

HOW WILL THE WORLD CUP INFLUENCE YOUR BRAND MARKETING IN 2026?

The World Cup sees billions tune in across the globe, creating opportunities for brands to engage, inspire, and deliver measurable impact.

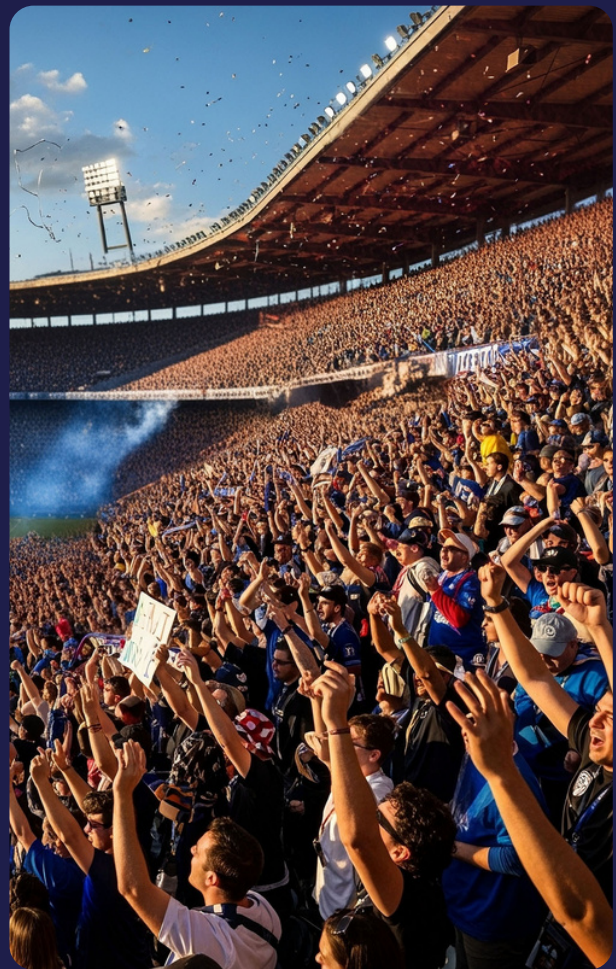
TLC DELVES DEEPER...



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There are very few moments in modern life when the entire world seems to stop, hold its breath, and look in the same direction. The World Cup is one of them.

Every tournament delivers memories that stay with us long after the stadiums empty and the coverage ends. The kinds of moments we remember where we were, who we were with, and how the experience made us feel.



Every tournament delivers memories that stay with us

Cast your mind back to 1998, when an 18-year-old Michael Owen single-handedly slipped past the Argentinian defence, scoring one of England's most memorable goals and earning Owen national hero status. Or Brazil's heartbreak in 2014, when the tournament hosts suffered an unforgettable 7-1 defeat to Germany. And then, of course Lionel Messi fulfilling his lifelong dream in 2022, leading Argentina to victory in the Qatar World Cup final against France, having narrowly missed out in 2014.

These moments span borders, languages, and generations – becoming shared reference points, clips we revisit, and conversations we return to – with each tournament etched firmly in our memories.

THAT UNIVERSAL REACH IS PRECISELY WHY THE WORLD CUP IS A HIGH-VALUE PLATFORM FOR BRANDS.

The 2022 final alone drew **~1.5 billion viewers**, and overall around **5 billion people engaged** with the tournament across global media platforms. With so many eyes watching, there's a rare opportunity for brands to connect in a way that feels both large-scale and deeply human.

The scale alone explains why some of the world's most iconic brands invest heavily in World Cup activity. But it's not just the audience size that matters. It's the cultural relevance, the sense of togetherness, and the opportunity for brands to feel genuinely part of a moment people care about.

And while official sponsorships come with significant cost implications, brands don't need to be front-of-shirt or stadium-side to participate. Smart, creative activations can cut through just as effectively, by delivering something meaningful to consumers in the right moment.

Brands such as Burger King, Aldi, Heinz, McDonald's, and Ferrero are among TLC Worldwide's clients that have capitalised on major sporting events to leverage maximum brand impact.

