

Lessons in sports marketing

⇒ FIFA World
Cup 2026 ⇒



Table of contents

Intro to the 2026 FIFA World Cup & how brands get involved _____	3
What's in this report & key terms to know _____	6
What we learned about soccer fan culture _____	8
FIFA sponsors _____	13
• AB InBev _____	14
• Diageo _____	31
• Unilever _____	46
• Coca-Cola _____	59
Non-FIFA sponsors _____	71
Takeaways _____	111



The 2026 FIFA World Cup

The 2026 FIFA World Cup is set to be **the biggest tournament in the competition's history**. Hosted across three countries for the first time ever — the US, Canada and Mexico — this year's tournament will expand across 48 teams and 104 matches.

But the World Cup is about far more than soccer.

It's **a month-long cultural event that brings together billions of fans** across sport, entertainment, food and social media. For brands, that makes it one of the rare moments where mass reach and emotional engagement collide at a truly global scale. And the size of this year's tournament also means even more opportunities for brands to get involved.

The brands that show up successfully at these types of events are often the ones that **understand how fans celebrate and participate** — finding authentic ways to add to that experience. And we've seen many different approaches and plays from brands of all sizes this year!

Clutch™ the Bald Eagle from the United States, Maple™ the Moose from Canada and Zayu™ the Jaguar from Mexico

MEET THE MASCOTS



The role of sports marketing

First, let's cover the role sports marketing plays in an event like the FIFA World Cup.

In a world of endless scrolling and skipped ads, live sports are one of the few places where brands still get undivided attention. That's what makes sports marketing so powerful and so competitive — it holds a unique position because it **brings together something that's increasingly hard to find: attention, emotion, culture and scale, all at once.**



EMOTION

During live games, fans aren't passive, they're emotionally invested. Every call, every play, every win and every loss carries weight. When brands show up in the right way, that emotion can translate into greater recall and connection.

ATTENTION

Live sports are one of the last remaining experiences where people watch in real time — which means you aren't competing with a skip button. For brands looking to make a big impression, that's a huge advantage.

CULTURE

Live sports also offer a direct line into culture. Big games like this extend off the field. They take over group chats, social media, headlines and more. This is where brands can go to become part of the conversation.

SCALE

Sports marketing is no longer a one channel play. The most effective campaigns don't stop at a single TV spot. They connect across social, digital, influencers, partnerships, products and experiential activations. The game is the anchor, but a brand's impact can extend well beyond.

How brands can get involved

There are a huge number of ways brands can get involved in marketing for an event like the World Cup.

And there's **no one-size-fits-all approach that determines success**, which means whether you have a tier one sponsor-sized budget or something more modest, there are still many ways brands can show up and make an impact.

In-game & digital advertising

TV spots, digital ads and in-stadium ad placements offer massive reach and visibility. It's a big investment, but when done well it can deliver big on brand awareness.

Social & real-time marketing

Some of the most talked about sports moments happen on social media, in real-time. Quick thinking and strong creative can go a long way here.

Sponsorships & partnerships

Sponsorships with leagues, teams or events give brands consistent exposure and deeper association. But the real value comes from how brands activate the partnership.

Limited-edition releases

Typically reserved for official sponsors, limited edition packaging, flavors, scents or merch can serve as a collectible item for fans and a great opportunity for sweepstakes.

Experiential activations

From fan experiences to pop-ups, live activations give people something to remember — and something to share. These moments can turn passive fans into active participants.

Athlete & influencer collaborations

Athletes bring in built-in audiences and credibility. But the partnership has to feel authentic to work. The best collabs often feel like a natural extension of both the athlete's and brand's identity.



What's in this report

This report seeks to help brands learn from great examples of World Cup marketing.

Since the 2026 FIFA World Cup is hosted by the **US, Canada and Mexico**, we focused on activations there, leveraging the Zappi platform to test new ad campaigns and new product launches — primarily in **CPG** categories.

What we found was really interesting. For a country that hasn't historically embraced soccer, **the US is very excited about this event** and brands are showing up in a big way to capitalize on that excitement. We saw so many limited-time products released in that market!

Overall, our biggest takeaway is that **there are many different ways for brands to show up for an event like this**. FIFA sponsors have the biggest campaigns across multiple different brands and countries, but consumers don't care or often even notice if a brand is an official FIFA sponsor. Individual team sponsorships can make a big impact in their markets too. And even general soccer tie-ins with no sponsorships get people excited.

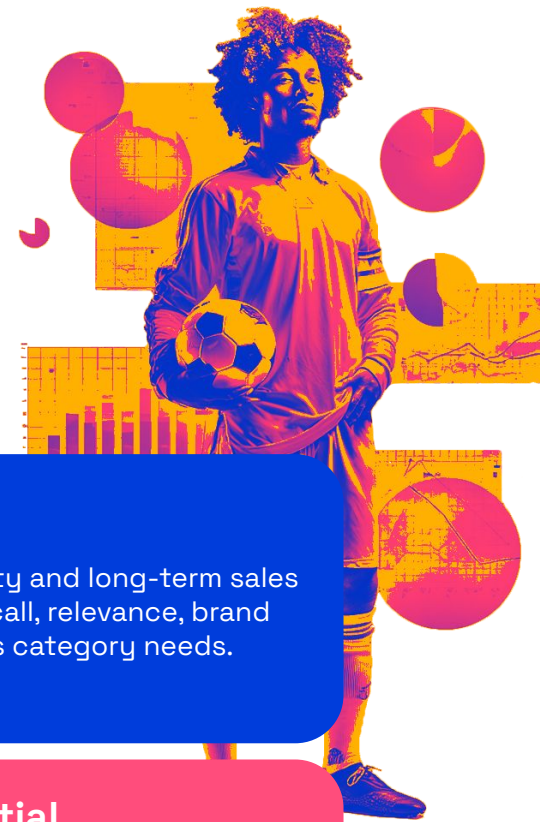
There's clearly a **"World Cup effect"** in place here, where anything that feels associated with the event catches people's attention. And that's good news for non-sponsors. There's always a way to tie your brand to a cultural moment! If it fits with your brand, of course.

First, we'll share what our survey of 2,000 US viewers revealed about how people plan to watch before digging into the campaigns themselves and what we can learn from them.



Key terms to know before you read

Before we dive in, there are a few **Zappi metrics** we should define.



ADVERTISING

Sales impact

Measures an ad's potential to drive short-term sales, built from signals including ad distinctiveness, emotional resonance, brand recall and purchase intent.

Brand impact

Measures an ad's potential to build brand equity and long-term sales impact, built from signals including brand recall, relevance, brand distinctiveness and how well the ad meets category needs.

INNOVATION

Trial potential

Measures purchase likelihood, tested without a price for a clean read on concept strength, and again with the actual price shown. The result is two trial potential measures — priced and unpriced.

Breakthrough potential

Measures how distinctive and advantageous a product feels compared to others in the category. For occasion-specific products, this score also reflects the cultural moment the product is tied to.

Each of these metrics are percentile scores — which tells you where the score falls relative to a **normative database**. For ads, that's a country norm, for innovation, it's a category-specific country norm. Ok let's dive in!

Soccer fan culture

Key takeaways:

- Nearly two thirds of World Cup viewers aren't regular soccer fans — **the cultural moment pulls in a far wider crowd than the sport alone**, and the opportunity for brands reflects that.
- **The match is only part of the experience** — food, drink and socializing matter just as much, giving brands well outside the soccer world a natural entry point.
- Player influence is powerful with devoted fans but drops sharply among casual viewers — **how you position your athlete matters as much as who you sign**.
- **Products and packaging are part of how fans participate** — limited editions and shareable formats give them a tangible way to feel part of the moment.

For more sports marketing takeaways,
download our Super Bowl report.

GET THE REPORT



The World Cup audience is bigger and broader than you might expect

Nearly two thirds of people planning to watch the World Cup (64%) are casual viewers, occasional fans or people who don't follow soccer at all.

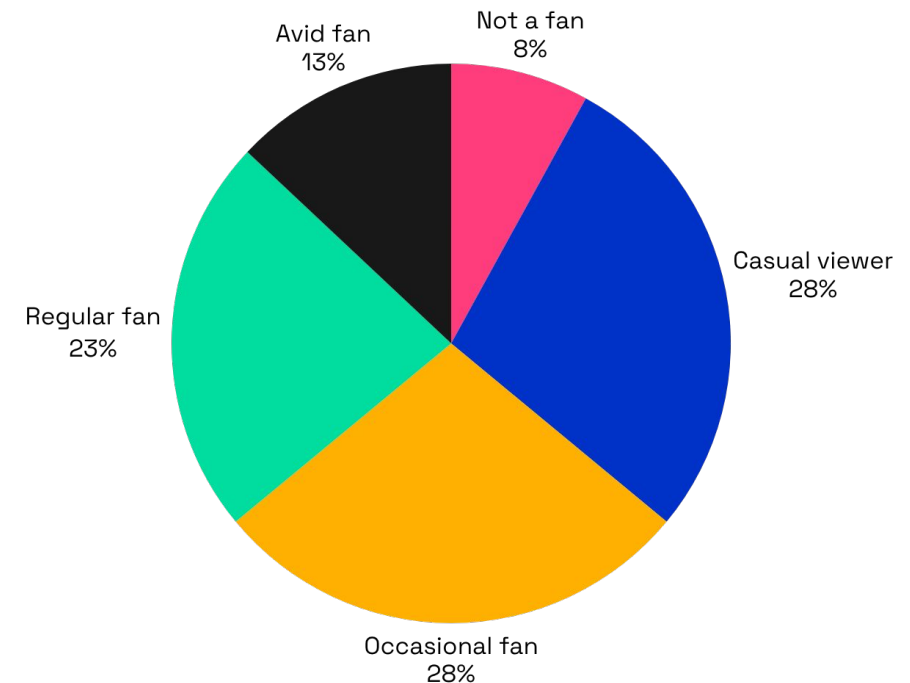
Avid fans — the devoted audience most brands picture — comprise only 13%.

The tournament **pulls in a far wider crowd than the sport alone** would and they're younger and more multicultural than any other major sporting event in the US.

45% of 18-34 year-olds plan to watch as much of the World Cup as possible — more than any other age group.

Data source: Zappi survey of 2,000 US respondents, May 2026

Who's watching the World Cup



The World Cup is a cultural and social occasion before it's a sports tournament

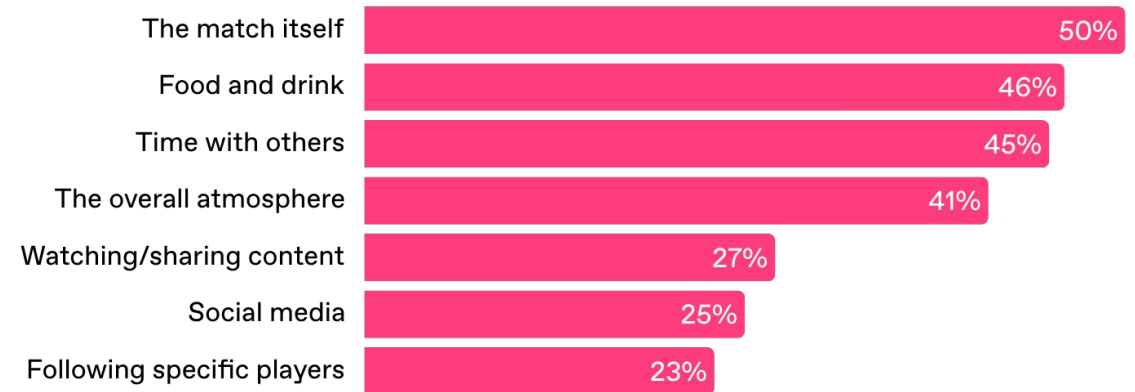
When asked what's important to their World Cup experience, fans rank food and drink (46%), time with others (45%) and the overall atmosphere (41%) alongside the match itself (50%).

For majority of the fans, the **wider cultural and social occasion is just as important as what happens on the pitch** and that's good news for brands well outside the soccer world.

(The gap is tiny. Food and drink (46%) matters nearly as much to fans as the match itself (50%).)

Data source: Zappi survey of 2,000 US respondents, May 2026

What's important to the World Cup experience



Players drive fandom, pop icons drive reach

56% of fans say specific players influence which teams they support, and player association is one of the top drivers of World Cup product purchase intent.

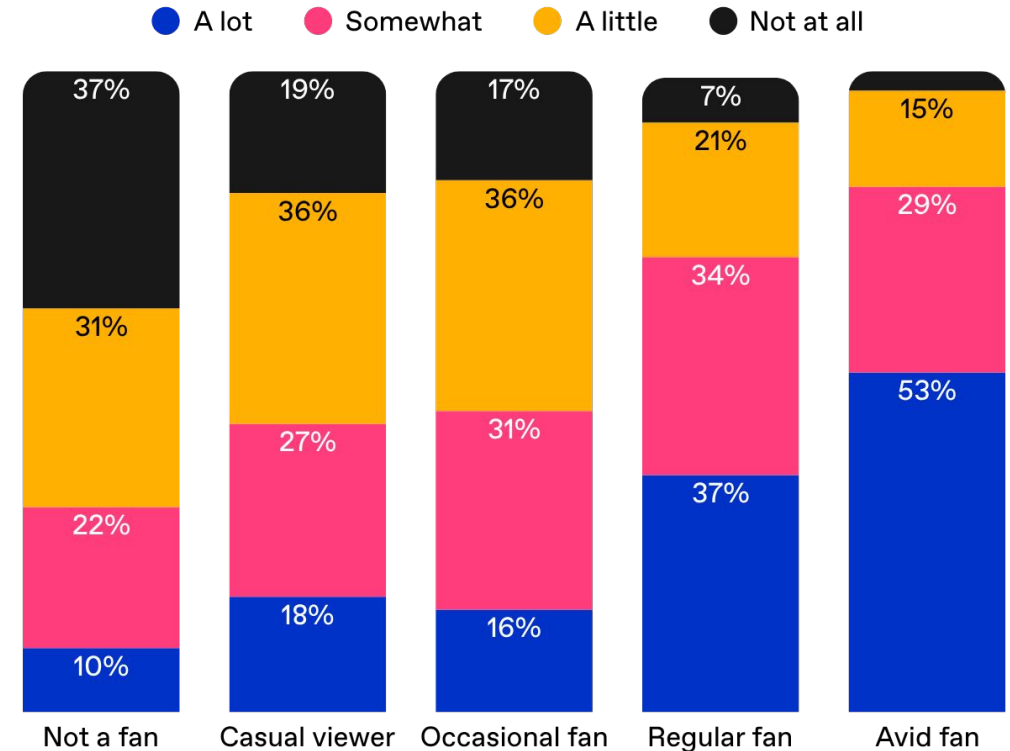
But player influence varies a lot by engagement — only 18% of casual viewers say players influence them a lot, compared to 53% of avid fans.

The most effective player-led campaigns use athletes as cultural figures first and soccer players second, **putting them alongside mainstream celebrities to broaden their appeal well past the devoted fan.**

Players influence 53% of avid fans but only 18% of casual viewers.

Data source: Zappi survey of 2,000 US respondents, May 2026

How much players influence the teams fans support



Products should be part of the experience

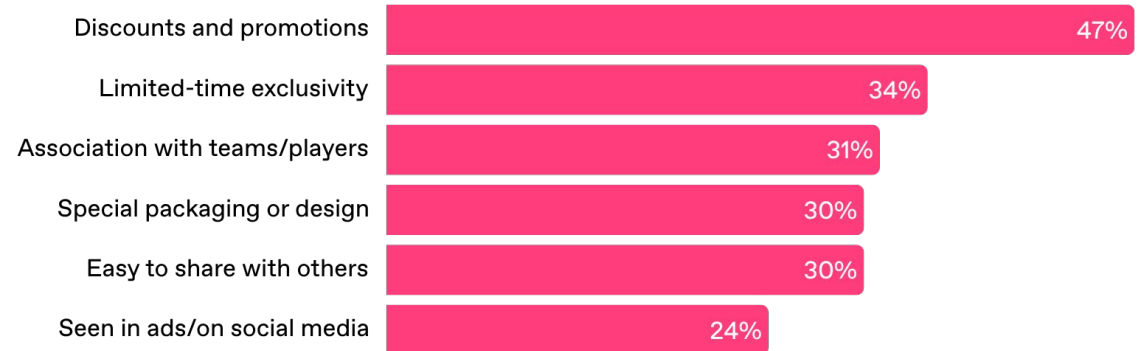
Over half of viewers say they're likely to purchase **limited-edition World Cup products**, and the drivers tell us exactly what they're buying into: exclusivity (34%), special packaging (30%) and products that are easy to share (30%).

They give fans a tangible way to feel part of the moment.

This goes beyond just consumption. The brands that earn a place in the World Cup moment are the ones that make themselves part of the ritual.

52% of viewers are likely to buy a limited-edition World Cup product.

