



# INDUSTRY-SPECIFIC BRIEFING KC SMALL BUSINESSES

## Surviving the World Cup Surge

### Overview

Kansas City and its regional partners will welcome hundreds of thousands of domestic and international visitors during the 2026 FIFA World Cup™. For gift and souvenir retailers, this represents a high-impact, short-window revenue opportunity, driven by tourism, impulse purchasing, and event-related spending.

Success will depend on anticipating demand and stocking the right merchandise, maximizing peak-period sales, creating compelling in-store experiences, and competing against online and mass retail alternatives.

### Industry -Specific

#### **Retail: Gifts & Souvenir Stores**

### OPPORTUNITY

*Position Kansas City merchandise as must-have, locally branded memorabilia tied to the World Cup experience.*

### Global Visibility for KC Area

The World Cup will bring:

- International fans
- Corporate sponsors
- Media organizations
- Team staff and families

### Johnson County Advantage

*Tourism is the primary driver of souvenir retail demand.*

- Visitors will actively seek:
  - Memorabilia
  - Local and branded merchandise
  - Gifts tied to the World Cup experience

There is plenty of opportunity in Johnson County to capture spending from:

- Visitors staying outside downtown
- Families and casual tourists
- Daytime and non-match traffic

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KC GAME PLAN PLAYBOOK](#)



## THE REALITY

- Growth Is Slow — Competition Is High
  - Industry growth projected at just ~1.07% annually through 2029
  - Competition includes:
    - Mass retailers
    - Online stores
    - Specialty shops
- Demand Is Highly Seasonal
  - Many retailers generate the majority of profits during:
    - Holidays
    - Tourist seasons
- Consumer Spending Is Cautious
  - Buyers are increasingly:
    - Price-sensitive
    - Value-driven
  - Discretionary spending is under pressure in uncertain economic conditions
- Inventory Risk Is High
  - Long lead times (especially imports) make forecasting critical
  - Overstock → markdowns
  - Understock → lost sales

## WIN THE CUSTOMER

*Visitors will choose stores that are:*

- Convenient
  - Located near:
    - Stadiums
    - Hotels
    - Attractions and high-traffic areas
- Visually Engaging
  - Attractive displays and layouts encourage browsing and impulse purchases
- Unique & Local
  - Distinctive merchandise tied to:
    - Kansas City identity
    - World Cup themes

## BUILD THE EXPERIENCE

*Retail success will come from experience + product.*

- Create World Cup Merchandise
  - Branded items:
    - KC + World Cup themes
    - Team-inspired products
    - Limited-edition collectibles
- Leverage Personalization Trends
  - Growing demand for:
    - Custom gifts
    - Personalized items (names, photos, etc.)
- Design for Impulse Buying
  - Easy-to-grab items near checkout
  - Clear pricing and bundled offers
  - High-visibility displays

## MAXIMIZE THE REVENUE

- Prepare for Peak Sales Windows
  - Build inventory ahead of the event
  - Staff up for high traffic periods
  - Many retailers generate most profits during peak periods
- Optimize Product Mix
  - Focus on:
    - Souvenirs and novelty items (core category)
    - Apparel and accessories
    - Giftable items
- Expand Sales Channels
  - In-store + online integration
  - Pop-up retail locations near venues
  - Kiosks for high-traffic areas

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## BE WORLD-READY

- International visitors will expect:
  - Clear pricing and product descriptions
  - Easy payment options
  - Efficient checkout
- Small details matter:
  - Compact, travel-friendly items
  - Easy packaging for transport
  - Visual merchandising for non-English speakers

## FIVE THINGS RETAILERS MUST DO WELL

- Forecast Demand Accurately
  - Avoid overstock and stockouts
- Maximize Peak Sales Periods
  - Capture revenue during high-traffic windows
- Differentiate Through Product
  - Offer unique, locally relevant merchandise
- Manage Inventory Efficiently
  - Balance variety with control over SKUs
- Create a Strong In-Store Experience
  - Encourage browsing and impulse purchases

STILL HAVE QUESTIONS?  
**CONTACT ECJC TODAY!**



The World Cup represents a short but powerful retail opportunity for gift and souvenir shops.

- For Kansas City and Johnson County retailers, this is a chance to:
  - Capture high-margin impulse purchases
  - Showcase local identity through merchandise
  - Drive significant seasonal revenue
- The retailers that succeed will focus on:
  - Smart inventory planning
  - High-impact merchandising
  - Unique, event-driven products
  - Operational readiness for peak demand