



# *RAISING THE BAR IN QSR:*

GRAND RAPIDS CHAIR HELPS REBRAND A FAMILIAR FACE



GRAND RAPIDS  
CHAIR COMPANY





## RAISING THE BAR IN QSR

Since 2011, Grand Rapids Chair Company has worked alongside QSR giant Wendy's to bring fresh, modern design to each and every store.

Founded in 1969, Wendy's has always been cognizant of ever-changing consumer tastes, undergoing renovations and menu revamps in the 70s, 80s, and early 2000s. In early 2011, they set out to rebrand again. But this time, Wendy's wanted more than just a new look.

[ ABOVE ]

### WENDY'S

Custom laminate chairs and counter stools

Spartan bases with laminate tops



*“...THEY DIDN'T JUST WANT A  
NEW FAÇADE, THEY WANTED  
CATEGORY CHANGING IDEAS.”*

Tré Musco, President & CCO of Tesser

## CATEGORY CHANGING IDEAS

They wanted “category-changing ideas.” In other words, turn the QSR world on its head. In 2011, “fresh,” “quality,” and “modern” were rarely synonymous with fast food chains, much less one of the largest chains in the world. Consumers were opting for fast casual concepts that focused on transparent sourcing and natural ingredients.

Tré Musco, president and chief creative officer of Tesser, Wendy's design and branding agency, stressed that the redesign would be more than your average remodel. “You have all of these chains remodeling now and it's mostly cosmetic. I think anybody can pick out a new color of fabric, but not many are willing to reinvent a little...They [Wendy's] didn't just want a new façade, they wanted category changing ideas,” Musco said.

Through high-quality food, streamlined customer service, and an elevated interior design, Wendy's would reconnect with the modern consumer and, in turn, raise the bar in QSR.

[ ABOVE ]

### WENDY'S

Custom lounge

Walloon Occasional Tables





## EASIER SAID THAN DONE

Category changing design is easier said than done. With thousands of stores and an internationally known brand, the redesign needed to balance a contemporary edge without alienating loyal, traditional customers. Their new furniture would need to be highly durable, unique, modern, and comfortable. Post redesign, Wendy's would need a furniture partner that could manage a large-scale rollout and value engineer products for optimized durability and cost.

That's where we came in. Along with Tesser, we created a customized furniture package that focused on quality, durability, and comfort. We created over 20 standard and custom products to test in their four prototype stores. From industrial aluminum to traditional wood chairs, each store was complete with a unique, yet modern design scheme.

[ ABOVE ]

### WENDY'S

#### LEFT

Spartan bases with laminate tops

#### TOP

Custom booths

#### BOTTOM

Custom laminate chairs and counter stools

# TEST STORES



## STORE 1: CONTEMPORARY

- Cozy red seats complement metallic paneling and walnut floors
- An updated look





# TEST STORES



## STORE 2: TRADITIONAL

- Furnishings intended to make people feel at home
- East coast cafe feel





# TEST STORES



## STORE 3: URBAN

- Furnishings incorporate steel and aluminum with bright pops of color
- Combines agriculture & industrial influences





# TEST STORES



## STORE 4: ULTRA MODERN

- Sleek angular lines and comfortable furnishings
- Inspired by contemporary architecture







## FRESH, NEVER FROZEN DESIGN

In the end, Wendy's chose the Ultra-Modern design which emphasizes clean lines, simple angular shapes, and warm, earthy tones. This package featured wood-look laminate chairs and counter stools, coordinating laminate table tops, rich, leather-look upholstered lounges and booths, and granite coffee tables.

The bright red wall—*complete with a flat screen and electric fireplace*—is reminiscent of Wendy's signature packaging of yesteryear. The combination of light and medium stained wood tones is fresh without being overly trendy.

[ ABOVE ]

### WENDY'S

**LEFT**  
Custom laminate counter stools

**TOP**  
Spartan bases with laminate tops

**BOTTOM**  
Custom booths



## BUT DID IT WORK?

In short, yes! According to Musco, the aesthetic changes set a “completely new bar for the QSR category.” That sentiment still rings true; nearly five years later, the redesigns remain fresh and on-trend. Wendy’s redesigned buildings had 25% increase in annualized sales, making these remodels “perform as highly as new builds.”

The brand’s health also showed major improvement since launch. Wendy’s president and CEO Todd Penegor pointed out in Wendy’s Q4 2016 press release that “as a result of our brand transformation efforts and with the support from our franchise partners, the Wendy’s system has never been stronger.”

[ ABOVE ]

### WENDY’S

Custom laminate counter stools  
Spartan bases with laminate tops  
Custom booths





## A PARTNER IN GRAND RAPIDS CHAIR

As an American furniture manufacturer dedicated to creating high-quality chairs and tables for restaurants, Grand Rapids Chair Company aims to not only elevate the dining experience for patrons, but to simplify and streamline the rollout process for new stores and remodels.

Trusted by the top firms in the industry, we have worked with major hospitality chains like Wendy's, Chipotle, Arby's, Papa Murphy's, Whole Foods, and Marriott to elevate and differentiate their commercial dining experience.

From completely custom projects to hassle-free standard products, whatever your goal, we're here to help you raise the bar. Call or visit our website today to get started.

[ ABOVE ]

### WENDY'S

Custom laminate counter stools  
Spartan bases with laminate tops  
Custom booths





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