What makes fans likely to purchase World Cup products



Read more about soccer fan culture in the US on our blog

READ MORE

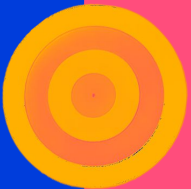
Data source: Zappi survey of 2,000 US respondents, May 2026

FIFA sponsors



We took a deep look at the campaigns of four major FIFA sponsors, and while each one is unique, there are some key similarities:

- **Every brand owns a ritual or a core aspect of the event.** Each brand we looked at tied its campaign to some specific aspect of the overall tournament, like the emotional journey, playful rivalries, game-day prep, etc.
- **Each ad campaign plays a clear role.** Each ad campaign targets a specific audience or conveys a specific message about the brand. Often we see that the FIFA sponsors released some ads that speak to more dedicated fans and some that are more broadly enjoyable. The World Cup has two distinct audiences watching the same tournament, and the brands that speak to both tend to unlock the biggest commercial opportunity.
- **Pop culture casting is prominent throughout.** Many (but not all) FIFA sponsors incorporate famous soccer players as well as broader pop culture celebrities in their ads. That matters because in our data, player influence is largely a devoted fan thing — pop culture figures are the ones who reach everyone else.
- **Limited-time products are earning their place.** All the FIFA sponsors released limited-time FIFA products and we see that they are a core part of the excitement around the event. The best scoring are the ones that give fans something to be a part of, and that maps directly to what fans told us they're buying into.



AB InBev

Key learnings:

- When bringing multiple brands in the same category into a sports sponsorship, **give each brand a clear role** in the campaign and an aspect of the event to own.
- Big sporting events are a powerful opportunity to **build on and reinforce existing brand platforms or associations**. Stella reinforced its premium identity, Corona reinforced its role in Mexican culture, etc.
- **Distinctive brand assets (DBAs) always matter** (Budweiser's iconic red, Stella Artois' chalice, Michelob ULTRA's "superior" language and Corona's crown symbolism and Mexican identity).
- **Celebrities** work best when they **serve an ad's story and don't overshadow the brand**. David Beckham and Lionel Messi work for Stella Artois and Michelob ULTRA because they fit with the story and let the brand shine — even if both of those celebrities are in other ads this season.





AB InBev: Owning the habitual moments

Sponsorship status: Official Beer Sponsor

Ownership: Habitual rituals

Through Budweiser, AB InBev has partnered with FIFA since 1986 as the Official Beer Sponsor — a long-standing role that already makes the brand feel like part of the tournament. For this year's FIFA World Cup, the company is doubling down on that heritage.

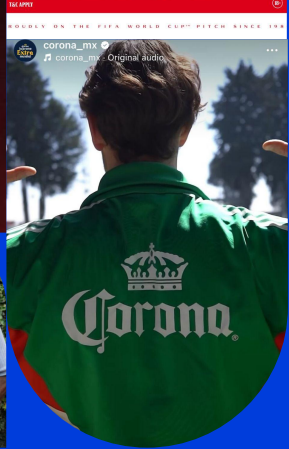
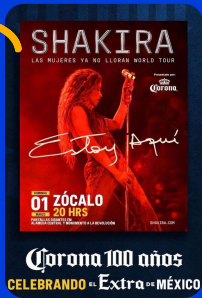
Beer is already a social, habitual choice. Instead of trying to change behavior, AB InBev is focusing on showing up for what fans are already doing, whether that's picking up drinks before kickoff or meeting at “the spot” to celebrate key moments together.

To achieve this, the company is showing up in three main ways across its brands:

1. **Advertising** that centers on fans and shared emotion rather than gameplay.
2. **Limited-edition packaging and apparel** that ties into the tournament and gives fans something tangible to connect with.
3. **On-the-ground experiences**, such as fan zones and watch parties, that bring people together outside the stadium.

As its flagship, Budweiser shares global brand messaging across all markets, Corona specifically targets Mexican audiences and Michelob ULTRA targets US and Canadian consumers.

AB InBev



Budweiser: Flagship global brand

Budweiser is the **emotional and cultural anchor** of AB InBev's overall FIFA World Cup strategy at the global level. Its role in the campaign is to embody the core emotional spectacle of the World Cup event and what it means to fans worldwide.

Budweiser has the longest relationship with FIFA, first partnering with the organization in 1986 — so this year Budweiser is celebrating 40 years as the Official Beer Sponsor of the FIFA World Cup!

The **global platform is centered around the phrase “Let It Pour,”** which refers to the pouring of beer as well as the outpouring of emotion passionate soccer fans experience during an event of this magnitude. The brand says the platform *“captures how that passion spills beyond the pitch – turning bars, homes, and cities into a shared celebration over 39 days. It shows how the world comes together, and strangers become teammates as they cheer on their team with a Budweiser or Budweiser 0.0% in hand.”*

The brand's hero ad, *“Let It Pour,”* follows the ripple effect of World Cup excitement as fans around the world drop what they're doing to get ready and celebrate in their own way. Featuring current and former players **Erling Haaland and Jürgen Klopp**, the spot moves through packed bars, stadiums, lively streets and more, showing beer literally pouring as the energy and emotion of the tournament overflow across different cultures and communities.



Budweiser: “Let It Pour”

“Let It Pour” is a strong ad that lands in the top 20% of US ads in its ability to drive sales and the top 25% in its ability to drive long-term brand equity.

But most importantly, this ad is all about the emotion. “Let It Pour” **aims to replicate the feeling of a goal** — the build up of anticipation and celebration afterward. The ad opens on a trembling pint to build that anticipation rather than a celebration. That opening device is doing emotional work before a single word is spoken and it activates the pre-goal anxiety that every soccer fan carries.

The ad is built to evoke love — and it is the dominant emotion (33% vs 27% norm) — with people feeling it from the first second we see a bottle of Budweiser slide across a bar. But there’s **humor** in there, too. As the chaos takes hold — beer flying upward and fans losing all composure — laughter builds through the back half of the ad. The ad portrays the idea that soccer fandom can be a little over-the-top and people find that funny to watch.

But **Budweiser speaks the language of devoted soccer fandom** — everything from the tensions at the start through to the excitement around scoring a goal and the celebration that follows. This is why love jumps from 33% to 54% among soccer fans. It still works with everyone, but it’s strongest with soccer fans since it’s specific to soccer fandom.

Finally, out of all the AB InBev ads we analyzed in the US, it has the **highest brand recall** (76% vs. 70% norm) — due to its prolific use of the brand’s specific shade of red and the frequent shots of the logo, including on Budweiser cans and glasses of beer!

Sales impact

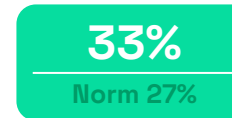


Brand impact

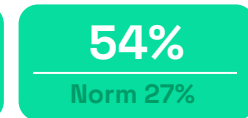


Love 🥰

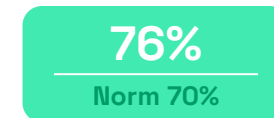
Overall



Soccer fans



Unaided brand recall



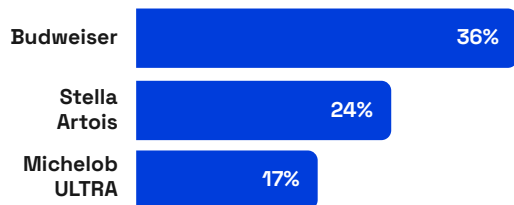
Crisp and refreshing



For people like me



Rooted in tradition



A beer for everyone

We'll get into the specifics of the ads from Stella Artois and Michelob ULTRA in the US, but it's important to compare Budweiser to those ads here to show what role Budweiser is playing in the AB InBev World Cup campaign.

Budweiser leads on **“crisp and refreshing,” “for people like me”** and **“rooted in tradition,”** all qualities that signal the brand is accessible, built for everyone and has a long history — exactly what this ad was designed to convey.

While the other brands are focused on conveying other attributes, Budweiser is leaning on its history to demonstrate that it is the beer of the people, and the one to be shared.

“The refreshing beer shots (made me want a cold one).”

“I like a crowd having fun with Bud.”

“I love how it made people happy and come together for fun.”

“It made me feel like celebrating with a Bud.”



Stella Artois: Sophisticated & social

Stella Artois has always been about **sophistication, slower consumption and premium taste** — ideas that come to life in its iconic chalice lined in gold, its focus on the ritual of pouring and the “A Taste Worth More” campaign launched in 2024 with David Beckham.

These ideas extend naturally into AB InBev’s World Cup campaign, which positions Stella Artois as the **premium beverage for social consumption** in the broader portfolio. The company says that Stella Artois *“is focusing on where the true roar of the game lives – the passionate, shared energy of fans watching together”* and that *“moments of great passion deserve to be savored.”*

Its hero campaign *“Celebration ft. David Beckham”* brings this to life beautifully through visuals, not spoken dialogue. It features David Beckham watching a match in a crowded bar. Suddenly the whole bar erupts in excitement — in slow motion while **Elvis Presley’s “Can’t Help Falling in Love”** plays — and beer glasses are thrown in the air, spilling broken glass and beer everywhere. **Beckham**, while excited, has retained complete control over his Stella Artois (in its iconic chalice) and takes a sip. The ad ends on “A Taste Worth More.”

The brand is also “transforming bars into the ultimate viewing arenas,” launching giveaways with a variety of prizes — including limited-time branded merchandise and items signed by David Beckham — and **limited-time FIFA packaging** on Stella Artois cans.

Stella Artois: “Celebration ft. David Beckham”

This ad is an exceptional all-round performer, landing in the top 10% of US ads for its ability to drive short-term sales and in the top 20% for long-term brand equity.

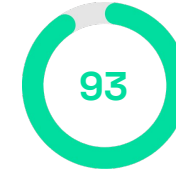
It’s a distinctive ad that makes people love it and laugh during it (Love: 36% vs. 27% norm, Laughter: 12% vs. 7% norm) and it drives strong purchase uplift (39% vs 22% norm).

But most importantly, all those associations Stella Artois wants to convey are coming through. Audiences agree that the ad conveys that Stella Artois is **“great for socializing,” “high quality” and has “great taste”** (57% each).

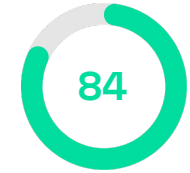
The ad does all of this by showing, not telling. The iconic Stella Artois chalice cues the brand immediately — while also conveying premium and sophistication in the way the chalice always does. And the juxtaposition of celebratory chaos and Beckham’s cool composure tells the story that **Stella Artois is premium and not worth spilling like the rest of the beers.**

Beckham is well loved and an obvious choice for the World Cup given his global soccer credentials. But other brands are featuring him for the same reason. What separates Stella’s casting choice is the consistent narrative behind it and the fact that **the brand’s own DBAs — the chalice, the logo, the tagline — ensure it never gets lost behind the celebrity.**

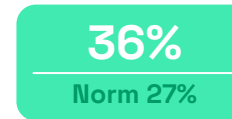
Sales impact



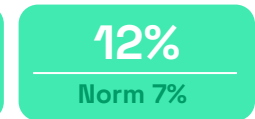
Brand impact



Love 🥰



Laughter 😂



Great for socializing



High quality



Great taste



⇒ Key takeaway ⇒

The importance of DBAs

Stella Artois has been using David Beckham in its advertising for several years — but the brand was wise to remember that Beckham is not a distinctive brand asset. He is connected to a number of other brands this season due to his unique position of being a pop culture figure as well as a former soccer player.

The Stella Artois brand doesn't get lost in this ad thanks to its other DBAs (particularly its iconic chalice) and clear role for the brand.

Always remember that unless you've been exclusively partnering with a celebrity for a long time, that celebrity is not your DBA. You need other brand cues to ensure your brand doesn't get lost.



Priced trial
potential



Breakthrough
potential



Distinctiveness

70%

Norm 73%

Advantage

60%

Norm 49%



Stella Artois: Limited-edition cans

Stella Artois has also released limited-time FIFA World Cup cans. The FIFA branding is subtle for this one — the cans are the brand’s standard white cans with red and gold detail, but with the addition of a **gold FIFA logo with a white FIFA World Cup trophy in the middle.**

These cans score in line with the norm on distinctiveness — understandable considering they aren’t too different from the brand’s original can. But they do stand out for their advantage (60% vs. 49% norm).

And the product’s trial potential is high (89). The price of \$16.99 for a pack of 12 is lower than what people would expect for a premium product, and that drives increased trial.

Importantly, unlike some other brands we’ve featured in this report, **purchase of these exact cans isn’t the primary goal of the campaign.** Driving purchase of any Stella Artois product, particularly in bars and restaurants, is more of the focus. These cans help drive the associations between Stella Artois and the FIFA World Cup, but they are just one piece of the overall campaign.

“I love the sleek and elegant design of the slim cans. The gold accents mixed with the classic Stella branding look incredibly premium, making it feel like a high-end collector’s item for the tournament.”

Michelob ULTRA: Athleticism & active lifestyles

Michelob ULTRA is the most athletic of the AB InBev brands, and it plays a critical role in AB InBev's US and Canada activations. The brand has spent years building an identity around active lifestyles and balanced living, positioning itself as "the superior light beer." Its World Cup campaign extends these ideas into **what "superior" looks like in soccer.**

One critical piece of the campaign is the **Superior Player of the Match trophy**. This physical trophy — complete with Michelob ULTRA red, white and blue branding and the red ribbon in the center — will be awarded to one standout player (selected by fan vote) after each FIFA World Cup match this year. This will reinforce the "superior" connection each match!

And Lionel Messi and Christian Pulisic are the brand ambassadors in this campaign. Messi has been the brand's ambassador since 2023 — and as a globally recognized and exceptionally skilled soccer player, his role in this campaign makes complete sense. American soccer player Christian Pulisic adds additional relevance to the US audience.

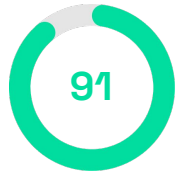
Plus, Michelob ULTRA released a limited-edition **US Soccer Jersey Pack** in the US, inspired by the wavy red stripes kit Team USA will wear for home games and promoted by Christian Pulisic. The ad that announces the product says, *"From what we raise on the flagpole to what we raise in our hand, we've earned these stripes. Superior is brewed here."*



Priced trial
potential



Breakthrough
potential



Distinctiveness

Advantage

71%

Norm 73%

61%

Norm 49%



Michelob ULTRA: Jersey pack

Michelob ULTRA's full FIFA World Cup US packaging makeover achieves high scores for breakthrough and trial potential.

Like Stella Artois, it doesn't stand out as significantly more distinctive than the norm, as it is ultimately the same beer. But it does stand out as more advantageous than the norm — which speaks to the **strength of the Michelob ULTRA brand**. People expect it to be better than average based on their experiences with the brand in the past and the “superior” branding.

And **people love the American design** and the connection to the World Cup!

“The American flag style they went with. Love the red, white and blue theme.”

“I love how it looks like the American flag.”

“I love that it has the American flag stripes and our logo on it.”

“I love it! It's very American.”

“Very unusual packaging really makes it stand out.”

“The USA team promotion and the FIFA World Cup makes it a very exciting tournament.”

Michelob ULTRA: “The Superior Match” (US)

The brand also released a big-budget ad in the US featuring both Lionel Messi and Christian Pulisic — plus Guillermo ‘Memo’ Ochoa, Alex Morgan and even Billy Bob Thornton!

In [“The Superior Match.”](#) a luxury hotel lobby is turned into an impromptu soccer pitch, where the players battle it out in a chaotic, World Cup-style showdown over a bucket of Michelob ULTRAs. The cinematic spot blends humor and high-energy gameplay as hotel guests become spectators, ending with the line **“Superior is worth playing for.”**

This idea of “playing for an ULTRA” is not new for the brand — it has been using it in its ads for many years, including its recent Super Bowl ads. The beer is always positioned as a reward for athleticism and hard work, and “The Superior Match” makes this idea relevant to the World Cup.

It’s an incredibly strong ad, landing in the top 15% of US ads for its ability to drive sales and the top 25% for ability to drive long-term brand equity.

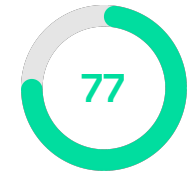
It’s also a very distinctive ad (4.2 vs. 3.7 norm) that people love (33% vs. 27% norm) — with **love spiking as soon as the ULTRAs are wheeled in at the beginning** and when Billy Bob Thornton says “ULTRAs on me!” And crucially, it drives a strong purchase uplift for the brand (33% vs. 22% norm)!

And possibly most important to the overall campaign narrative, the key message “Michelob ULTRA is worth competing for” lands as clear and believable.

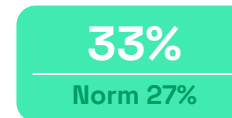
Sales impact



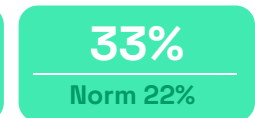
Brand impact



Love 🥰

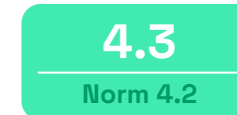


Purchase uplift

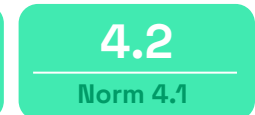


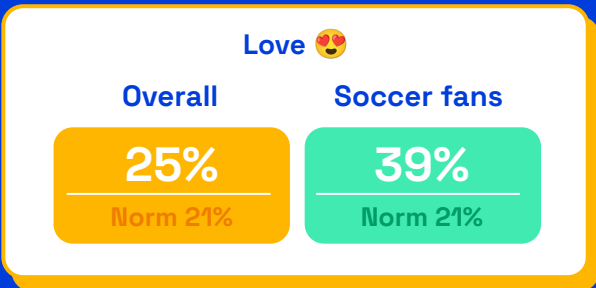
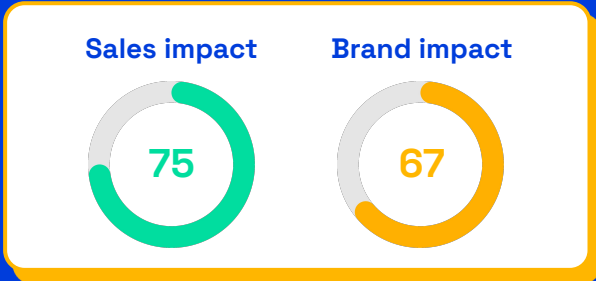
“Michelob ULTRA is worth competing for”

Key message clarity



Key message believability





"The brand represents that they are competitive and will win. And they also feature Team Canada which makes me proud."

