



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 local businesses, this moment presents extraordinary opportunity — and real risk if unprepared. Success will depend on: understanding global dining preferences, scaling operations without losing service quality, managing labor, food costs, and customer flow and delivering memorable, locally authentic experiences.

Industry -Specific

Full-service Restaurants

OPPORTUNITY

Full-service restaurants (table-service dining) are uniquely positioned to benefit from:

- Group dining (families, corporate sponsors, teams)
- Extended dwell time (pre/post-match meals)
- High-margin beverage sales
- Cultural dining experiences

However, they also face capacity limits and labor intensity, making execution critical.

Global Visibility for KC Area

The World Cup will bring:

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

Johnson County Advantage

Johnson County will play a major supporting role in restaurant demand:

- Visitors staying in Overland Park, Leawood, and Olathe will dine locally
- Suburban restaurants may attract:
 - Families seeking less crowded dining
 - Corporate groups and extended-stay visitors
 - International travelers exploring beyond downtown

Introduce global visitors to Kansas City BBQ, Midwest hospitality, and regional cuisine—turning first-time visits into repeat tourism.

[DOWNLOAD THE
KC GAME PLAN PLAYBOOK](#)



THE REALITY

- Demand Will Be Strong — But Not Evenly Distributed
 - Traffic will spike around match days, evenings, and weekends
 - Suburban areas (Johnson County) will see spillover demand
 - Restaurants must handle short bursts of extreme volume
- Costs Are Rising
 - Labor costs are increasing (wages up ~5% YoY)
 - Food and input prices remain elevated
 - Profitability depends on keeping prime cost \leq 65% of sales
- Many visitors will:
 - Compare prices
 - Seek bundled value
 - Expect transparency

This applies directly to restaurants—value perception matters as much as quality.

WIN THE CUSTOMER

Visitors will choose restaurants that are:

- Easy to Access
 - Clear directions from hotels and stadium
 - Integration with maps, ride-share, and transit routes
 - Online reservations that work seamlessly
- Fast & Reliable
 - Efficient seating and table turns
 - Simplified menus during peak hours
 - Consistent service quality under pressure
- Helpful & Local
 - Staff who can recommend:
 - Attractions
 - Transportation options
 - Match schedules

Restaurants become informal visitor hubs, similar to hotel front desks

BUILD THE EXPERIENCE

Travelers remember experiences—not just meals.

- Create a World Cup Atmosphere
 - Match watch parties
 - Team-themed menus or specials
 - Extended hours for international match times
- Localize the Experience
 - Highlight:
 - Kansas City BBQ
 - Local craft beer
 - Regional ingredients
- Offer “taste of KC” sampler menus
- Adapt to Global Preferences
 - Include:
 - Allergen-friendly options
 - Clear ingredient transparency
 - Global flavors alongside comfort food

MAXIMIZE THE REVENUE

Use Strategic Pricing. Avoid extreme price hikes.

- Instead:
 - Tiered menus (standard, premium, group packages)
 - Prix fixe menus for faster service
 - Multi-course or group dining bundles
- Increase Average Check Size
 - Promote:
 - Alcohol (16% of revenue, high margin)
 - Add-ons (desserts, appetizers)
 - Train staff for upselling
- Expand Dayparts
 - Adopt all-day café / flexible models:
 - Breakfast \rightarrow lunch \rightarrow dinner \rightarrow late-night
 - Capture revenue across all match-related traffic windows



BE WORLD-READY

- International visitors will expect:
 - Clear communication (simple English, visual menus)
 - Familiar payment options (contactless, international cards)
 - Cultural awareness
- Small details matter:
 - Multilingual menus
 - Icons for dietary needs
 - Friendly, patient service

FIVE THINGS RESTAURANT OWNERS MUST DO WELL

- Deliver Consistent Service
 - Fast, friendly, accurate service—even at peak volume
- Manage Capacity & Table Turns
 - Maximize seats without sacrificing experience
- Control Costs
 - Keep food + labor (prime cost) under control
- Partner Locally
 - Collaborate with:
 - Hotels
 - Transportation providers
 - Event organizers
- Capture Future Business
 - Collect emails
 - Encourage reviews
 - Turn visitors into repeat customers

STILL HAVE QUESTIONS?

CONTACT ECJC TODAY!



The World Cup is more than a short-term sales spike.

- *For full-service restaurants in Kansas City and Johnson County, it is an opportunity to:*
 - *Showcase regional cuisine and hospitality*
 - *Build international brand recognition*
 - *Strengthen long-term customer pipelines*
- *The restaurants that succeed will focus on:*
 - *Operational efficiency*
 - *Value-driven menus*
 - *Memorable local experiences*
 - *Smart pricing and staffing strategies*