1.5 Bn

viewers in 2022 final

5 Bn

people engaged

TLC clients that have capitalised on major sporting events



FERRERO





BURGER KING'S "FOME DE BOLA" TRANSFORMED A LOCAL PHRASE INTO A NATIONAL CAMPAIGN

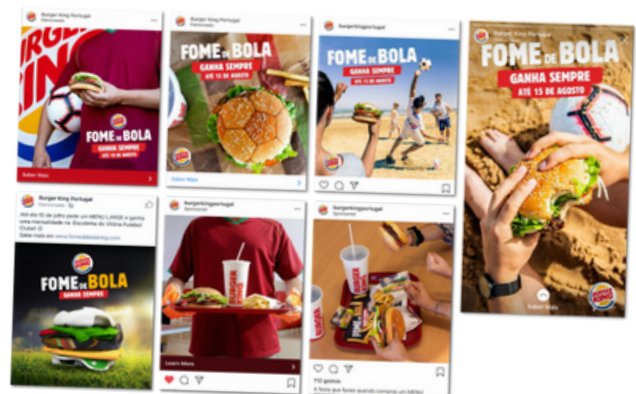
Ahead of a fiercely competitive World Cup period in Portugal, Burger King faced the challenge of standing out against competitors with significantly larger marketing budgets, and in a way that felt credible to football-loving families.

The concept grew from a simple truth that the brand wanted more. More sales, more buzz, more association with the tournament. That became "Fome de Bola" ("Hunger of Football"), a phrase already familiar in Portuguese culture. To bring it to life, TLC helped create a family-relevant reward tied directly to the spirit of the tournament. For every Large Menu purchased, customers received either a discount on sporting equipment or a free month at one of the most prestigious football academies of Portugal.

The campaign **strengthened brand awareness, lifted sales** during the World Cup period, and positioned Burger King as a brand that understands what football means to its audience, **all without the cost of a headline sponsorship.**



Watch the campaign video





INJECTING AN EVERYDAY ERRAND WITH WORLD CUP EXCITEMENT

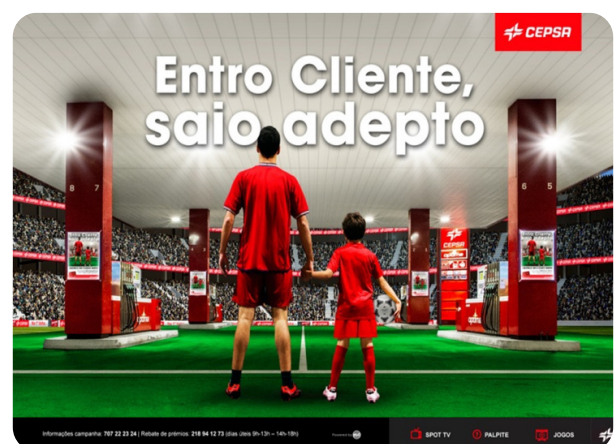
Spanish fuel brand CEPSA – now rebranded as Moeve – sought to encourage customers to top up more fuel during the World Cup, from 15L to 25L. But filling up is a routine, almost automatic task, so the promotion needed to feel just as effortless. TLC designed a campaign where claiming a reward was as simple as stopping at the pump.

Customers could instantly access a range of football-related prizes – from Adidas balls and shirts to stadium visits, sports-school subscriptions, and fuel vouchers – without any complicated sign-ups or waiting periods. The experience was stress-free, immediate, and rewarding, perfectly aligned with the ease of a fuel top-up.

The campaign generated more than **150,000 site visits** and **strengthened CEPSA's network to 500 partners** nationwide, while also increasing both average fuel spend and overall brand awareness during the World Cup period.



Watch the campaign TV Ad





MCDONALDS' HAPPY OLYMPICS THEMED PARTNERSHIP WITH TLC

While the World Cup is unmatched in its intensity and scale, the Olympic Games share similar qualities of mass viewership, national pride, and deeply rooted global attention.