"I liked the luxurious setting and how the beer was presented a little bit like champagne on a tray and with ice in a bucket. I liked the competition and the crowd cheering for both teams."

"The real football legends used are fantastic. I liked seeing Lionel Messi play."

Michelob ULTRA Zero: "The Superior Match" (Canada)

Interestingly, the brand released a similar but **slightly different version of this ad for Canada**. In this version, Lionel Messi plays another soccer player for ULTRAs (Michelob ULTRA Zeros this time) in the lobby of the same hotel — but this time the player is Jonathan David, Michelob ULTRA Zero's Canadian athlete ambassador.

In the US version, Pulisic scores, but Billy Bob Thornton interrupts the game to say "ULTRAs on me." In the Canadian version, **David beats Messi and David proclaims, "Game over."**

There's no pop culture celebrity like Billy Bob Thornton in this version, so Michelob was likely assuming that Messi was famous enough in Canada to have broad appeal. That does seem to be the case! **Messi is more recognized in Canada than either Messi or Thornton is in the US.**

But despite that, we see lower levels of love overall compared to the US (Love: 25% vs. 21% norm) — although it jumps up to 39% among soccer fans. With the removal of Billy Bob Thornton (and Alex Morgan who gets a laugh when she says "hold my beer"), the **Canadian version is a bit less funny and a bit more soccer-specific than the American version, which is why it gets more love from soccer fans.** We do see strong spikes of love once David wins and the Canadian fans cheer though — indicating that this moment resonates with Canadians.

Despite lower levels of love, the ad is still successful. It conveys that Michelob ULTRA is "great for socializing" (55%) and it drives a strong purchase uplift for the brand (Purchase uplift: 32% vs. 22% norm)!

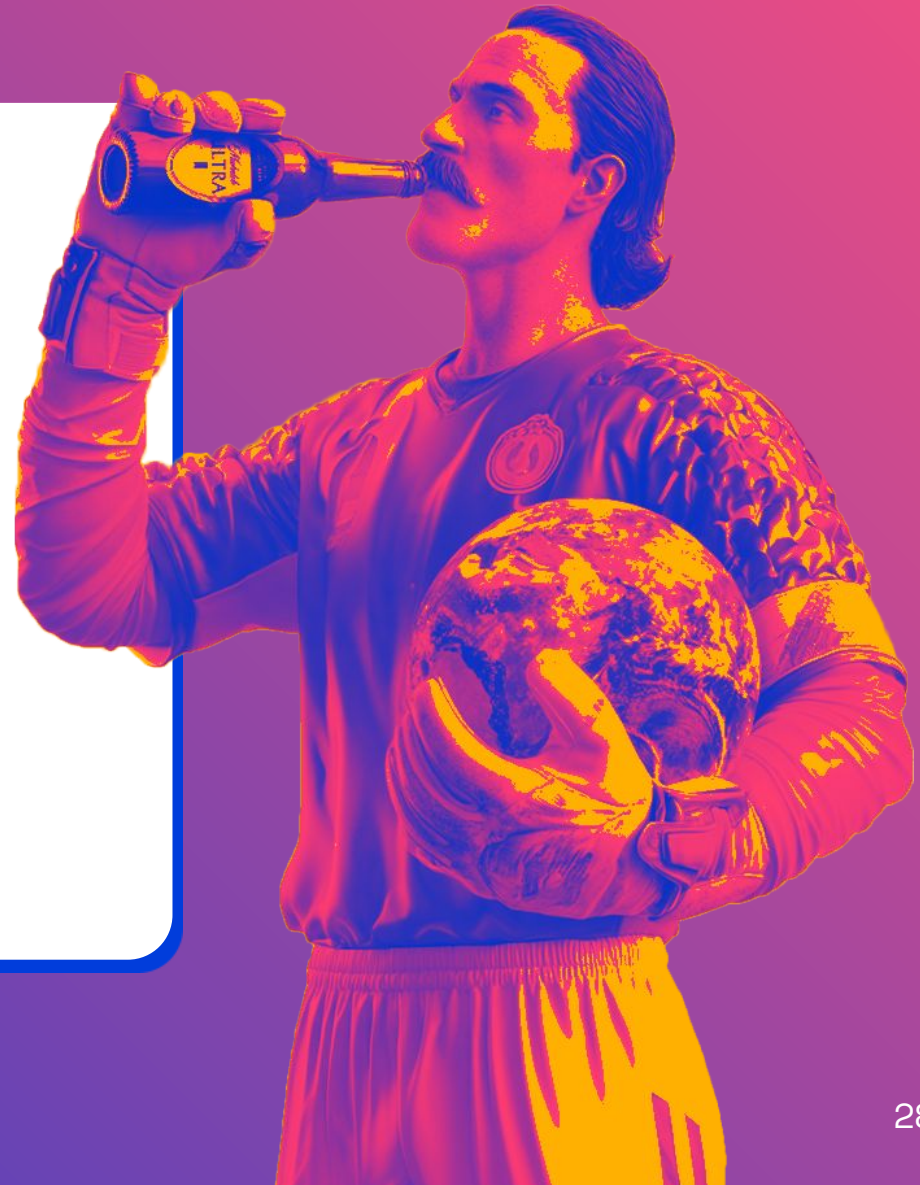
➤Key takeaway➤

Same idea, local execution

A key moment of “The Superior Match” is the national soccer player scoring on soccer legend Lionel Messi. That moment with Christian Pulisic certainly wouldn’t land in Canada, nor would Jonathan David work in the US.

Michelob ULTRA was smart to take the same idea but bring in local players so the winning moment would evoke real national pride.

The result are two versions that generate strong sales and brand impact in their respective countries — exactly what AB InBev is looking for with this campaign.



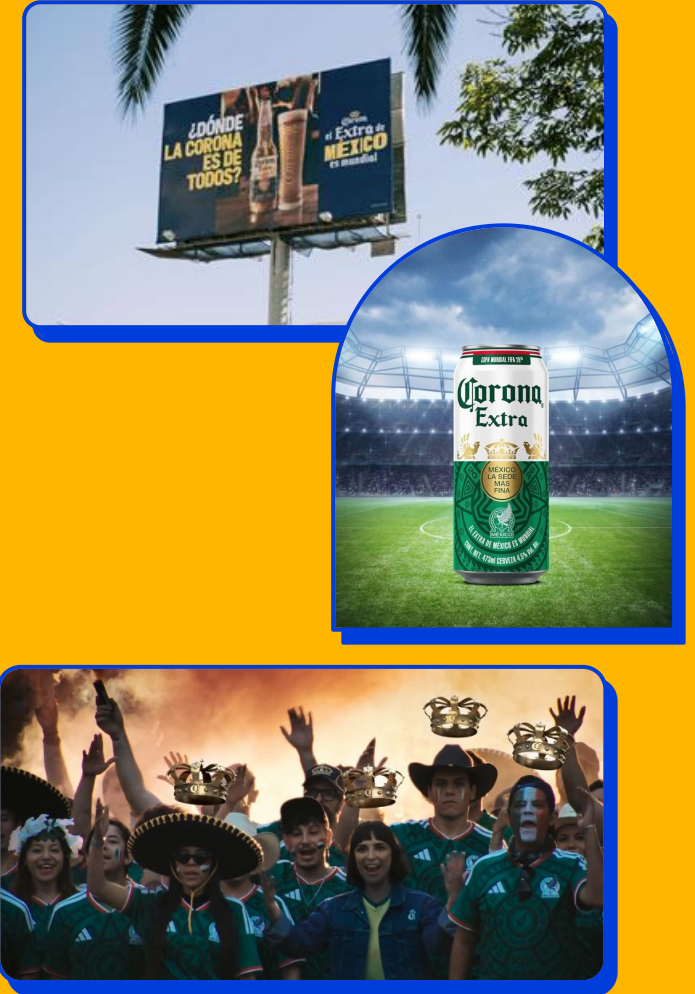
Corona: Mexican culture & spirit

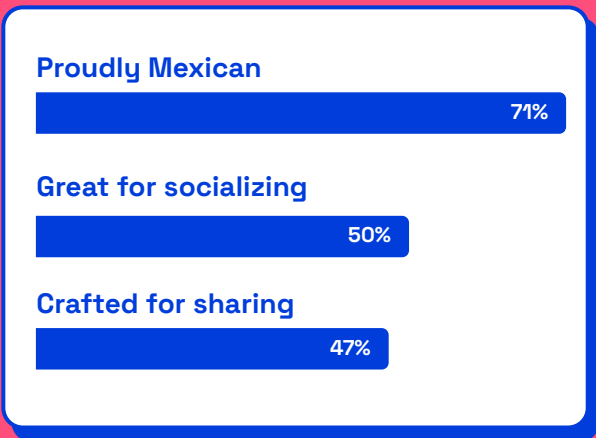
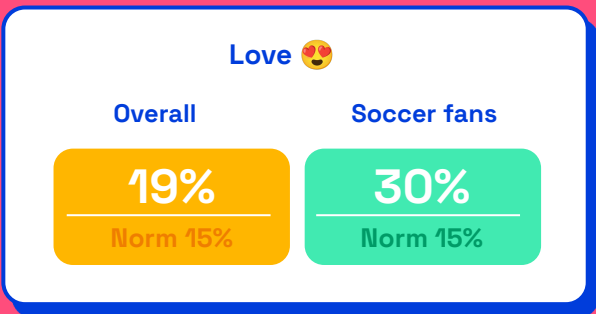
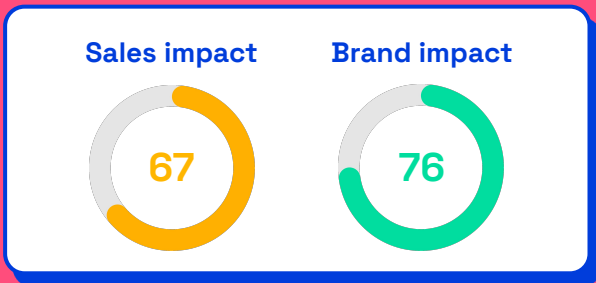
While globally the Corona brand is known for beaches, sunsets and living in the moment, in Mexico it has increasingly embraced the role as a cultural icon — a beer that represents the country's people and traditions. And those themes come through clearly in Corona's World Cup platform **"El Extra de México es Mundial"** ("Mexico's Extra Is World Class"), which celebrates the idea that what makes Mexico "Extra" special isn't *just* its soccer team, but the passion and spirit of its people.

Corona is activating this through **limited-edition packaging**, merchandise, experiential events with **Shakira and partnerships with Mexican soccer legends Jared Borgetti, Pavel Pardo and Oribe Peralta** as well as nationwide celebrations designed to amplify Mexican pride ahead of the country's *third time* hosting the FIFA World Cup!

The brand has also launched **contests that reward fans** by encouraging them to share the uniquely Mexican traditions, rituals and energy they bring to the tournament.

Corona's hero ad **"El Extra de México es Mundial."** brings all of this to life by **focusing on the people of Mexico**, opening with a shot of a stadium lit up by a large Corona sign as the packed red and green stands chant "Mexico! Mexico!" A montage of scenes follow, showing where and how fans celebrate together across neighborhoods, streets, bars and more — with people proudly dressed in their country's colors, steadily chanting throughout. The ad ends with Mexican soccer stars Jared Borgetti and Oribe Peralta and the words "El Extra de México es Mundial."





Corona: El Extra de México es Mundial

This is a strong brand-building ad from Corona (Brand impact: 76). It has two key strengths. The first is that it is incredibly well-branded, with **an amazing 91% unaided brand recall!** The second is that it effectively conveys Mexican pride.

Viewers loved how the ad celebrated Mexican identity, culture and passion for soccer. Many said it made them feel “proud to be Mexican” and positioned Mexico as the ideal World Cup host. An incredible 71% of people agreed the **ad demonstrated that Corona was “proudly Mexican.”** People particularly liked the wave in the stadium turning into beer being poured in a wave shape and the crowns in the ad which conveyed the idea that **“Mexico takes the crown.”**

But despite the fact that it resonated most deeply with soccer fans who love it (Love: 30% vs. 15% norm) and find it very relevant (Relevance: 4.1 vs. 3.7 norm) — it still builds the Corona brand with non-fans as intended!

Translated from Spanish:

“It is true that the best beers are Mexican and I know they are known worldwide.”

“It’s a source of pride to see the support for the country’s team.”

“All the visuals, like the wave of people transforming into a wave of beer, represent the community spirit and enthusiasm of Mexicans. And they say Mexico takes the crown.”

Diageo

Key takeaways:

- The World Cup is about much more than the game itself so there are many ways to give a brand a role in the event — Diageo focuses on ideas of **victory, rivalries, community, etc.**
- It's important to **play the portfolio game strategically.** Diageo taps into different occasions consistent with each brand's positioning in a way that ensures each brand plays in its own lane.
- **Limited-time products and advertising don't exist in isolation,** they are both part of the broader campaign and land best when they're working together to share the message.
- **Cultural targeting works best when it's specific and authentic** — Buchanan's World Cup campaign targets US hispanics, and it works because it's based on the community's existing associations with the brand.

Diageo: Elevating the moment

Sponsorship status: Official Spirits Supporter

Ownership: New rituals

With brands like Don Julio, Casamigos, Buchanan's, Johnnie Walker and Smirnoff, Diageo focuses on premium, social occasions. And the global spirits leader is certainly leaning into this in its role as the Official Spirits Supporter for the World Cup.

The company's goal isn't to be the default drink at kickoff, but to shape how people choose to celebrate. That might mean pre-match cocktails or more elevated, intentional ways to mark key moments. Rather than replacing existing habits, Diageo aims to add to them.

To achieve this, Diageo is showing up in three main ways across its brands:

1. **On-the-ground activations** across all 16 host cities
2. **New advertising campaigns** across brands, focused on gestures, rivalry and togetherness rather than gameplay
3. **Limited edition bottles** (one of Diageo's biggest plays) positioned as collectibles



Diageo



Specific roles for each brand

As a first-time FIFA World Cup sponsor, we were looking forward to seeing which brands Diageo leveraged as part of its campaign and how they each showed up.

What's most interesting about Diageo's approach is how integrated it is. Each brand has a **clear role in the campaign** — owning an aspect of the World Cup or a critical audience segment.

And their roles are played out through *both* their ad campaigns and their limited-time product launches.

For example, in the US:

- **Don Julio** is focused on the feeling of victory and what it feels like to win. It leverages cinematic visuals, an emotional tone and a premium, collectible product.
- **Casamigos** is focused on watch parties and playful rivalries between friends. It leverages a light and fun tone and has a more accessible price point.
- **Buchanan's** has a targeted focus on Latino culture, focused on the passion Hispanic fans have for soccer. It leverages a celebratory tone with a specific focus on music.

All of it comes together to create an incredible opportunity for Diageo to drive sales and build long-term brand equity for some of its top brands.





Don Julio: Victory

Don Julio's presence in the World Cup is all about sophistication, celebration and the feeling of victory. How do you convey what winning feels like in a bottle of tequila? In Don Julio's case, it's done by modeling it after the World Cup trophy!

The FIFA World Cup trophy is very distinctive as a tall, golden statue lined in green. Don Julio took key recognizable elements from the trophy — the height and the gold and green coloring — and brought them into the iconic Don Julio 1942 bottle shape. The result is a striking bottle that definitely **reminds us of the FIFA trophy**.

The connection to the FIFA trophy is made even clearer in the brand's hero ad, ["Made to Be Raised."](#)

This cinematic ad features Thierry Henry, one of the greatest soccer players of all time, in a crowded party holding the limited-edition Don Julio 1942 FIFA World Cup bottle. At one point, he pauses and kisses the bottle — a nod to his soccer legacy — before lifting it up above his head.

The ad closes on a clean shot of the limited-edition bottle, alongside the line: **"Made to Be Raised."**

Don Julio: “Made to Be Raised”

“Made to Be Raised” scores in the top 25% of US ads for its ability to drive sales, but about average on long-term brand equity. Among soccer fans, however, the ad scores in the top 10% for both sales and brand impact. The significance of the FIFA World Cup trophy and the feelings associated with winning it understandably resonate more strongly with soccer fans.

But regardless of soccer fan status, the ad lands the associations it’s meant to, standing out for **“high quality” (57%)**, **“premium/luxury feel” (49%)**, **“great taste” (46%)** and **“rooted in tradition” (28%)** — all attributes we’d expect a premium brand and a cinematic ad to convey.

