

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

TLC DEEP DIVE

Billions will watch the World Cup from every corner of the globe – but only some brands will be remembered by them.

Here's your guide to engaging and inspiring fans to deliver measurable impact.



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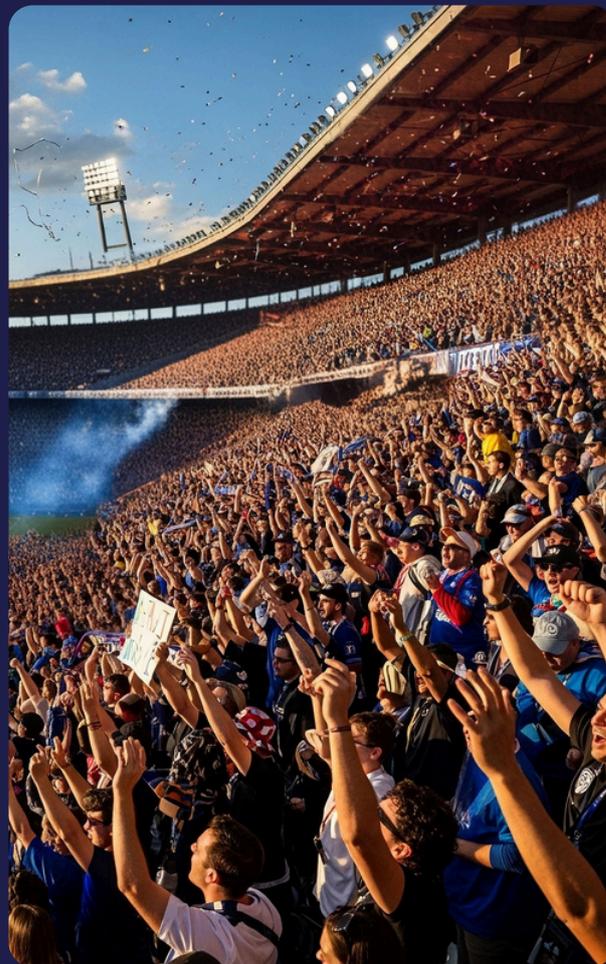
There are only a few moments in modern life when the entire world seems to stop, collectively hold its breath, and look in the same direction.

The World Cup is one of them.

Long after the final whistle is blown, we still remember how it felt: where we were, who we were with, what moments made us jump out of our seats or bury our heads in our hands.



*Every tournament delivers memories that stay with us*



Landon Donovan's legendary 2010 goal against Algeria in stoppage time that saved the USA from elimination. Michael Owen slipping past Argentina's defence in 1998 to score one of England's most memorable goals at just 18 years old. Brazil's 2014 heartbreak where they lost 7-1 to Germany on their home turf. Lionel Messi finally lifting the trophy in 2022, fulfilling his lifelong dream of leading Argentina to victory in spectacular fashion.

These iconic moments live on in clips we revisit and conversations we return to. They aren't just sports highlights – they're shared emotional memories that span borders, languages, and generations.

# THAT UNIVERSAL APPEAL AND EMOTIONAL INTENSITY IS PRECISELY WHY THE WORLD CUP IS SUCH A HIGH-VALUE PLATFORM FOR BRANDS.

The 2022 final alone drew ~1.5 billion viewers, and around 5 billion people engaged with the tournament across global media platforms.

The scale alone explains why some of the world's most popular 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.

While official sponsorships come with heavy cost implications, brands don't need to be on shirts or in stadiums to participate. In our noisy world, consumers won't necessarily remember a logo on a billboard – but deliver something meaningful in a creative way at the right moment, and you've got a strategic activation that cuts through everything.

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.

And that opportunity is finally coming home to North America this summer.



