondary activities:

- Assist TWB in handling and executing reactive media inquiries.
- Announce marketing partnerships to media and VIP contacts as they became official.
- Consult with Tom Ryan and other TWB executives on best practices and strategies for future store openings.

### The Game Changer / Results

TWB hired Game Changer to help launch in Minneapolis and execute in all of the above ways. More specifically:



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- Six grand opening events were planned and held, and more than 40 VIPs experienced the store in its first few days:
  - One event for civic and government VIPs – 7 attendees, including Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey and City Councilmember Michael Rainville.
  - One event for business and coalition leaders – 16 attendees, including the president/CEOs of the Minneapolis Chamber of Commerce, Minneapolis Downtown Council, Meet Minneapolis and Minnesota Sports and Events.
  - Two events for local sports media – four attendees total, including two local TV anchors, a newspaper beat reporter and a Timberwolves radio anchor.
  - Two events for local and restaurant VIPs, as determined by their influence and communities in social media – 13 attendees total, including the leaders of Vikes Verified, 10K Takes and GopherHole.com.
- A private dinner was held with Nicole Hvidsten, the food editor at the Minneapolis Star Tribune. That has produced two unique stories about the opening in the newspaper (as of two months after the opening).
- As marketing partnerships were forged and announced with the Minnesota Wild, Timberwolves and others, Game Changer assisted in disseminating the news to local media and VIP contacts.

According to data six months after opening, TWB Minneapolis has been a grand success:

- Total revenue from TWB Minneapolis has more than doubled the number that TWB leaders expected and budgeted for.
- In terms of sales, Minneapolis has ranked among the top half in the now eight-store chain almost every day – most of them before marketing partnerships and other in-store promotions began in earnest.
- The Minneapolis store's first-week visits and sales were among the best in the chain's history.
- Relationships built with local leaders have led to exciting business and civic opportunities. Also, remarkably, Mayor Frey has been back to the restaurant several times, including bringing his senior staff for a meeting.

TWB plans to open another 20-30 stores across the United States before the end of 2024. Going forward, Game Changer will remain involved and support this rapid growth.

### In Their Words

*"Insert a few sentences here, hopefully about the value you received and what it was like to work with me."*

--Tom Ryan, co-founder of Tom's Watch Bar