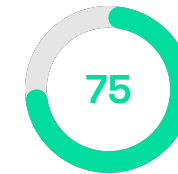
How did this ad convey these attributes? It comes down to **deliberate creative choices**. The gold bottle in the opening seconds, the cinematic lighting, the slow-motion shots, and most importantly, the raise — **every choice is telling the same premium story**. And respondents felt it, saying things like:

“The ad looked premium and visually appealing, with high-quality imagery and a clear focus on the product. It effectively communicated a luxury feel and made the tequila seem special and well-crafted.”

“I liked the stylish visuals and the focus on fun social moments. It made the brand feel premium and enjoyable.”

Sales impact

Overall



Soccer fans

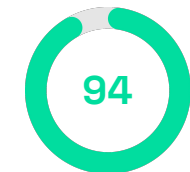


Brand impact

Overall



Soccer fans



High quality



Premium/luxury feel



Great taste



Rooted in tradition



Don Julio 1942 FIFA World Cup Edition

The limited-edition gold Don Julio 1942 bottle stands out in the category with its strong breakthrough potential (91). Unpriced trial potential is quite high as well (81), though it drops to 19 once price is a consideration. This is what we'd expect from a high-priced, premium limited-edition bottle.

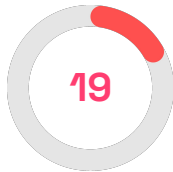
Don Julio is an **aspirational brand**, and this product is more than the premium tequila itself — it's meant to be a **collectible item that is displayed**. The goal of this product isn't broad appeal or multiple purchases, it's meant to be purchased by a specific, high-income consumer who buys it once for a singular occasion.

Consumers instantly understand that from seeing this product, calling it “**elegant**,” “**premium**,” “**expensive-looking**” — and noting that they want to have it on their shelves as decoration. So while the price significantly affects people's willingness to buy it, that's the point with a premium product like this.

Unpriced trial
potential



Priced trial
potential



Breakthrough
potential



Distinctiveness

78%

Norm 73%

Advantage

55%

Norm 49%

“It looks expensive. Very elegant and sophisticated.”

“I loveeee the color.”

“I like both the color and design of this product. I might buy it just to set it up as a decoration.”

“I like the display-ability of the bottle. Very good looking and stands out in a crowded cabinet.”

“The bottle itself says everything! That gold with the green top.”

“It looks premium.”

Casamigos: Watch parties & playful rivalries

Friendly rivalries are a core aspect of viewing experience of the World Cup — and that's the direction of the Casamigos brand, the Official Margarita of the World Cup. While everything about Don Julio's approach to the World Cup screams "premium," Casamigos' approach shows it's **more accessible and for everyone**.

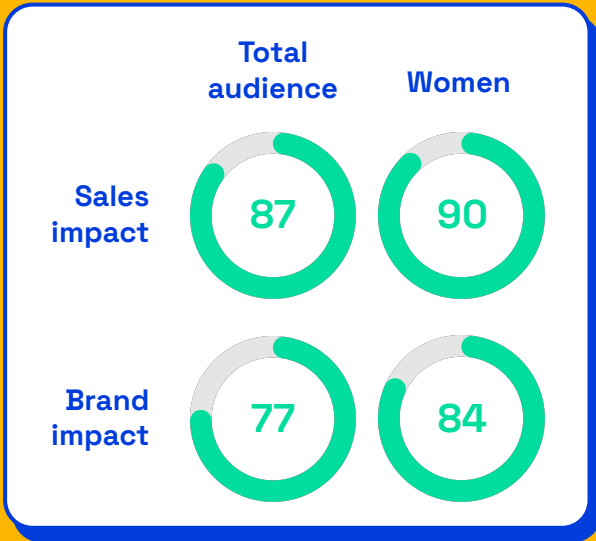
Much like with Don Julio's activations, the idea of playful rivalries shows up in the limited-edition product — or in this case, two products. Because you can't have a rivalry with just one team! Casamigos released **two ready-to-drink margaritas**: Classic Lime Margarita and Spicy Margarita. "Team Classic or Team Spicy?" Together the two products sell the idea of **"picking a team."**

And the idea is further brought to life in the brand's ad campaign, ["This Calls for Casamigos."](#)

The ad features celebrities Keegan-Michael Key and Gabrielle Union bantering with one another and making playful claims about their soccer skills — comparing themselves to different types of players. There's a sense of **friendly competition** in their exchange, with both leaning into the rivalry around the game.

The tone softens as they acknowledge that when margaritas are involved, they can be **"Rivals at the game, Casamigos at the bar."**





Casamigos: “This Calls for Casamigos”

“This Calls for Casamigos” lands in the top 15% of US ads for sales impact (87) and in the top 25% for brand impact (77).

The strength is consistent across audiences — but women stand out. Among women, sales impact reaches 90 and brand impact 84. Notably the ad is driving increased purchase consideration among women as well as building a stronger brand relationship with them. In a tournament historically dominated by male viewership, Casamigos is making its deepest impression with an audience that World Cup advertisers don’t always reach.

Most importantly, **“This Calls for Casamigos” drives strong associations with “Great for socializing” (64%), “Great taste” (52%), “Crafted for sharing” (41%) and “Suitable for any occasion” (39%).** These are the precise attributes that make a brand the natural choice for a watch party and clearly differentiate it from the Don Julio approach.

A key goal of this ad is accessibility, and a big part of that comes from the casting choice. “This Calls for Casamigos” cast Gabrielle Union and Keegan-Michael Key — pop culture figures rather than soccer icons. Celebrity appeal comes in at 4.3 vs 3.9 norm, a standout metric for the ad.

People recognize them and like them and their banter together, and so while the two celebrities are talking about soccer, **the ad still appeals to everyone!**

Casamigos: Classic Lime & Spicy Margaritas

In contrast to Don Julio, the Casamigos Classic Lime and Spicy Margaritas are **built for repeat purchase and broad trial**, which maps to the watch party occasion the campaign is built around.

Both margaritas have high breakthrough and trial potential, which means they stand out in the category and are likely to be purchased.

Classic Lime is the most broadly appealing with the higher priced trial potential (99). But **Spicy Margarita is the more exciting and innovative product** with the higher breakthrough potential (95), largely driven by its exceptionally high distinctiveness score (81% vs. 73% norm)

Overall, the RTD products are likely to drive sales for Casamigos.

Classic Lime:

"I like that it is ready to serve, does not require too many different purchases for one flavor."

"Smooth, refreshing and super easy to serve chilled."

"Good size for serving at parties, container being a bottle not a can, made with a name brand spirit."

Spicy:

"I always love a good margarita but with a little spice kick sounds amazing."

"I love the design of the bottle. The spicy concept is intriguing and it seems like the flavor would be good."

"I like that it's a spicy Margarita, it's different."



Distinctiveness

Classic Lime

70%

Norm 73%

Spicy

81%

Norm 73%



⇒ Key takeaway ⇒

Two portfolio brands shouldn't compete

Diageo has two tequila brands activating around the FIFA World Cup, but they're playing very different roles.

Casamigos has broadly appealing, celebrity-led creative and ready-to-drink margaritas priced for accessibility. Don Julio has cinematic creative and a premium product that's meant to be collected by those who value what the product stands for. Neither ad is trying to do the other's job, and each product plays in its own lane.

This is a portfolio strategy working exactly as designed. For any brand with multiple products showing up at the same cultural moment, the Diageo tequila playbook is worth studying!



Buchanan's: Culture & celebration

Moving on to whiskey, let's look at Buchanan's. Culture and celebration play a massive role in the World Cup. You truly can't have an event at this scale without it. Through Buchanan's — a brand that's long positioned itself around the idea of familia and shared celebration — Diageo is leaning heavily on the idea of **communal moments of celebration within the Latino community**.

As a key audience for the World Cup, this feels particularly natural (for both the event and the brand). Watching soccer is often seen as a shared ritual across many Latino communities, and Buchanan's is positioning itself at the center of those moments.

To bring this to life, the brand has launched a limited-edition, **four-bottle FIFA World Cup collection** designed in partnership with Kids of Immigrants, an organization known for celebrating immigrant identity and multicultural belonging. The illustrations across the bottles are **inspired by the streets, stadiums, neighborhoods and fan energy that define soccer culture**.

Each bottle carries a name tied to a different part of the fan experience:

El Ritmo | La Calle (The Rhythm | The Street), **Mi Gente | Mi Juego** (My People | My Game), **Un Balón | Un Sueño** (One Ball | One Dream) and **El Golazo | La Fiesta** (The Goal | The Party).



What people say:

"I like that it's celebrating the World Cup and soccer in a way that doesn't feel disingenuous and it has a unique flavor that is in line with the branding."

"I like that it comes in two different flavors. I like the design of the bottle and the story of the immigrant children."

"I love the design and the names plus the pineapple flavor looks like it could be amazing."

"I like the colors, but I really like how each bottle is like a story of the collection itself."

"I like the overall design and ties to Latin culture."

Buchanan's: Authenticity with Hispanic consumers

Since the Buchanan's campaign is targeted very precisely to US Hispanics, we analyzed how the whiskey collection resonates with that population specifically. And the short answer is: it resonates exceptionally well. But before we get into the numbers, let's look at what people like about the line of whiskeys.

The **collectible, limited-edition bottles** were by far the biggest draw. Many people saw the bottles as display-worthy or giftable. The bottle design strongly resonated, with consumers repeatedly mentioning the **vibrant colors, artwork, trophy imagery, labels, wax seals and premium aesthetic**.

The **pineapple flavor** generated the most curiosity and excitement. Even non-whisky drinkers said the tropical flavor made the product feel more unique and fun.

People also appreciated the **tie to soccer culture**, and the cultural relevance and **Hispanic representation** mattered. Respondents appreciated the collaboration with Kids of Immigrants and felt the campaign celebrated their culture authentically rather than superficially.

And the creative naming and storytelling helped to elevate the collection. **People liked that each bottle had its own identity, story and tournament-inspired theme.**

Buchanan's: Authentic representation

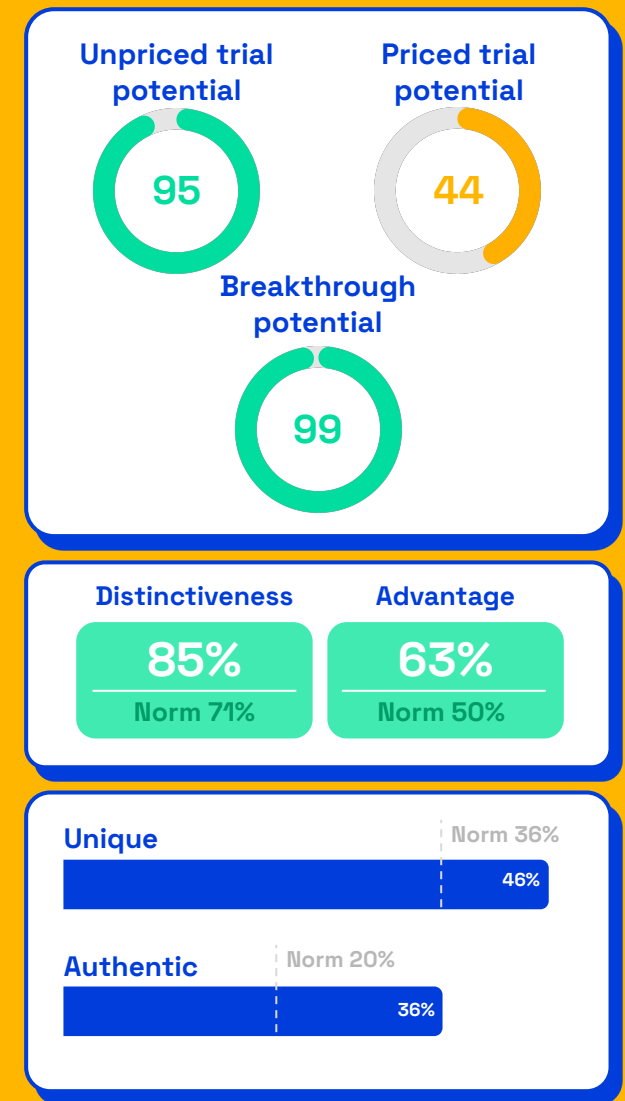
With all of that in mind, it's no surprise at all that the whiskeys score exceptionally well in breakthrough for US Hispanics (99)! The products are seen as incredibly distinctive and advantageous. Not only do they stand out, but **people love them** (Love: 26% vs. 20% norm)!

We looked at the set of all four bottles together, which costs \$179.99 at full price. Unpriced trial potential is incredibly high at 95, but with a higher price point, we naturally see a lower priced trial potential of 44.

Buchanan's was smart to release each bottle individually, as well as smaller 50 ml packs with the pineapple flavor to **allow people to buy at lower price points**.

Overall, this example from Buchanan's is a **masterclass in targeting a specific group of consumers in an authentic way** that doesn't feel like pandering (and it's worth noting that these products are seen as more "authentic" than the alcohol category).

It isn't just the connection to soccer that's working here, it's **the full story around the products**. The whiskey names and what they mean, the artwork and where it's sourced from, even the brand itself — its existing popularity with Hispanics and its connections to celebrations in the community — all ladders up to a line of products that feels credible and exciting to the group of people it's targeted to.



**Data reflects US Hispanics only*

⇒ Key takeaway ⇒

Resonating with the Hispanic audience

The US Hispanic audience is one of particular importance for World Cup marketers. They drive a large portion of soccer's viewership and often have deep emotional connections to the sport — which is critical in a country that hasn't historically embraced soccer.

Diageo's strategy with Buchanan's is a smart one. The company selected a brand that already has ties to the community and built its World Cup campaign all around authentically representing them. It's the type of play that could come across as forced or stereotypical if done incorrectly — but Buchanan's did it well.

Always do your research when undertaking a strategy like this to ensure your campaigns authentically resonate!



Unilever

Key learnings:

- While food and beverage brands tend to dominate sports marketing, **personal care fits here too as part of getting “game day ready.”**
- Sports marketing can be overtly about driving sales. **Unilever’s approach is meant to drive immediate sales** with a wide-scale retail distribution and a line of products designed to grab attention in-store.
- Sports sponsorships should **show off a brand’s identity** rather than overpower it. All of the Unilever limited-time products keep the core the brand while bringing in FIFA in intentional ways.
- **Creator ecosystems** can be just as important as traditional advertising. While Unilever has launched ads as part of this campaign, its strongest asset is its creator-led content.



Unilever: Leading the everyday

Sponsorship status: Official Personal Care Sponsor

Ownership: Everyday rituals

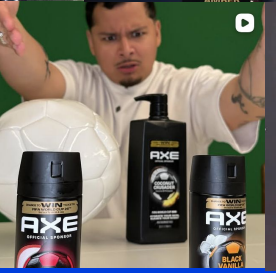
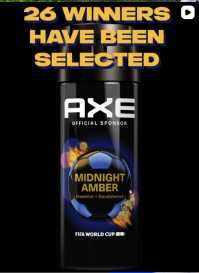
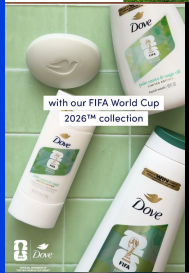
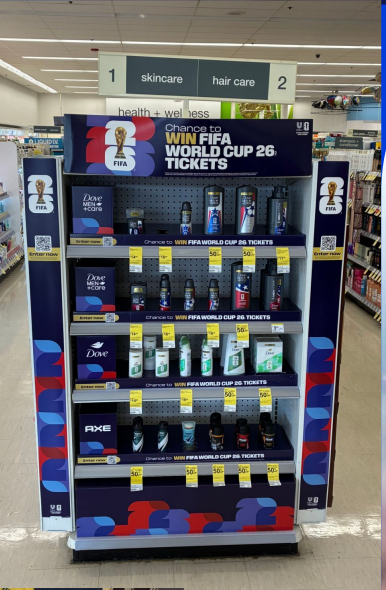
Unilever's sponsorship of the 2026 FIFA World Cup represents the company's biggest ever sports partnership activation — and one of the biggest innovation pushes of any sponsor this year.

Instead of trying to own the big emotional moments, Unilever's approach focuses on the everyday: from the preparation before going to a match or watch party to the clean up at the end of it all.

To bring this to life for the World Cup, Unilever is launching major activations across its portfolio:

- **A huge wave of limited-edition World Cup products** across brands
- **Advertising campaigns and platforms** across brands and categories with customized storytelling for each
- **Social-first, creator-led content** through thousands of influencers across markets and social channels
- **Retail-first execution** spanning in-store displays, Point of Sale (POS) materials and cross-brand shelving to dominate personal care aisles
- **Contests and chances to win** tickets, prizes and experiences through product purchases





A massive innovation launch

Unilever has one of the **biggest innovation pushes** we've seen across any sponsor this year.

The company has launched a huge wave of World Cup products across many of its personal care brands, including deodorants (sprays, sticks, roll-ons), body washes & 3-in-1 products, all featuring FIFA branding, limited edition designs, scents and collectible packaging.

