



COLLECTIVE CASE STUDY

Washington State University

A national-broadcast brand spot, built in under a month at half the going rate

CLIENT	Washington State University
SCOPE	Creative, production and delivery of a 30-second broadcast spot
TIMELINE	Less than one month
PLACEMENT	Apple Cup, national telecast on NBC, Labor Day weekend (and throughout the season)
MODEL	First Person Collective

OVERVIEW

In the summer of 2026, Washington State University (WSU) was preparing for the relaunch of the Pac-12 athletic conference. The recently rebuilt conference had negotiated a new media rights contract that included placement of a 30-second spot to showcase the university. The first game of the season, the Apple Cup, was set for the Sunday of Labor Day weekend and would air nationally on NBC to an expected audience of more than 3 million viewers. It had been a couple of years since WSU had invested in a new TV spot, and the marketing team wanted to use the season kickoff to introduce a new image.

THE CHALLENGE

The timeline was tight, less than a month, and WSU's budget was roughly half what a traditional agency would require to take on the project. Facing the prospect that a new spot might not be feasible on that budget and timeline, the marketing team approached First Person for a solution. Fortunately, First Person had built a deep bench of specialists around a Collective model that could be activated quickly, without the overhead of a traditional agency.

THE ASK

WSU wanted the new spot to highlight the university's breakthrough impact in research and development, connect with alumni and boosters, and appeal to prospective students. Taken together, a big ask for 30 seconds.

THE SOLUTION

First Person assembled an award-winning creative and production team, all of whom had worked together previously. The Collective model enabled the team to deliver the spot within WSU's timeline and budget, without compromising the quality of the team or the production. Our WSU partners were a key part of the formula too. As part of the collective solution they helped refine our approach, secured locations and talent, helped generate excitement throughout the organization. The ultimate solution centered the spot on a student in dialogue with an announcer and used that exchange to highlight research that would boost alumni pride: climate-resistant apples, alternative fuels for aerospace, a world-class veterinary school, and Washington's multibillion-dollar wine industry.

Data showed that Gen Z students, the age group WSU is recruiting, want to be part of something bigger than themselves. With that in mind, the spot highlighted the ways WSU lets students be "part of something bigger."

THE RESULT

5.5 M+

FIRST NATIONAL BROADCAST
PLACEMENT (NBC)

4 Weeks

FROM BRIEF TO DEADLINE

> 50%

TRADITIONAL AGENCY COST

"Everyone is impacted by the dramatic shifts in how work gets done. First Person enabled us to adapt our approach without compromising time, cost, or quality."

Pam Scott, Vice President of System Communications and Strategy, Washington State University