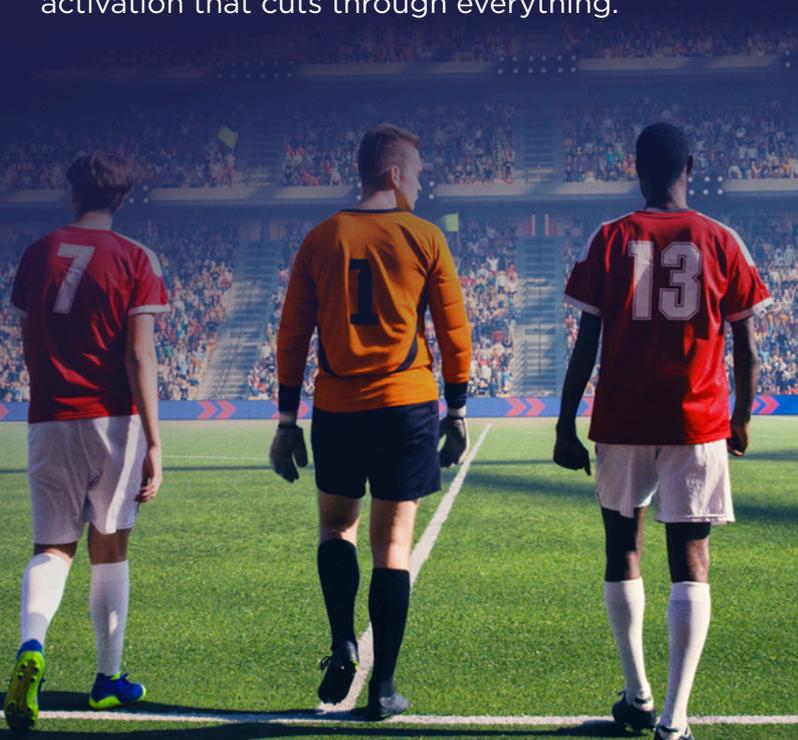
Your brand doesn't need to own the World Cup – it just needs to help your customers experience the best parts.

We've worked with clients globally to create maximum brand impact around major sporting events.

*Keep reading for some of the highlights featuring these brands*



**FERRERO**





# TRANSFORMING A LOCAL PHRASE INTO A POWERFUL 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. Crucially, they needed to differentiate in a way that felt credible to football-loving families.

The concept grew from a simple truth: the brand wanted *more*. More sales, more buzz, more association with the World Cup. That turned into “**Fome de Bola**” (“Hunger of Football”) – a phrase already familiar in Portuguese culture.

To bring it to life, TLC helped create a family-friendly reward tied to the spirit of the tournament. For every large menu purchased, customers got a discount on sporting equipment or a free month at one of the most prestigious football academies in Portugal.

The campaign **strengthened brand awareness, lifted World Cup sales, and positioned Burger King as part of Portugal’s passion** for the beautiful game.

All without the high cost of a headline sponsorship.



Watch the campaign video





# FILLING AN EVERYDAY ERRAND WITH WORLD CUP EXCITEMENT

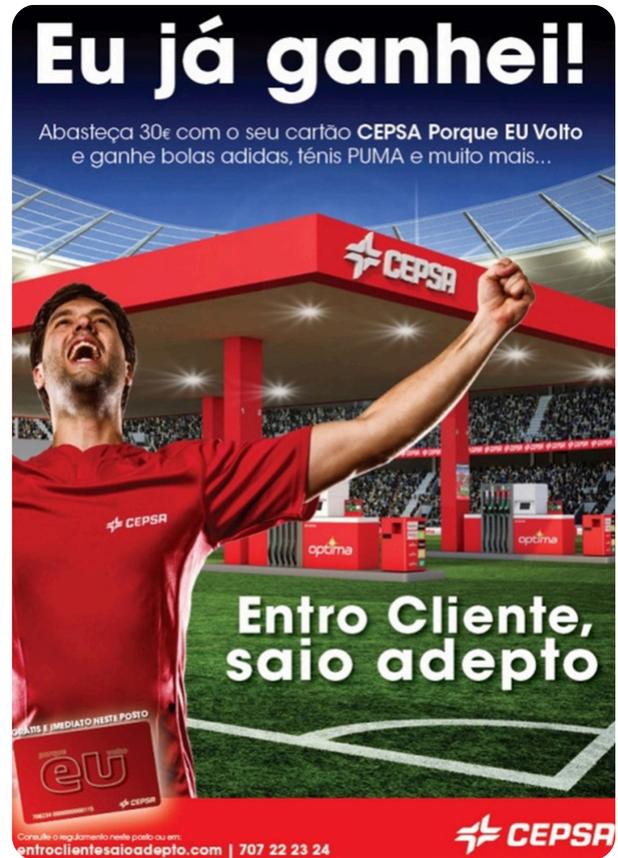
Spanish fuel brand CEPSA (now Moeve) wanted customers to top up more fuel during the World Cup. But filling up is a routine, almost automatic task – so the promotion needed to feel equally effortless.