In the US, our favorites include:

- **Dove Men+Care:** A line of body & face washes and deodorants with red, white and blue packaging and soccer-related scent names like “Fresh Victory” and “Striker Swag.”
- **Dove:** A limited-edition palo santo & sage oil scent with light green packaging and a prominent FIFA World Cup trophy featured on deodorant, body washes, beauty bars and body scrubs.
- **Axe:** A fragrance collection featuring four existing scents in the brand's traditional black packaging, but this time featuring soccer balls.

This feels like a very intentional strategy to target multiple consumer segments with new products that tie to the World Cup. With the company's broad distribution, large in-store displays, massive influencer and social push and a ticket giveaway (where shoppers can win a chance to win FIFA World Cup tickets with the purchase of any Unilever FIFA World Cup product) — **it's clear Unilever's primary goal is to drive immediate sales.**



Limited-time products people want to try

The limited-edition World Cup products from all three brands perform incredibly well. All three have very high breakthrough potential — which means they all stand out in the category as unique and different.

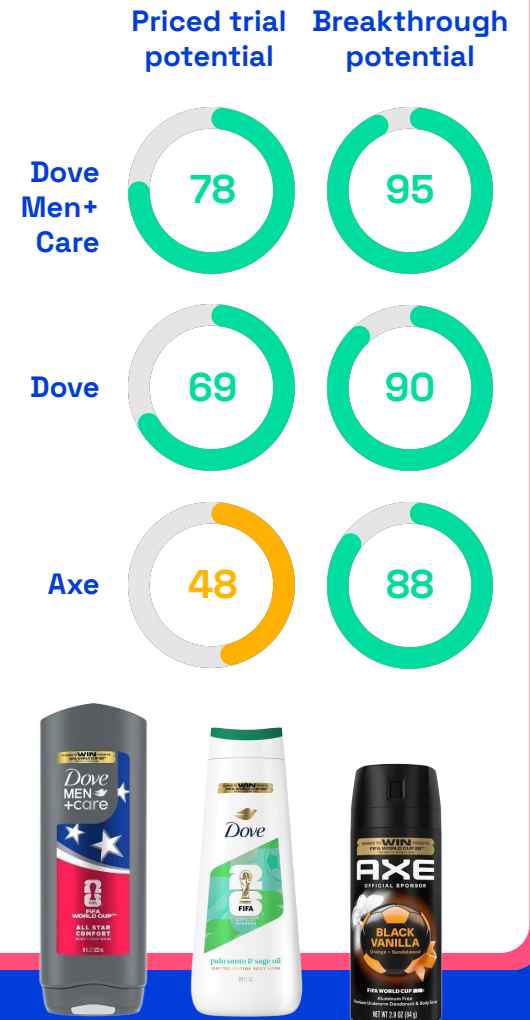
Dove and Dove Men+Care both have a high trial potential (landing in the top third of our database for personal care products), indicating broad appeal. Axe scores slightly lower on trial potential because it appeals most to men and 18-34 year olds — exactly the groups the Axe brand targets.

Of the three, **Dove Men+Care has the highest priced trial potential** (78). In promotional images, Unilever typically centers this brand, and that seems like the right choice as it's the brand that's most likely to drive purchases. People expect the new scents to smell good and they like the fun names of the products.

Axe stands out as most distinctive (73% vs. 65% norm), with many citing its sleek black packaging as bold and attractive. The scents were also noted as unique. **Dove is seen as the most relevant** (69% vs. 63% norm). Many were drawn to the idea of the new scent and thought the packaging was attractive.

Across the board, the **Dove and Axe brands were cited as well-loved and trusted**. People referenced how they believe the products will smell good and, in the case of the Dove products, be good for their skin, because they have had great experiences with the brands in the past.

It's a testament to the great brands Unilever has built over the years!



What people say



“I like the brand, it’s been a **trusted brand** for years.”

“Dove’s scents are always phenomenal.”

“I like the catchy names.”

“I like that it comes in **many different fragrances** inspired by the World Cup.”

“I like the bold red and blue design with a star which looks eye-catching and sporty.”

“I like that Dove is affiliated with the World Cup and has packaging and fragrances to celebrate that fact.”

“I like the **QR code to scan for a chance to win tickets**--cool.”



“I like how bold the package is.”

“Love the colors on the packaging.”

“The packaging looks clean and modern, and the black design makes it stand out.”

“I like that the **scent names** are clear and sound more premium than typical body sprays.”

“I like the **different colors**, it makes it easier to know which one is it.”

“I like the different color ball image and that it reflects scent.”

“I like the FIFA specific image.”

“I like the **limited edition** packaging and how it’s soccer themed.”



“I have **always liked and used Dove** skincare products I think they are some of the best on the market.”

“I love Dove moisturizer, but I **really like the palo alto with sage oil scent**.”

“This seems like a unique scent. I’ve never really seen this innovative combination before.”

“I love the packaging, it’s **super confident and cute**.”

“I enjoy these colors. Kind of matches the scent.”

“The FIFA World Cup edition packaging is really cool. Great collectible for football fan.”

“The chance to win tickets with the purchase just makes soccer fans want to try it more!!”



A strategic approach to incorporating soccer & FIFA

One of the things we like most about Unilever's approach is how each brand brings the World Cup into its design while retaining the core of the brand's look. All the products keep their typical shapes while Dove is still white, Dove Men+Care is gray and Axe is black. The **brands stand out and don't get lost in the FIFA partnership.**

Dove Men+Care leans the most in the athletic direction, with soccer-specific scent names and the red, white and blue coloring of the US team that makes the FIFA partnership pop — yet it's still generically patriotic enough to attract non-soccer fans.

Most of the scents in the Axe line are not new to the brand, and traditionally they each have their own color scheme to identify them. The FIFA World Cup version keeps that traditional color scheme so the scent is recognizable, but **prominently features a soccer ball** in the center to connect it to the sport. It's subtle, but still noticeable.

Dove is the least associated with soccer. The products feature a softer green color with no soccer imagery, but with the gold trophy which ties it into FIFA and pairs nicely with the green — you might be drawn to it even if you aren't familiar with the World Cup. The new scent makes that even more appealing, with many people describing it as being intriguing and wanting to try it.

Unilever has clearly thought through how to **bring FIFA authentically into each brand** in a way that extends beyond soccer fans. Driving a large volume of sales during the World Cup period requires more than interest from passionate soccer fans — which all of these products achieve.



➤Key takeaway➤

Personal care is personal

Each Unilever product's look is clearly meant to appeal to the primary user of each brand.

This is extremely important in a category like personal care, which is (obviously) extremely personal — with big differences in preferences across ages and genders. Unilever's portfolio is designed to ensure that the company has a brand for everyone, and its approach to the World Cup is no different.

The bold visual approach Dove Men+Care uses would likely not appeal to the typical Dove user. The softer visual approach Dove uses would likely not appeal to the typical Axe user. The designs are meant to grab the attention of a specific demographic and make them feel comfortable keeping these products in their bathrooms and reaching for them every morning.

It's an important reminder to keep your target consumer in mind when designing your packaging, even for limited-time products like these.



Dove: #KeepHerConfident

The messaging around each brand's new FIFA World Cup products also **reflect the identity of that brand**.

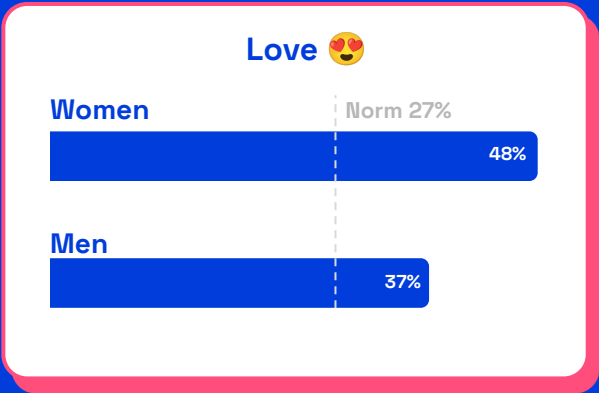
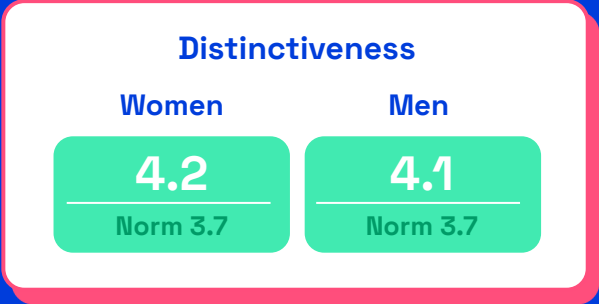
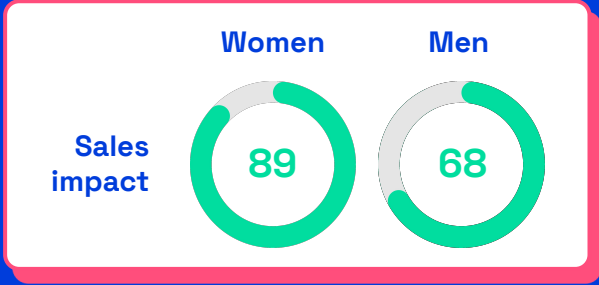
For example, Dove's messaging is centered around the brand's existing **#KeepHerConfident** platform. According to Dove, *"1 in 2 girls who quit sports are criticized for their body type. But when it comes to sports, there is no 'right' body type. We're on a mission to build the body confidence and self-esteem of girls, to make sure they feel unstoppable."*

It's a cause that Dove has the right to own. The brand has been championing real beauty and issues affecting self-esteem for women and girls for decades. This message fits right in with everything Dove supports.

This message comes through loud and clear in the brand's owned social channels as well as its large-scale creator partnership program. Creators around the country are promoting the FIFA World Cup products while talking about the overall brand message. In one example, [@simplycolette](#) says, *"Looking back I realize sports builds confidence, and that's the kind of confidence I want my daughter to grow up with. Knowing every Dove purchase keeps girls confident and in sports makes it even better."* While sharing these thoughts, she shows herself shopping for the Dove FIFA World Cup line at Target and then using the products herself.

The brand is also **featuring its Super Bowl ad from earlier this year**, *"The Game is Ours."* in this campaign. With its purpose-driven #KeepHerConfident message and its focus on athleticism, it's a strong ad Dove can use for a while— not just one time in the Super Bowl.





A message women love

There’s so much inclusion in “The Game is Ours,” and audiences notice and appreciate it. It helps to make the statement that all girls deserve to have sports in their lives.

And this ad **stands out and has the power to make you pay attention**. The silence is loud at the beginning — and it’s punctuated by a poignant drum beat of the girls clapping throughout the rest of the ad. Both men and women find this ad very distinctive.

But the Dove brand is targeted to women and so, unsurprisingly, the **ad resonates most strongly with women**. They enjoy it more, find it most relevant and — most importantly — they respond with higher levels of love (Love: 48% for women vs. 37% for men). But it’s worth noting that while women love it more, men DO still love it. Compared to a norm of 27%, both groups love the ad. It’s just the women who love it the most.

As a result of its stronger resonance with women, we see a higher sales impact for women compared to men as well (Sales impact: 89 for women, 68 for men).

Overall, this ad lands very well for the female target audience — but still holds men’s attention. And it fits perfectly with Dove’s decades-long emotional, mission-driven approach. A strong choice for its World Cup campaign this year!

“I like how it represented women in all types of sports and sizes to let them feel empowered by ability instead of appearance.”

“I liked how it’s promoting everyday girls. They have all kinds of skin tones and body types and that is beautiful.”

Dove Men+Care: Fresh, dry, game-day ready

While Dove's messaging is focused on body confidence, Dove Men+Care has a more traditional sports-and-performance approach centered on **freshness, confidence and "game readiness."** Yet while some sports-related messaging might focus on extreme athleticism, Dove Men+Care is focused on the everyday and building your "winning routine." It's about showcasing how Dove Men+Care is a **part of the fan experience**, from getting ready in the morning to washing off body paint after the game.

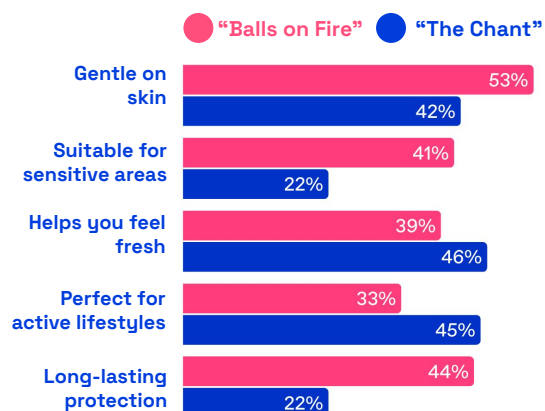
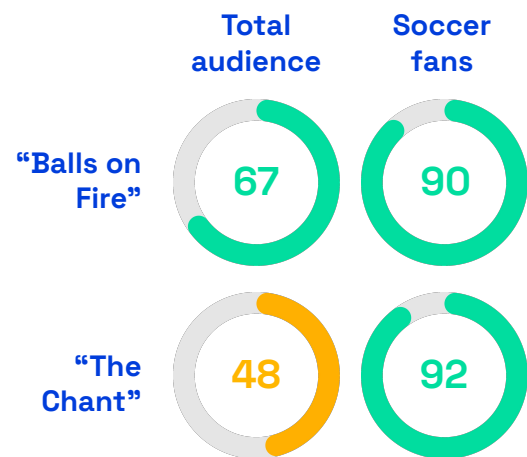
Like Dove, Dove Men+Care has a big creator-led social push to get the "game-day readiness" message out there — featuring both male and female creators. In one sponsored Instagram post, US National Soccer Hall of Fame inductee [Clint Dempsey](#) promoted the products saying, *"My go-to move for staying fresh for the FIFA World Cup '26: Stocking up on the right grooming essentials."*

But the brand also has several traditional ads. **"The Chant"** is its **hero ad**, which tells an emotional story about what it means to be a devoted fan and the role of Dove Men+Care in that experience. Featuring The White Stripes' "Seven Nation Army," the ad depicts multiple scenes of fans responding passionately as they watch soccer games, interspersed with scenes of them using Dove Men+Care products to help them get clean and smell fresh. The ad ends with the line **"Care for your skin like you care for the game."**

"Balls on Fire" is funny and functional ad that uses soccer framing to show how Dove Men+Care's whole body deodorant won't "burn your balls." It shows that Dove Men+Care products are gentle in a way that feels masculine and sporty.



Sales impact



2 ads with distinct purposes

Looking at how the two ads convey key category attributes is where **each ad's distinct purpose** in the brand's overall World Cup campaign becomes most visible. **"Balls on Fire" drives strong associations with "gentle on skin" and "suitable for sensitive areas"** — the precise claims it was built to land.

"The Chant" leads on "helps you feel fresh," "perfect for active lifestyles" and "long-lasting protection" As one respondent described it: *"I really liked that I could see myself being in the ad and using the Dove products because I want to feel clean and look my best like that."* These are associations that come from telling a story people see themselves in.

Additionally, there are some differences in how these ads land. Overall, "Balls on Fire" produces a strong sales impact (67) while "The Chant" has an average score of 48 for sales impact.

But among soccer fans, the gap closes entirely. With that audience, "Balls on Fire" has a sales impact of 90, while "The Chant" has a sales impact of 92. The ad that looks weaker overall turns out to be an equally strong sales driver with the right audience! Relevance is perhaps the starkest illustration, jumping from 3.7 to 4.4. Love climbs sharply too (from 32% to 54%, significantly above the 27% norm).

For the audience it was built for, "The Chant" is incredibly effective because it speaks directly to them. The focus on the devoted fan experience doesn't land universally with non-soccer fans.

➤Key takeaway➤

Targeting different audiences with different creative

You don't need to love soccer to find flaming balls funny. But you do need to love the game to really love "The Chant." That's why "The Chant" lands best with soccer fans and "Balls on Fire" works for a broad audience. Yet both land the associations they're meant to land.

Dove Men+Care landed these complementary but different emotional and functional associations across assets — rather than demanding too much from a single ad.

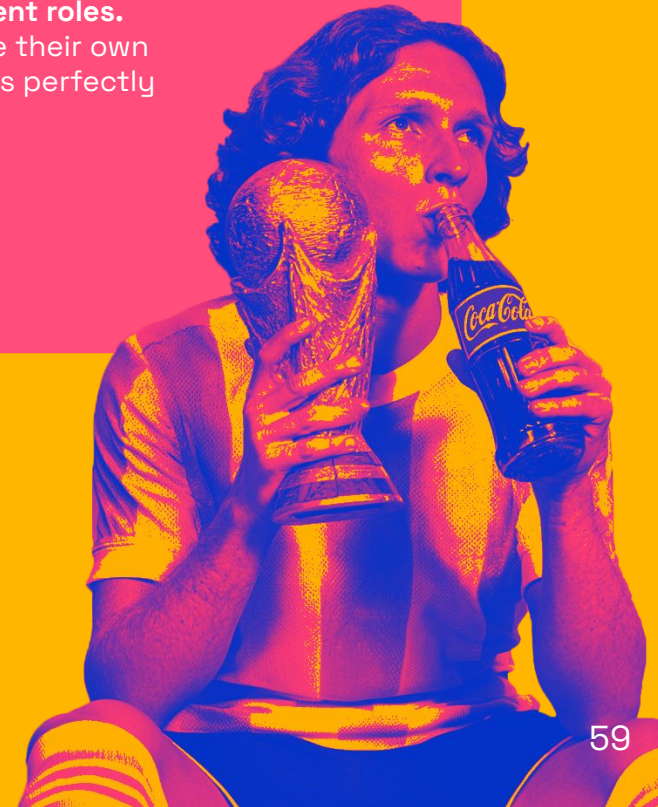
Together, they help to promote the products across different audiences and support the sales-driven CPG approach Unilever is aiming for with this FIFA World Cup campaign.



