



INDUSTRY BRIEFING FOR KC SMALL BUSINESSES

Surviving the World Cup Surge

Objectives

Kansas City and its regional partners will welcome hundreds of thousands of domestic and international visitors during the 2026 FIFA World Cup™. For local businesses, this moment presents extraordinary opportunity — and real risk if unprepared. Success will depend on understanding the global fan, scaling smartly, and delivering unforgettable experiences while protecting cash flow and operations.

What's Happening

This major soccer event is a once-in-a-generation moment for most. Businesses that plan intentionally will not only survive the surge — they will transform it into long-term growth, global recognition, and community pride.

Who Benefits

Local, small and independent businesses across the Kansas City region. **FOCUS:** Johnson County

What's the Goal

Help JoCo businesses convert local and international soccer traffic into sustainable revenue, brand equity, and long-term customers

Industries Covered

Dining & Nightlife

Restaurants, Bars, Coffee Shops, Food Trucks, Caterers

Lodging & Transportation

Hotels, Short-Term Rentals, Shuttles, Rideshare Drivers, Tour Operators

Entertainment & Attractions

Museums, Historical Sites, Performance Venues, Guided Tours, Event Hosts

Retail

Boutiques, Gift Shops, Grocery, Convenience Stores

Makers

Kansas City & Heartland product creators

Personal Services

Salons, Spas, Gyms, Wellness, Language & Tech Support

Tourism & Experiences

Artists, Performers, Cultural Hosts, Experience Creators

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KC GAME PLAN PLAYBOOK](#)



1. OPPORTUNITY VS. REALITY

Opportunity

- Global visibility for Kansas City brands
- High visitor spending and urgency to buy
- New international customers discovering local businesses
- Long-term reputation building

Reality

- Demand spikes can overwhelm staff, inventory, and systems
- Thin margins disappear without cost control
- Cash flow strain from pre-event investments
- One bad experience can travel globally via social media

Key mindset: The World Cup is not just about volume — it's about precision.

2. KNOW THE CONSUMER YOU'RE SERVING

Soccer event visitors differ from typical local customers.

Key characteristics

- Short stays, high daily spend
- Experience-driven, not price-driven
- Multilingual, multicultural
- Heavy mobile usage
- Expect frictionless payments and service

Action Steps

- Identify your primary customer (fans, families, corporate travelers, media, teams)
- Adjust menus, hours, offerings, and staffing accordingly
- Assume customers may not understand U.S. tipping, ordering, or service norms

3. BUILD AN EXPERIENCE (NOT JUST A TRANSACTION)

Visitors will remember how you made them feel, not just what you sold.

Experience builders

- Themed menus, products, or packages
- Local storytelling (KC culture, food, music, history)
- Visual cues: flags, signage, welcome messages
- Staff trained to be hosts, not just workers

By sector

- Dining: Limited-edition Soccer Fans items, quick-service lanes, late-night hours
- Retail: Curated "Kansas City" collections, gift-ready packaging
- Makers: Live demos, pop-ups, storytelling labels
- Tourism: Interactive experiences, not passive tours

4. MAXIMIZE REVENUE AND INCLUSIVITY

Revenue levers

- Bundles and packages
- Premium pricing during peak windows
- Prepaid reservations or timed entry
- Add-ons (souvenirs, upgrades, photos)

Inclusivity matters

- Accessible entrances and seating
- Dietary options clearly labeled
- Gender-neutral restrooms where possible
- Clear, friendly communication regardless of language level

Inclusive businesses attract global loyalty.

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5. CASH FLOW & WORKING CAPITAL
*Many businesses fail not from lack of sales
— but lack of cash.*

Plan for

- Inventory and staffing costs before revenue arrives
- Delayed payouts from platforms or vendors
- Security deposits, equipment rentals, marketing spend

Recommendations

- Build a 90-day cash flow forecast
- Secure lines of credit early
- Negotiate vendor terms now
- Avoid over-expansion that can't be sustained post-event

6. TECHNOLOGY & CONTROLS

Must-haves

- Mobile-friendly POS
- Contactless payments
- Multi-currency or international card acceptance
- Real-time inventory tracking
- Backup internet or payment solutions

Controls

- Clear pricing and refund policies
- Fraud awareness
- Staff permissions and cash-handling rules
- End-of-day reconciliation processes

7. STAFFING & MANAGEMENT FOR PEAK PERFORMANCE

Staffing realities

- Longer hours
- Emotional labor with international guests
- High-pressure environments

Preparation

- Hire early, train thoroughly
- Cross-train roles
- Schedule mandatory breaks
- Incentivize performance (bonuses, meals, recognition)

Your staff ARE your brand during the World Cup.

8. MARKETING & COMMUNICATION

Before the Soccer Event

- Update Google, Apple Maps, TripAdvisor, Yelp
- Optimize social profiles with hours, menus, booking links
- Partner with hotels, fan zones, and tour operators

During

- Daily social updates
- Clear signage and wayfinding
- QR codes for menus, translations, and payments

After

- Capture emails and followers
- Offer return incentives
- Thank visitors publicly

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9. ADAPTING FOR INTERNATIONAL VISITORS

Key adjustments

- Simplify language
- Use icons and visuals
- Translate key materials
- Be patient with cultural differences

Common differences

- Different tipping expectations
- Different queueing norms
- Different service pace expectations
- Different payment habits

10. BUILD A FAN-FRIENDLY ATMOSPHERE

Create belonging

- Welcome fans of all teams
- Display international flags
- Play match broadcasts where possible
- Celebrate diversity, not rivalry

A friendly space becomes a global recommendation engine.

11. OPTIMIZE PAYMENTS

Best practices

- Accept all major international cards
- Mobile wallets (Apple Pay, Google Pay)
- Clear pricing with taxes included
- Avoid surprise fees

Speed + clarity = higher spend.

12. STRENGTHEN PARTNERSHIPS

Partner with

- Neighboring businesses
- Hotels and short-term rentals
- Transportation providers
- Cultural organizations
- Local government and chambers

Think ecosystem, not competition.



SUMMARY: FIVE THINGS TO DO WELL

1. Know your soccer event customer
2. Design experiences, not just products
3. Protect cash flow and operations
4. Train staff to be global hosts
5. Collaborate to elevate KC together



STILL HAVE QUESTIONS?
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READINESS CHECKLIST FOR KC SMALL BUSINESSES

PART TWO



STRATEGY & PLANNING

- Defined World Cup target customer
- Identified peak dates and hours
- Set revenue goals and capacity limits

EXPERIENCE DESIGN

- World Cup-specific offerings created
- Local KC storytelling integrated
- Clear signage and wayfinding

FINANCIAL READINESS

- 90-day cash flow forecast completed
- Working capital secured
- Vendor terms negotiated

TECHNOLOGY & PAYMENTS

- Mobile POS and contactless payments enabled
- International cards accepted
- Backup payment/internet plan

STAFFING

- Staffing levels adjusted for peak demand
- Staff trained on cultural awareness
- Clear roles and escalation paths

MARKETING & VISIBILITY

- Google and maps listings updated
- Social media active and current
- Partnerships with nearby businesses

INTERNATIONAL READINESS

- Simplified language and visuals
- Key materials translated
- Staff trained on cultural differences

INCLUSIVITY & ACCESS

- Accessibility reviewed
- Dietary and non-alcoholic options available
- Welcoming environment for all fans

RISK & CONTROLS

- Pricing clearly posted
- Refund and dispute policies defined
- Inventory and cash controls in place

LEGACY PLANNING

- Email capture or loyalty strategy
- Post-event offers prepared
- Thank-you messaging planned

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