McDonald's has invested heavily as an Olympic sponsor over the years – from logo rights to on-site restaurants in the Olympic Village. But big investment alone doesn't guarantee customer impact.

TLC's work with the brand added a free children's sports lesson to every Happy Meal. For a small cost per unit, McDonald's was able to offer families something high in perceived value and closely aligned with Olympic themes of athleticism.

Crucially, it shifted the narrative. McDonald's wasn't just jumping on the Olympics bandwagon, it was helping children experience sport first-hand.





ALDI'S 'GET A TASTE FOR SPORT' OLYMPIC CAMPAIGN

Already ahead in the price war, Aldi wanted to create further engagement with its customers in the run-up to the 2024 Olympics and Paralympics.

To reinforce its national sporting partnerships while driving higher basket spend among value-conscious families, Aldi offered a guaranteed free sports session with a high perceived value when customers met a minimum spend threshold. Through TLC's network of more than 50 sports and 3,500 partner providers, families could try everything from swimming and climbing to martial arts and trampolining, giving them access to an aspirational experience at a time when cost-of-living pressures were hitting shoppers hard.

The campaign was launched by athletes and sporting ambassadors on social media, strengthened with influencer content, and featured on television, in press, and in store.

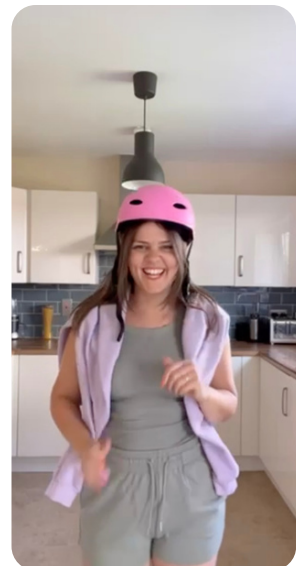
More than 200,000 sessions were claimed – nearly half of them free swims – and there was markedly more awareness of Aldi's sporting partnerships compared to the previous Olympic cycle in Tokyo 2020.



[Watch the campaign video](#)



[Watch the influencers video](#)



[Watch the influencers video](#)

FERRERO

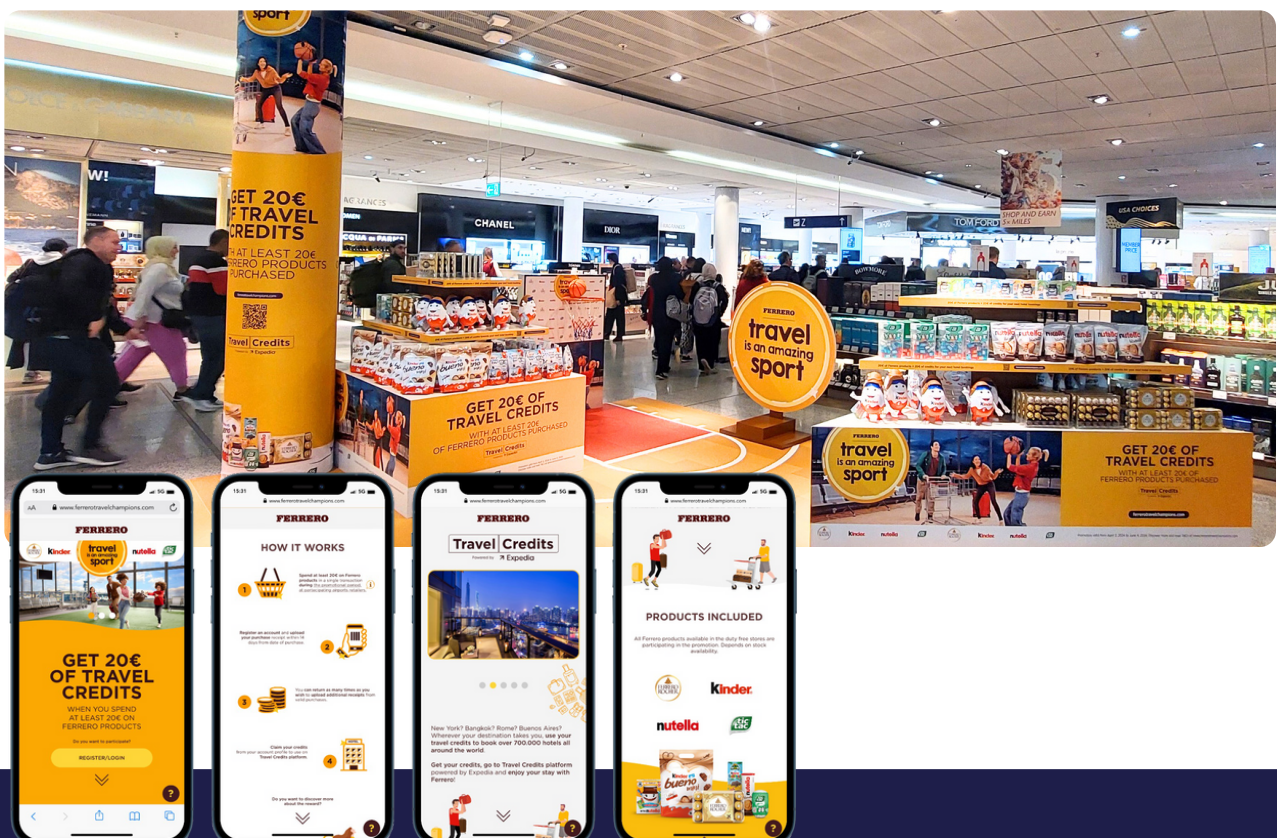
FERRERO 'TRAVEL IS AN AMAZING SPORT' BOOSTING DUTY-FREE SELL-OUT DURING THE OLYMPICS