Coca-Cola

Key learnings:

- Start with **what your brand already owns**. Coca-Cola has spent decades associating itself with emotional connection and shared moments, so its World Cup strategy fits perfectly with the brand.
- Don't make your brand an afterthought. Throughout Coca-Cola's ads, the **product and the emotion are inseparable** — so the Coca-Cola brand pops.
- **Portfolio brands should play different roles.** Coca-Cola and Powerade both have their own roles in this campaign, and each fits perfectly with each brand's identity.



Coca-Cola: Amplifying the emotions

Sponsorship status: Premier partner & Official Beverage Sponsor

Ownership: Emotional rituals

As one of FIFA's longest-standing partners (since 1978), Coca-Cola has a lot in store for the 2026 FIFA World Cup, including the brand's **global platform** “**Feel It All**” / “**All the Feels.**” Every soccer fan knows the World Cup can be an emotional rollercoaster, and Coca-Cola is here for every moment of it — the anticipation, tension, joy, heartbreak and more.

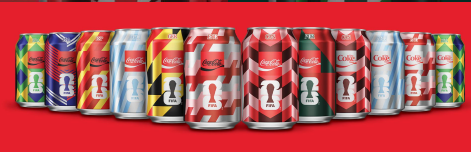
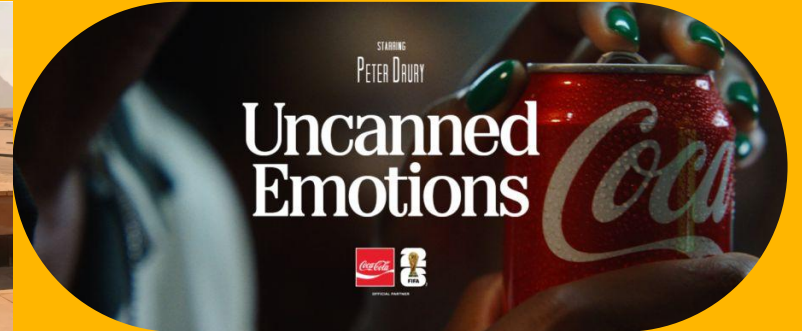
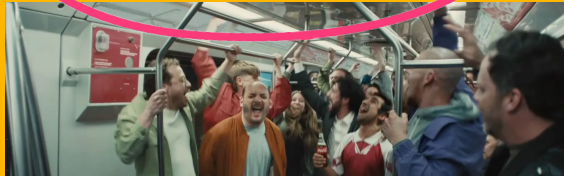
This is showing up through omni-channel campaigns and activations, including:

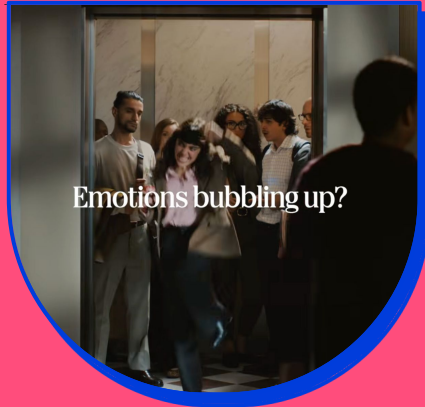
- **A three-part global film series** that spans the [anticipation](#) of kickoff, the [raw emotions](#) of the matches and [peak tournament](#) emotions and celebrations.
- **A new global [anthem](#)** featuring major artists performing a new rendition of Van Halen's “Jump.”
- **Social-first content** designed to live through creators across TikTok, YouTube and IRL activations.
- **Limited-edition packaging** on bottles and cans across the host countries that feature each of the teams and a chance to win tickets to the FIFA World Cup.
- **Stickers and merch** created specifically for the tournament as collectible items.
- **The FIFA World Cup Trophy Tour** (the brand's biggest play) that brings the original trophy to fans ahead of the tournament in a 30+ country, 75 stop experiential activation.

While the main hero of these plays is the Coca-Cola brand, the company is also highlighting its Powerade brand to focus on the athletic side of the tournament.



Coca-Cola





Coca-Cola: Emotional core

With the company's inclusion of two brands in its FIFA World Cup activations, it's clear that the Coca-Cola brand is the hero and emotional core of the campaign. The goal is to position Coca-Cola as part of the emotional experience of the tournament rather than simply a sponsor of it — showing up at **every phase of the fan journey from anticipation through to celebration.**

To do that across a global audience, its three-part film series showcases the emotions that soccer fandom produces — placing the product at the center of each one.

The three ads include:

- **"Bubbling Up"** — released in January
- **"Uncanned Emotions"** — released in April
- **"No Better Feeling"** — released in June

"Bubbling Up" highlights the **excitement building in the weeks before** a ball is kicked, spreading from person to person like carbonation.

"Uncanned Emotions" focuses on tension and release — the **emotional journey experienced during a match.**

"No Better Feeling" focused on the suspense during a VAR check and the **feelings of celebration** that fans experience when the decision goes their way.

All together, the three ads cover a wide-range of feelings fans experience in the months leading up to the World Cup. We looked at all three to see how they resonated with US audiences.

“Bubbling Up”

This ad is all about **anticipation** for the World Cup.

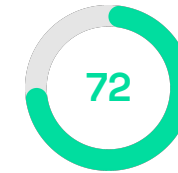
It opens on a woman inside a cramped elevator hearing the FIFA World Cup being announced on the news. What then starts as a low chant quietly spreads across the city as anticipation starts bubbling into everyday life, pulling strangers into the same emotional current. As the music builds — a new version of **Van Halen’s “Jump”** — the film moves through a series of interconnected moments showing how deeply soccer culture seeps into ordinary life.

This series is all about building strong emotions, and people love this ad (Love at 35% vs. 27% norm)! Love and like run concurrently through the opening of the ad — but love takes over when the FIFA World Cup is announced — indicating that people are excited about the event too.

And once the chorus of the song hits, love reaches its highest point. **The Van Halen “Jump” rework is a huge part of what sells the emotion in this ad** and it’s a key source of what people like it (Musical appeal: 4.3 vs. 3.8 norm).

Ultimately, “Bubbling Up” conveys important attributes about the Coca-Cola brand. Compared to “Uncanned Emotions” and “No Better Feeling,” this ad leads on **“Great taste” (59%)** and **“Appeals to a wide range of people” (50%)** — the broad cultural associations of a pre-tournament anthem that puts everyday fans at its center.

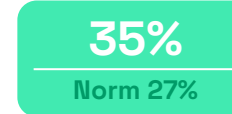
Sales impact



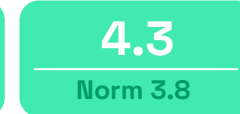
Brand impact



Love 🥰



Musical appeal

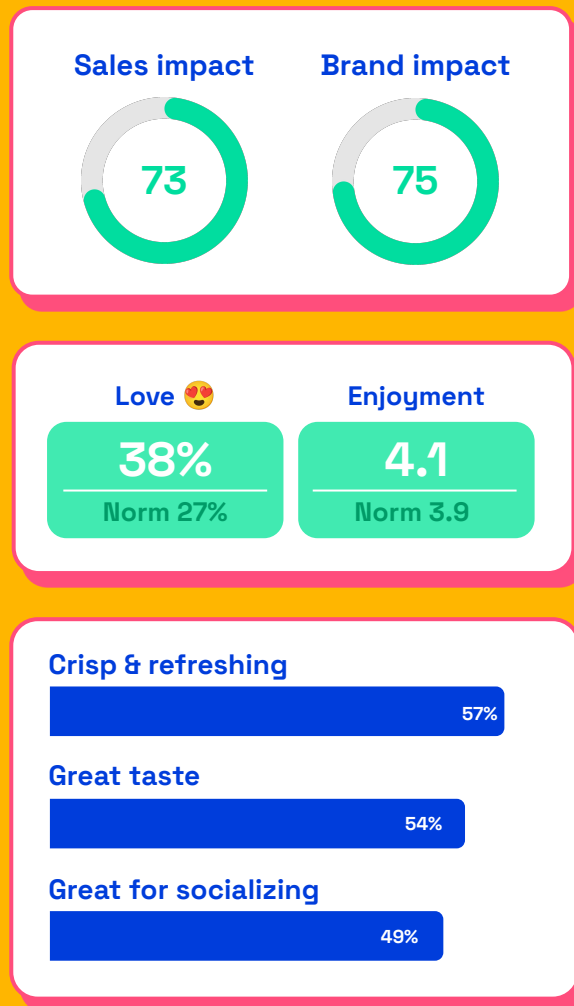


Great taste



Appeals to wide range of people





“Uncanned Emotions”

This ad is all about the **emotional journey** fans experience while watching a game.

The ad depicts fans holding Coca-Cola cans while watching a match. Peter Drury — one of the most distinctive voices in soccer — commentates a game as we see a drop of Coca-Cola fly through the air and land in a glass (like a soccer ball making it into a goal) as the crowd cheers.

Rather than depicting an actual soccer match, “Uncanned Emotions” uses the product and Peter Drury’s commentary to **make you feel what it feels like to watch a match**.

And people **love** it (Love: 38% vs. 27% norm). The ad earns its emotion through the senses — making you **almost taste the Coke as you watch**. Love is present and strong from the very first second of the ad, though surprise builds through the middle of the ad as the commentary escalates and the match tension becomes more intense — just like in a real soccer match.

And then love surges to its highest point at the exact moment “Refresh to Recharge” appears on screen and a woman takes a sip of her Coca-Cola.

Compared to “Bubbling Up,” “Uncanned Emotions” leads on “Crisp and refreshing” (57%) — a very sensory attribute — followed by “Great taste” (54%) and “Great for socializing” (49%). The sensory creative work of the ad is **translating directly into what viewers associate with the brand!**

➤Key takeaway➤

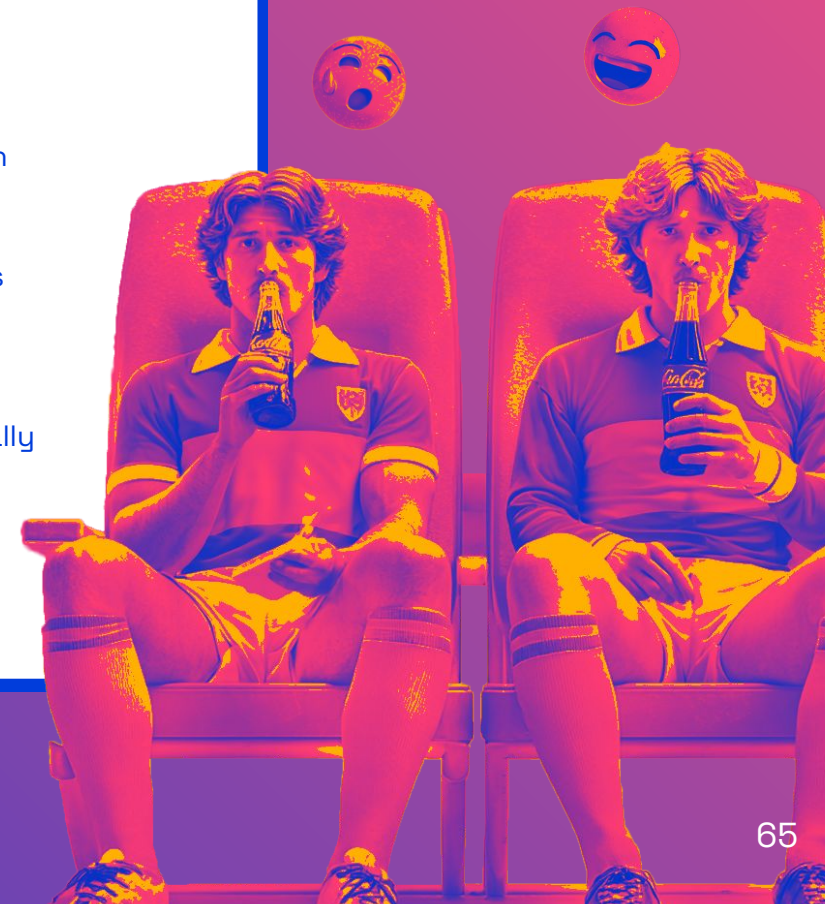
Product & emotion blended together seamlessly

What's powerful about these two ads is that in each one, the product is inseparable from the emotion the ad is tapping into.

“Bubbling Up” is built around the metaphor that anticipation behaves like carbonation. As we see fans slowly getting more excited about the approaching World Cup, we see bubbles rising in a bottle of Coca-Cola.

“Uncanned Emotions” shows the emotional journey of watching a soccer match — but we don’t actually see one. Instead the product behaves like a goal being scored while the announcer shouts and the crowd cheers.

It’s an excellent way to tie a product to the World Cup in a way that feels authentic and not forced.



“No Better Feeling”

While “Bubbling Up” focuses on anticipation for the World Cup and “Uncanned Emotions” focuses on the emotional rollercoaster of watching a match, **“No Better Feeling” is about the payoff** — the dread you experience during a VAR check and the relief and **joy when the result goes your way**.

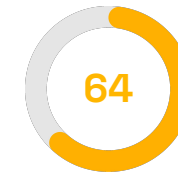
“No Better Feeling” is the most cinematic and arguably the boldest of the three as it is the only one built through suspense. The ad moves through a deliberately tense VAR check to a resolution that lands powerfully — as **love peaks at the celebration at the end**.

That slow build is what makes the release feel so good. Tension is a powerful tool when you’ve built a payoff big enough to justify it!

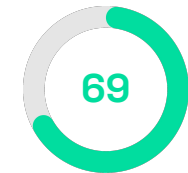
With its shared celebrations, “No Better Feeling” scores the highest of the three ads in **“great for socializing” (52%)**. It also scores highest in **“rooted in tradition” (34%)**, potentially due to its focus on a time-honored tradition in viewing soccer (waiting for a call to be made and celebrating a goal).

Ultimately, it lands as a good all-round performer, with a strong score for long-term brand equity and an average score for short-term sales (Sales impact: 64, Brand impact: 69). It **generates a lot of love** (Love: 38% vs. 27% norm) and **stands out as distinctive** (Ad distinctiveness: 4.0 vs. 3.7 norm).

Sales impact



Brand impact



Great for socializing

“Bubbling Up”



“Uncanned Emotions”



“No Better Feeling”



Rooted in tradition

“Bubbling Up”



“Uncanned Emotions”



“No Better Feeling”



Love 🥰

38%

Norm 27%

➤Key takeaway➤

A connected campaign around one emotional journey

Each of Coca-Cola's three films released in the lead-up to the World Cup work well on their own, but they were clearly planned as a set — and that's what turns three good individual ads into one coherent emotional journey that mirrors the fan experience.

“Bubbling Up” is the broadest, leading on “Appeals to a wide range of people” and carrying the highest brand impact to build cultural relevance in the months before kickoff. “Uncanned Emotions” is the most sensory, owning “Crisp and refreshing” and putting the product literally at the center of the frame.

“No Better Feeling” is the most cinematic, closing the campaign in the week before kickoff with the clearest focus on the game of soccer itself that draws out a real sense of togetherness.

The Coca-Cola campaign is designed around emotion, and these three ads deliver it!



Powerade: Athletic preparation

While the Coca-Cola brand owns the emotional fan experience of the World Cup, Powerade is more about the athletic experience. As a sports drink, Powerade is the clear choice in the Coca-Cola portfolio for this direction, and it is the Official Sports Drink of the FIFA World Cup.

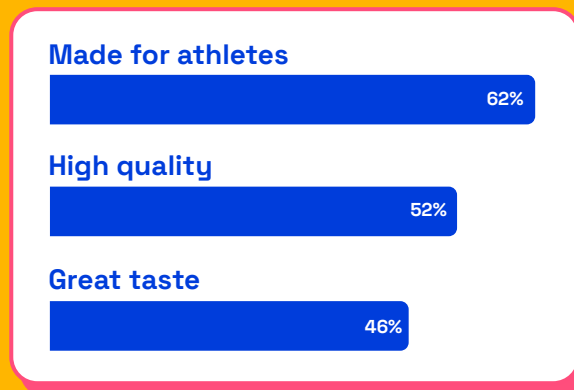
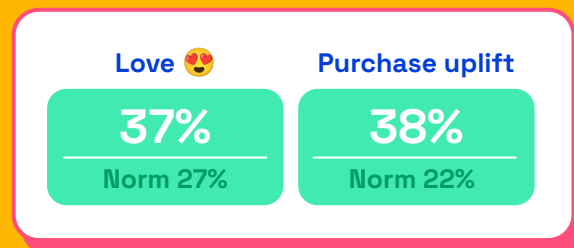
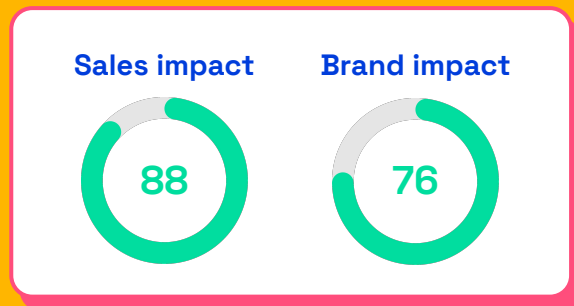
“**Power Your Fate**” is Powerade’s global campaign that *“inspires athletes to take control of their performance through relentless preparation and superior hydration.”* Manolo Arroyo, EVP and Chief Marketing and Customer Commercial Officer, says that *“‘Power Your Fate’ for FIFA World Cup 26™ is built on the belief that destiny is shaped by preparation, discipline, and focus.”*

As part of this campaign, the brand released its **hero ad** *“Power Your Legacy,”* featuring rising soccer stars, including Lamine Yamal and Rodrygo Goes, showcasing the role Powerade plays in fueling their preparation. The campaign also includes a limited-edition **Legacy Lineup of World Cup-inspired flavors** — Blood Orange Kick, White Grape Wave and Cold Berry Burst.