We designed a campaign where 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 and immediately rewarding – perfectly aligned with the ease of a fast fuel refill.

The campaign generated over **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's TV ad





# TURNING HAPPY MEALS INTO HAPPY MOVES TO INSPIRE TOMORROW'S ATHLETES

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 a big investment alone doesn't guarantee customer impact.

Together, we 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 the Olympics' themes of athleticism, resilience, and the pursuit of dreams.

Critically, it **shifted the narrative**.

McDonald's wasn't just jumping on the Olympics bandwagon with other brands; it was **helping children experience sports** first-hand and **inspiring them to create their own Olympic moments**.





# GIVING FAMILIES A FREE TASTE OF OLYMPIC ACTION DURING A COST-OF-LIVING CRISIS

Despite already being ahead of competitors on pricing, Aldi wanted to create further engagement with their customers in the run-up to the 2024 Olympics and Paralympics.

To reinforce their Team GB and Paralympics GB partnerships while driving higher basket spend with value-conscious families, Aldi offered a free sports session worth up to £25 when customers spent £30 or more. Through TLC's network of over 3,500 partner providers covering 50+ sports, families could try everything from swimming to climbing to trampolining. At a time when cost-of-living pressures were hitting shoppers hard and causing them to cut back on extracurricular activities, Aldi gave them access to aspirational experiences for the whole family to enjoy.

The nationwide campaign was launched by Team GB on social media, boosted with influencer content, and featured on television, in the press, and in stores.

**More than 200,000 sessions were claimed**, leading to **markedly more awareness of Aldi's Team GB/ParaGB partnerships** compared to Tokyo 2020.



[!\[\]\(642aa997563f9a325b310230bb5078b7\_img.jpg\) Watch the campaign video](#)



[!\[\]\(d0262bbe9d2356661a2e89321dfcc781\_img.jpg\) Watch an influencer reel](#)



[!\[\]\(c444627dab9fee9a1550c053ffaaaae2\_img.jpg\) Watch an influencer reel](#)

**FERRERO**

# BOOSTING DUTY-FREE SALES WITH VALUE FOR OLYMPIC-LEVEL TRAVELERS

Ferrero set out to reward a different kind of athlete during the Olympics: travelers.

Across duty-free retailers, shoppers who spent €20 on Ferrero products received €20 in hotel credits to redeem via TLC's global travel platform.

The mechanic was simple to communicate, instantly valuable, cumulative, and usable worldwide - making it highly appealing to a wide audience across borders, from families with children to business passengers.

By offering a reward that aligned with travel trends and delivered true value, the campaign created a compelling reason for travelers to buy now and buy more. This was reflected in the results: **up to a 32% sell out and 18% volume increase for Ferrero products** across major airports in Paris, Frankfurt, and Oman.

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





# WHY GLOBAL MOMENTS MATTER MORE THAN EVER 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. With the right frameworks in place, brands can score a true hat-trick:

1. Emotional engagement at scale
2. Cultural relevance
3. Shared experiences

## Designing World Cup programs that drive real ROI

Standing out doesn't require the biggest budget. What matters is relevance, creativity, and understanding what people value at key moments.

For over 30 years, we've helped brands turn global moments like the World Cup into exciting, personalized programs that increase customer acquisition, boost engagement, and build loyalty. Combining data-led insights with strategic creativity, we craft campaigns that resonate deeply and inspire consumer action.

With a global rewards network of over 100,000 partners covering dining, wellness, entertainment, services, travel, and more, we help brands:



**Engage audiences at scale  
without sacrificing relevance**



**Build long-term loyalty  
rather than short-term reach**



**Translate brand partnerships  
into real customer value**



**Turn major cultural moments  
into commercial outcomes  
with bigger returns**



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



## THE COUNTDOWN IS ON

Research shows that sport-linked loyalty programs **deepen emotional connections and drive commercial outcomes**, especially when rewards feel aligned with brand identity and community. And for the brands that find a way to extend the excitement after the final whistle, there are powerful gains for long-term loyalty.

The 2026 World Cup is set to be one of the most watched sporting events in history. The brands who activate smartly, thoughtfully, and in an emotionally attuned way will win more than fans: they'll win brand advocates that stick around long after the tournament ends.

Ready to kick-off your own global rewards program?