Ferrero set out to reward a different kind of athlete – travellers – during the Olympics. Across airport retail, **shoppers spending €20 on Ferrero products received €20 travel credits to book hotel stays via TLC's global travel platform.**

The mechanic was simple to communicate, instantly valuable, cumulative, and usable worldwide – making it highly appealing to a broad mix of travellers from families with school-age children to business passengers.

By offering a reward that aligned with the travel environment and delivered genuine value, the campaign created a compelling reason for travellers to buy now and buy more. the impact - up to a 32% sell out and 18% volume increase across Paris, Frankfurt and Oman airports.

Crucially, this approach also strengthened retailer relationships in the duty-free channel, providing a differentiated offer that drove footfall, increased basket size, and secured prime space at high-traffic airports





WHY GLOBAL MOMENTS MATTER FOR BRANDS

Whether it's the World Cup, the Olympics, or another global sporting event, these moments offer a scale of audience reach and engagement that's difficult to replicate elsewhere. People are emotionally invested, discussing, sharing, and interacting with brands that feel genuinely part of the occasion. And the magnitudinal impact of these events – with billions of viewers across several continents – makes them a powerful stage.

Standing out doesn't require the biggest sponsorship budget. What matters is relevance, creativity, and understanding what people value in the moment. TLC Worldwide specialises in exactly that.

For more than 30 years, we've helped global retailers create more valuable, exciting, personalised and unique programs that increase customer acquisition, boost engagement and drive loyalty. Combining data-led insights with strategic creativity, we craft campaigns that resonate deeply.

With over 100,000 experiences within our global rewards network – spanning travel, food, wellness, entertainment, learning, services, shopping, and more – we help brands:



**Engage audiences at scale without
sacrificing relevance**



**Build loyalty that lasts long after
the final match**



**Translate brand partnerships
into real customer value**



**Turn major cultural moments
into commercial outcomes that
deliver bigger returns**



**Offer high-value experiences that are timely,
meaningful, and motivating — at a fraction of the
cost of cash offers and discounts**



IN CONCLUSION

Research shows that loyalty programs tied to major sporting events can **deepen emotional connection and drive commercial outcomes**. Furthermore, aligning rewards with brand identity and community significantly improves campaign impact.

So, as the 2026 World Cup approaches, the opportunity for retail brands remains huge. Those who activate smartly, thoughtfully, and in tune with what people care about, are the ones who'll make an impact that lasts well beyond the tournament.

Ready to kickstart your own global rewards program?