Beyond advertising and innovation, Powerade also unveiled its **House of Legends platform**, an immersive fan experience where people can unlock content, participate in challenges and enter to win prizes ranging from merchandise to soccer-related travel experiences.

All of these plays drive home the brand’s message (that feels true to its role as a sports drink): great moments aren’t left to chance, they’re earned through preparation.





“Power Your Legacy”

The 30-second version of “Power Your Legacy” begins with the voiceover, “While the world sleeps, the legends rise.” Rhyming narration continues with inspirational messages about athletes training to win through **hard work and preparation** — not luck. We see players of all races and genders working hard and the ad ends with the message **“Power your legacy with Powerade.”**

In the context of a tournament dominated by stories around victory, emotion and national identity, “Power Your Legacy” focuses on what usually remains unseen — the preparation — which is exactly when you’d want to use a product like a sports drink to stay hydrated during long training hours.

And the data shows it landed: **“Made for athletes”** leads all category attributes at 62%. But it’s not just soccer fans, or even athletes themselves, that this ad resonated with. The ad is universally appealing — **people love it** (37% vs. 27% norm) and that love translates into **immediate purchase consideration** (Purchase uplift: 38% vs. 22% norm).

While the visuals in the ad are focused on soccer, the message of working hard to accomplish a goal is one anyone can appreciate. It can be a delicate line to walk to **focus an ad entirely around a specific sport but still resonate with everyone**, but this ad lands it, with people saying things like *“I like the energetic sports scenes and motivating message. And Powerade felt refreshing and useful.”* and *“It inspired me to get back to working on my game.”*

It’s a different approach compared to Coca-Cola’s emotional appeal, and it totally fits with the brand!

Legacy Lineup flavors

Powerade also released three new flavors in the US with soccer-inspired names and a patriotic color scheme. **Blood Orange Kick** is red, **White Grape Wave** is white and **Cold Berry Burst** is blue. Each one features the FIFA logo and a prominent black and white soccer ball in the middle.

And people love them (Love: 38% vs. 22% norm)! The new flavors have incredibly high breakthrough potential compared to other US beverages (99), and priced at only \$1 each, they also have an incredibly high trial potential (100)!

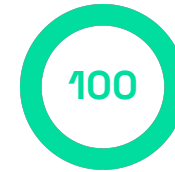
People see them as both **distinctive and advantageous** compared to other beverages, and specifically see them as **refreshing** (58%) and **hydrating** (57%).

What people like most about the line is the new flavors themselves, calling them **unique, refreshing and delicious**, with Blood Orange Kick generating the most excitement. People were also intrigued by White Grape, noting that they don't usually see that flavor in sports drinks. The **FIFA packaging** also generated interest, with people saying they liked the soccer ball graphic, the sporty look and the patriotic color scheme.

But importantly, people also highlighted the **functional benefits** as part of the appeal. Consumers liked that the products support hydration, feel useful for sports or hot weather and seem performance-oriented.

This is a great way to drive a burst of **short-term sales** for the brand while the US is more focused on soccer!

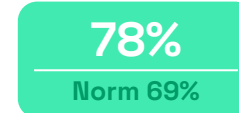
Priced trial
potential



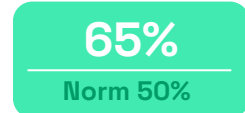
Breakthrough
potential



Distinctiveness



Advantage



Non-FIFA sponsors

Key learnings:

- **You do not need to be a FIFA sponsor to capitalize on World Cup excitement.** You can play into the cultural moment in many other ways.
- **The product itself can be the activation.** Not every brand we featured had a large campaign budget — some focused primarily on the product and generating excitement (and sales) in stores.
- **Find an angle that fits with your brand.** Heineken targeted making friends (over beers), Tim Hortons leaned on its history with community soccer, LEGO focused on play. They all work because those things are already a part of those brands.



Kellanova



Fueling the fans

Sponsorship status: Official Snack Partner of the US Soccer Federation

Ownership: The fan fuel behind the game

As an official partner of the US Soccer Federation, Kellanova is using the tournament as a global platform for some of its biggest brands, including **Pringles**, **CHEEZ-IT**, **Pop-Tarts**, **Town House** and **Kellogg's cereals**.

Like most brands that aren't official FIFA sponsors, Kellanova is focusing on the moments that surround the World Cup — like the snacks shared during watch parties and the traditions that bring fans together.

To bring this to life, Kellanova is launching **soccer-themed packaging, limited-edition snack flavors and shapes**, in-store promotions, digital campaigns and fan experiences designed to turn everyday snacking into part of the World Cup celebration.

It's worth noting that Kellanova is **utilizing its full portfolio** for this campaign rather than a single brand. Just like some of the great work we've seen from larger scale official sponsors, this allows each of its brands to play a different role — from game-day gatherings and family viewing occasions to spontaneous snacking moments.

This play positions Kellanova as the company **helping fans fuel their World Cup experience in the US**.



New flavors: Pringles & CHEEZ-IT

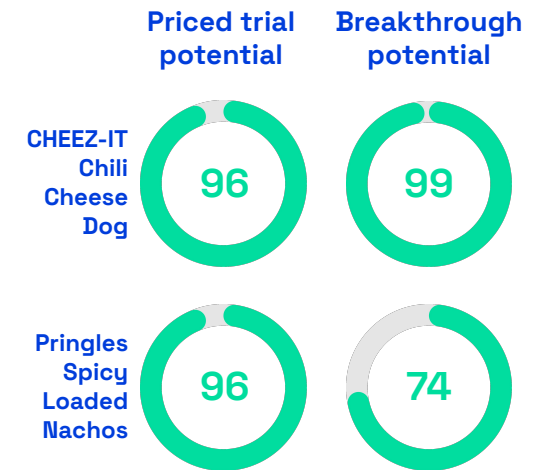
We looked at all four of Kellanova's salty snack releases, two of them are flavor innovations and two of them are shape innovation.

Both **CHEEZ-IT Chili Cheese Dog** and **Pringles Spicy Loaded Nachos** score very well. They both have very high trial potential (96), with CHEEZ-IT beating out Pringles in breakthrough potential (99 vs. 74) thanks to CHEEZ-IT Chili Dog's extremely high distinctiveness score (83% vs. 73% norm).

People thought both flavors sounded **bold and unique**, with the **spicy** element being the key to the appeal of Pringles and the **"comfort food"** element (both the flavor and CHEEZ-IT crackers themselves) being key to the CHEEZ-IT appeal. Overall **brand trust** is also a critical component of the appeal of both of these snacks, with many people describing how much they love CHEEZ-IT and Pringles.

And people also **love the US Soccer connection** in both snacks, saying that it helps the snacks stand out. The association with hot dogs in the CHEEZ-IT Chili Cheese Dog flavor helped make the connection to soccer more obvious in CHEEZ-IT than Pringles, as people felt that hot dogs were a "stadium food." People also felt like the CHEEZ-IT flavor was great for summer overall — saying it felt very patriotic for the 4th of July or great for summer BBQs.

Overall, both snacks piqued people's interest enough to want to try them. **Even those who were skeptical about the flavors wanted to try them to find out how they were!**



Distinctiveness

CHEEZ-IT
Chili Cheese
Dog

83%

Norm 73%

Pringles
Spicy Loaded
Nachos

76%

Norm 73%



New shapes: CHEEZ-IT & Town House

Kellanova also released two salty snack shapes: **CHEEZ-IT Flags & Stars** and **Town House Star Spangled**. Both of these shapes have been released before, but this time they have US Soccer branding!

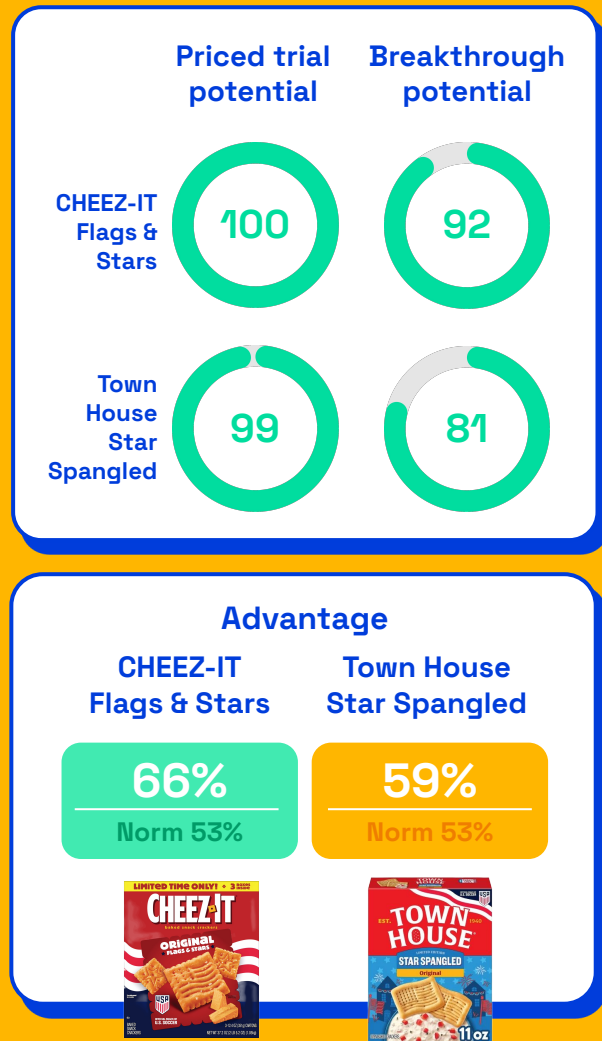
Both score exceptionally well in trial potential (CHEEZ-IT: 100, Town House: 99), and CHEEZ-IT beats out Town House slightly in breakthrough potential (92 vs. 81) — thanks to **CHEEZ-IT's high advantage** (66% vs. 53% norm). That means that while these CHEEZ-IT shapes aren't viewed as significantly different than what's available in the category, they are seen as better, thanks to consumers' overall love and trust for the CHEEZ-IT brand.

The biggest source of appeal for both of the crackers was the patriotic vibe — people loved the flags embossed on both crackers, noting that they both felt “very American.” They liked that the packaging stood out and that they were brands they know and love.

The soccer connection was noted, but much less so than in the flavor innovations. These shapes were **associated much more strongly with the 4th of July** (including the nation's upcoming 250th birthday) and summer gatherings overall.

Town House in particular was connected to hosting — to be served with dips and cheese at summer parties.

Overall, people were excited to try their favorite crackers in patriotic shapes!



⇒ Key takeaway ⇒

New flavors vs. new shapes: A portfolio can benefit from both

All four Kellanova snacks — the new flavors and the new shapes — have high trial and breakthrough potential.

The flavors are seen as more strongly connected to soccer, while the shapes are seen as more broadly patriotic and good for the 4th of July and summer BBQs.

Ultimately, Kellanova will benefit from having a full line of US Soccer products across different brands so there's something for everyone. Neither approach is the right approach — they'll work together to drive sales for the brand!



Mondelēz



“Summer of Soccer”

Sponsorship status: Not a sponsor

Ownership: Snacking occasions

As a non-sponsor, Mondelēz is showing up in a more creatively adjacent way for this year’s World Cup tournament.

Through a **broader “Summer of Soccer” campaign**, the company is using the tournament as a major cultural and snacking occasion, positioning its products (like Oreo, Chips Ahoy! and Ritz) as essential parts of the watch-party experience.

Nick Rogers, Director of Portfolio Marketing and Sponsorship at Mondelēz, shared: *“Many of our brands across the whole portfolio have a rich history and heritage when it comes to sporting events as an occasion. It’s about harnessing the halo effect of this summer of sport.”*

The campaign **features partnerships with soccer stars** themselves, such as Christian Pulisic, Alex Morgan and Sophia Wilson (as well as Pitbull) in a series of ads and activations built around the idea of “Score Snack Goals.”

Beyond advertising, Mondelēz has also created **several limited-edition soccer themed products** and packaging, including soccer-shaped Ritz crackers and new Chips Ahoy! flavors inspired by the summer tournament season, as well as sweepstakes, fan experiences and retail activations designed to connect snacking with soccer viewing moments.



Chips Ahoy!: Unique flavors

For the first time, Chips Ahoy! released **three new flavors at once** to commemorate its summer of soccer. Each package features a former or current US soccer player:

- **Chewy Chocolatey Churro** features Alex Morgan
- **Chewy Dulce de Leche** features Sophia Wilson
- **Crunchy Red, White & Blue Candy Blasts** features Christian Pulisic

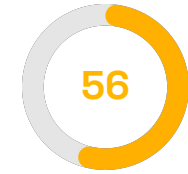
This line of new flavors is **quite unique**, including two inspired by international desserts, resulting in a very high breakthrough potential of 88! They are distinctive and advantageous and have an average trial potential of 56 — but that jumps to 80 for adults under 45.

People repeatedly described the new flavors as **“different”** and **“internationally inspired.”** We saw a lot of comments around people’s love for the Chips Ahoy! brand — noting that they trust the brand, with some even commenting that they have **loved Chips Ahoy! since childhood**.

Consumers said the **soccer players on the packaging added authenticity and excitement** to the cookies and several specifically appreciated the inclusion of women athletes. The tie-in to the World Cup made the flavors seem timely and relevant.

Interestingly, none of these flavors stand out as more interesting to people — they all seem to have the same level of appeal, as roughly the same percentage say they are likely to buy each one. It shows that Chips Ahoy! picked great flavors with broad appeal! None of them are particularly polarizing.

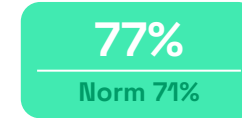
Priced trial
potential



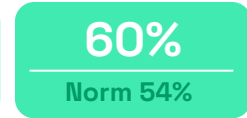
Breakthrough
potential



Distinctiveness



Advantage



● Would not buy (B2B) ● Would buy (T2B)

Chewy chocolatey churro



Crunchy red, white & blue candy blasts



Chewy dulce de leche



Priced trial
potential



Breakthrough
potential



Distinctiveness

72%

Norm 73%

Advantage

63%

Norm 53%



Ritz: Simple shapes, executed well

While Chips Ahoy! released three new flavors, Ritz kept it simple with **fun new soccer-inspired shapes** (soccer balls and jerseys), with Christian Pulisic on the package.

These crackers are appealing to just about everyone, resulting in an exceptionally high trial potential of 98. They aren't more distinctive than the category norm, but they are advantageous thanks to the strength of the Ritz brand!

People love the fun shapes and like **the package design with Pulisic kicking the Ritz cracker** — it stands out and conveys the idea of the product very well.

This is an excellent way to tie into soccer while the US is paying much more attention to the sport than usual — without the cost of a sponsorship!

"I love Ritz regardless, but I love the shape of these."

"The graphics really make the box stand out and I think kids would love the shapes."

"I love the packaging it is so well done."

"I love the taste of Ritz crackers no matter what the shape."

⇒ Key takeaway ⇒

There's no one right way to innovate around the World Cup

As a US Soccer sponsor, Kellanova leaned into American patriotism with its products. The connection to soccer is there, but not the primary focus.

Mondelēz — with no partnership — more closely tied its products to soccer (with soccer players on the packaging and soccer-related shapes) and also leaned into the global nature of the World Cup with some of its international-inspired flavors.

And both approaches work. Clearly, there is no single right way to activate around an event like the World Cup. You can get a team sponsorship and release related innovations or you can evoke soccer and global themes without a partnership. So long as these new products fit with your brand and get consumers excited, there's no wrong way to do it!



Tim Hortons





Grassroots & global

Sponsorship status: Major national supporter and promoter (Canada)

Ownership: Grassroots & global soccer culture

Tim Hortons has built a Canadian campaign around **grassroots soccer culture** through its **long-running Timbits Soccer program**, which supports youth leagues across Canada and positions the brand at the center of community and family soccer.

The campaign also includes **limited-edition menu items and merch** designed to celebrate global soccer culture. This includes a partnership with Adidas on new Timbits soccer jerseys to celebrate over 30 years of Timbits Soccer and new **“Tastes of the Globe Timbits”** (plus bucket!) inspired by four World Cup participants: Canada, France, Brazil and Italy. The flavors include:

- **Canadian Fireworks Timbit:** Birthday Cake flavor with a fun coating of popping candy clusters
- **Chocolate Crème Brûlée Filled Timbit:** Chocolate filled with Venetian cream and finished with burnt sugar, à la crème brûlée
- **Lime Cheesecake Filled Timbit:** Filled with a creamy lime cheesecake and topped with lime sugar
- **Cappuccino Timbit:** Coffee-flavored topped with coffee-flavored doughnut sugar

Together, these activations position Tim Hortons as a brand celebrating the everyday fandom and grassroots community spirit that surround the World Cup — without a sponsorship.

