



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