Tastes of the globe

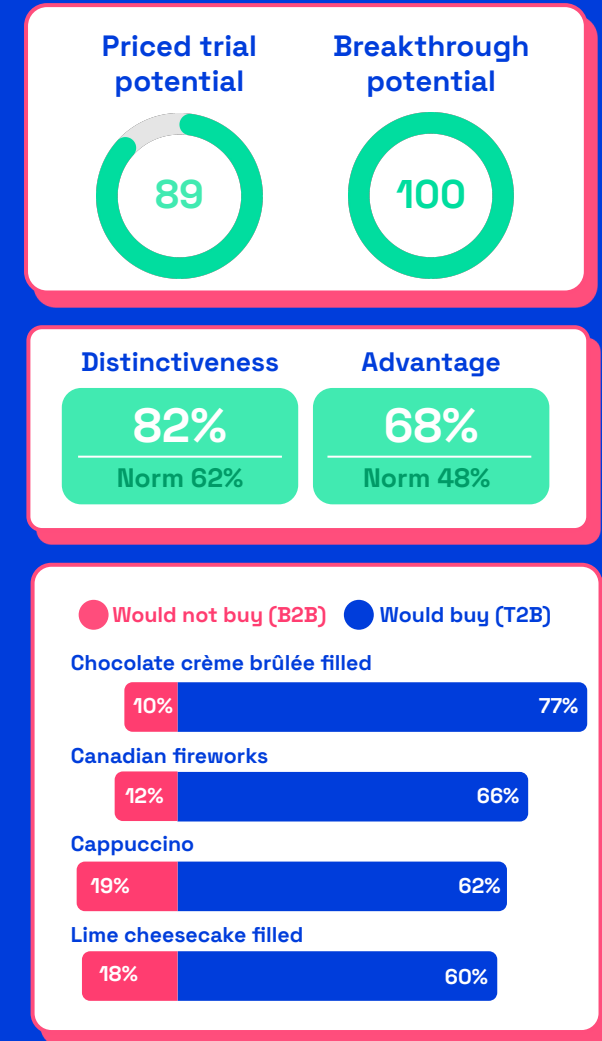
These global Timbits stand out and **Canadians love them** (Love: 31% vs. 20% norm)! They have a high breakthrough potential of 100, driven by their exceptionally high distinctiveness AND high advantage — which means people see them as both different and better than what’s currently available in-market.

By far the biggest driver of appeal was the chance to try **new, globally inspired flavors**. People repeatedly described the flavors as “interesting,” “different,” “creative” and “unique.” They also loved having **multiple flavor options in one bucket**, often mentioning how it made the product feel fun and shareable.

Chocolate Crème Brûlée Filled is the clear favorite of the four Timbits flavors, though they were all well-loved. The soccer-themed bucket with its world flags and colorful visuals was also frequently praised for being eye-catching, cute, collectible and family-friendly.

What’s most exciting about these global Timbits flavors is that **Tim Hortons hasn’t partnered with FIFA, a specific team or any players**. Rather, it’s capitalizing on the excitement around soccer right now to launch these at the right time. And it has the credibility to do so given its long-running Timbits soccer program.

It’s a menu item that makes sense and Canadians are excited about — without the sponsorship costs!



Chobani





Nourishing the future

Sponsorship status: Official Nutrition Partner of US Soccer

Ownership: Nourishing the future of the game

Chobani is approaching the 2026 FIFA World Cup with a perspective few other sponsors can claim: the future of the game is built long before kickoff.

Through its **“Feed the Dream” platform**, the brand is shifting the focus from the spectacle of the tournament to the communities and support systems that help athletes reach soccer’s biggest stage — naturally positioning nutrition as an important part of every player’s journey.

Chobani is bringing all of this to life through **investments in grassroots soccer**, including funding and resources for youth clubs across the United States, nutrition education programs and partnerships designed to support the next generation of players. The brand has also released new, **limited-edition packaging** featuring US Soccer stars, alongside [advertising that highlights the journeys behind elite athletes](#) and those by their side.

What makes this strategy stand out is how naturally it connects the Chobani brand to the tournament. In a World Cup space filled with entertainment, celebrations and match-day rituals, Chobani is bringing a more human perspective and the wonderful belief that every future star starts somewhere.

Greek yogurt 4-packs

Chobani's limited-time packaging, including its 32 oz containers, single serves, 4-packs and yogurt drinks, is an interesting case because in most situations **Chobani has replaced its typical products in the refrigerated aisle with these US Soccer ones**. The product remains the same — it's just the packaging that's different — which makes sense as yogurt has a shorter expiration date compared to other products we've featured in this report.

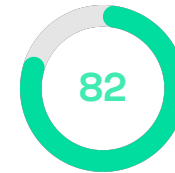
We looked at the brand's 4-packs, which **perform very well on both breakthrough potential (78) and trial potential (82)**. They're seen as better than what's available on the market, but not different — understandable considering this isn't a new product.

The responses from consumers **overwhelmingly focus on the product itself, not the packaging**. People talk about how they regularly buy Chobani yogurt (it is the top-selling Greek yogurt brand in the US), trust the brand and like the taste. They focused on the **real fruit on the bottom** as a key feature of Chobani yogurts. They liked the **flavor variety, natural ingredients and protein content**. In other words, they focused on all the aspects they already like about Chobani yogurt!

Secondarily, they mentioned the packaging, which they thought was **modern, colorful and patriotic**. They liked the tie-in to US Soccer and felt like it fit with the brand and was well-timed with the World Cup.

And some even called out the female players on the packaging, saying things like *"I enjoy seeing female players being represented."*

Priced trial
potential



Breakthrough
potential



Distinctiveness

71%

Norm 71%

Advantage

63%

Norm 54%



"I like the fun soccer themed packaging and the familiar Chobani flavors I already enjoy."

"My family loves soccer and yogurt so it is fun to have it be teamed up together to enjoy."

"I like the red and white confetti. It's very patriotic."

"I think it's commendable that Chobani is partnering with a sport franchise that targets young women."

Yogurt people already love, just a bit more special

For Chobani, the soccer connection is a bonus rather than a primary purchase driver, as many mentioned they would buy Chobani no matter what.

And we see that sentiment reflected in the data. The impact to Chobani purchase frequency is average overall (Impact to brand purchase frequency: 56% vs. 56% norm). However, it is much higher for soccer fans (78% vs. 56% norm). This means that **the 4-packs are not likely to drive shoppers to buy more Chobani overall, but they are likely to drive increased purchases among soccer fans.**

Ultimately, this approach is a great way to inform and remind regular Chobani purchasers throughout this World Cup period that Chobani is a US Soccer sponsor — and **make them feel like they're buying something a little more special than usual.**

The **packaging is likely to grab more attention from soccer fans** who may buy the 4-packs when they wouldn't do so originally, or buy them more often during the World Cup tournament.

Either way, people love the soccer-inspired yogurt (Love: 34% vs. 25% norm) and think they're very fun!

Lala



Así se nutre México

Sponsorship status: Partnership with the Mexican National Team

Ownership: Nourishing family match-day rituals in Mexico

Lala is showing up for the 2026 FIFA World Cup by leaning into Mexican soccer fandom and the emotional, family rituals that surround the tournament.

Through its **“Así se nutre México”** (“This is how Mexico is nourished”) campaign, the dairy brand is positioning itself as part of the everyday match-day experience — from family meals to living-room watch parties — while celebrating the pride and passion tied to Mexico hosting the World Cup for a third time.

While Lala is not an official FIFA sponsor, its **partnership with the Mexican National Team** gives the brand a strong and authentic connection to soccer.

Lala’s campaign includes **World Cup-themed packaging**, **advertising**, **collectible designs** (including 11 collectible jerseys), **retail activations** and collaborations with **soccer legend Rafael Márquez** as well as the Mexican Cumbia music group **Los Ángeles Azules** with a reimagined version of the iconic “México en la piel.”

Instead of focusing on the tournament itself, Lala is tapping into the culture around it — connecting Lala’s brand heritage with the excitement of soccer and the World Cup, all summed up in the campaign rallying cry: “¡Golalazo!”



Proudly Mexican ad campaign

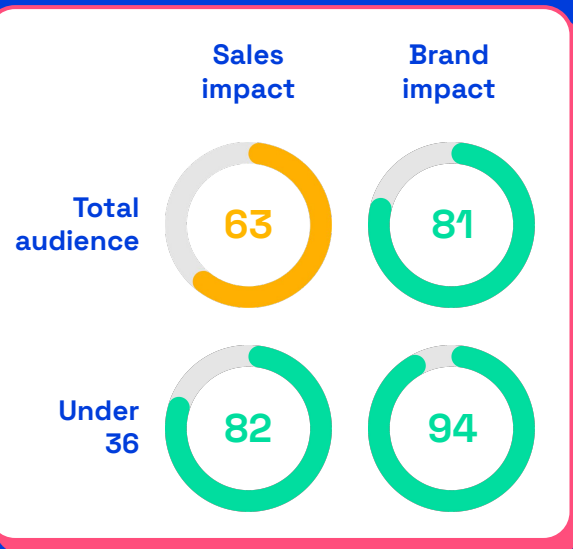
The hero ad in the [“Así se nutre México” campaign](#) features two quintessentially Mexican elements: the first is **Rafael Márquez** — legendary former captain of the Mexican national team. The second is the music: a **reworked version of “México en la piel,”** a song that’s woven into the national identity so deeply that its refrain is instantly recognizable. Here it’s reimagined by Los Ángeles Azules — the iconic cumbia group whose sound is a piece of cultural shorthand.

Lala turns “this is how Mexico feels” into “this is how Mexico is nourished,” folding its nutrition idea into a line the whole country already knows by heart. The ad depicts a series of scenes of Mexicans watching soccer and eating Lala products with their families.

The ad also features the expression **“GoLALAZo”** shouted at the end of the ad — which elicits the highest spike of love from the audience. It’s a clever way to work the brand name into the Spanish word **“golazo”** — **which is commonly used to describe a spectacular goal.**

The result is the ad is extremely well branded (Unaided brand recall: 95% vs. 77% norm) and viewers most strongly took away from the ad that Lala is **family-oriented (61%) and proudly Mexican (61%)** — exactly what this ad sets out to convey.

Ultimately, this is strong brand-building ad, landing a brand impact score of 81 and a sales impact of 63 — resonating most strongly with adults under 36, where brand impact reaches 94 and sales impact rises to 82.



Family-oriented



Proudly Mexican



Connected to soccer culture



Translating Mexican pride from the ad to the grocery store

Lala also released a **line of milks inspired by the Mexican national team's historic uniforms** (and featured in the ad in the previous page). The line has high breakthrough (95)! Mexicans see the line as both distinctive (70% vs. 65% norm) and advantageous (53% vs. 43% norm).

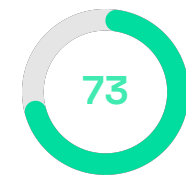
People are most excited about the packaging and the jersey-inspired designs. They noted that the packaging was **eye-catching and the colors were bright**. People also appreciated that each type of milk had its own color jersey.

Functionally, people appreciated that all milk variants participated in the campaign and that the different milk types were easy to identify. **Whole milk** (red packaging) and **lactose-free milk** (green packaging) are the ones most likely to be purchased.

People also appreciated the feelings of **national identity** — they loved the green, white and red of the Mexican flag and felt pride in seeing Mexican culture and the Mexican team represented. And, of course, the connection to the World Cup was a big part of the appeal as well, with one person noting (translated) *“I really like the colors and design; it's genuinely original. It's great to see something related to the World Cup, especially coming from a big brand like Lala.”*

Dairy isn't the biggest category associated with sports marketing, but it works for Lala. People love the brand and see it as authentically Mexican, so this connection to the Mexican national team fits well and people love it!

Priced trial
potential



Breakthrough
potential



Distinctiveness

70%

Norm 65%

Advantage

53%

Norm 43%



Ferrero





Fueling the sweet moments

Sponsorship status: Official partner of Canada Soccer

Ownership: The sweet side of the tournament

Through its **“Go All In” campaign** in the US and Canada, Ferrero is bringing together brands including Nutella, Kinder Bueno, Tic Tac, Ferrero Rocher, Butterfinger, Crunch, Keebler, Halo Top and Blue Bunny under a single soccer platform for the first time.

In the US, Ferrero [partnered with Tom Brady for an advertising campaign](#) which encourages fans to purchase participating products for the chance to win daily prizes and a **\$1 million grand prize**. While in Canada as an official team sponsor, the campaign expands into soccer-specific fan rewards and **VIP Canada Soccer experiences**.

Omar Zausa, President of Ferrero Canada, shared: *“This is Ferrero Canada’s biggest partnership yet, and we’re uniting all our brands to celebrate the sweet moments soccer creates for millions of Canadian fans, on and off the pitch. Together with Canada Soccer, we’re committed to championing excellence, passion and the power of shared experiences.”*

Across both markets, Ferrero is rolling out **special tournament packaging**, large-scale retail displays, digital and social activations, sweepstakes, influencer partnerships and in-store promotions designed to connect its multiple brands to adding some sweetness to match-day rituals.

Nutella + Canadian Soccer

Ferrero's "Go All In" campaign in Canada includes **Canadian team-inspired packaging** across several brands. We looked at Nutella's new packaging, which features white and red Canadian team jerseys and the Canada Soccer logo.

Overall, the products land in the top third of concepts for Canadian foods, though they score average on breakthrough potential. But similar to what we saw with Chips Ahoy!, **these spreads are most appealing to younger consumers** — trial potential jumps to 79 among people under 45! And those under 45 see these spreads as better than what currently exists in-market (Advantage: 62% vs. 49% norm). Older consumers are less interested in general in a limited-time World Cup product unless there's additional value beyond the soccer connection, so this is consistent.

The biggest reason people are excited about these spreads is that **they already love Nutella** and see it as a trusted, tasty product. But the limited-time nature of the packaging makes the spreads particularly appealing, with **people praising the connection to the World Cup and the Canadian team in particular**. They see these as special and collectible. And as is typically required in Canada, the packaging features both English and French, which people appreciated!

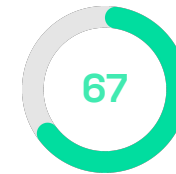
"It's good to see that a company that isn't Canadian is selling a product in Canada with the World Cup theme, specifically the Canadian team jersey. Well done."

"I love that it's Special edition for FIFA, as I am a huge FIFA fan. Also, Nutella is delicious and satisfying."

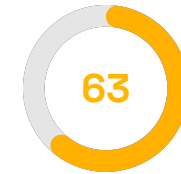
"What lovely packaging. My kids love soccer and Nutella, so it's a good fit."

"I like that it's the same classic taste with World Cup decor for the tournament."

Priced trial potential



Breakthrough potential



Advantage

Overall

48%

Norm 49%

Under 45

62%

Norm 49%



➤Key takeaway➤

The power of the national team connection

While some brands highlighted the global nature of the World Cup in their ads and innovations (like Tim Hortons' international-inspired flavors), some brands chose to evoke national team pride instead — like Chobani (US), Lala (Mexico) and Nutella (Canada). Each one partnered with the national soccer teams to make these connections very credible.

It shows us again that there are so many different ways to tie into a massive event like the World Cup. It's a global event, but it also has deep significance for people at a local level. People are proud of their countries and national teams — and want to show off that pride in the products they buy.

So if global rights aren't on the table or in your budget, the national route can earn you just as much love.



Heineken



The social side of soccer

Sponsorship status: Official Beer of Soccer

Ownership: The social side of fandom

Heineken is showing up for the 2026 FIFA World Cup by leaning into something it has spent years building in global soccer: **the social side of fandom**. While the brand is not an official FIFA World Cup sponsor, it has a long history in the sport through partnerships such as the UEFA Champions League, giving it strong credibility.

Focusing on the social experiences that bring fans together, Heineken is activating through **soccer-themed advertising** (which includes the “**Fans Have More Friends**” platform), **limited-edition packaging**, retail promotions and fan events.

A unique activation within its campaign is the brand’s **Fan Volunteers initiative** — which recruits supporters to help create unforgettable World Cup experiences, from welcoming fans and helping organize viewing events, to bringing local soccer communities together.

These pushes continue to play into themes Heineken knows well, with an emphasis on shared experiences: meeting new people, celebrating together and creating memorable moments around every match — with a Heineken in hand.



“Fans Have More Friends”

Heineken commissioned research to understand what fandom actually means to people — and found that **75% of fans say fandom has helped them meet new people**. This is the insight Heineken built its global platform around — the idea that fandom brings people together. The platform encompasses soccer fandom but also extends into other types of fandom, like music and Formula 1.

We looked at one ad in the campaign [“Fans Have More Friends: Bar.”](#) This ad opens on a sparse sports bar covered in Heineken green where a handful of people are quietly watching a match. The room is empty. Over 30 seconds, as the soccer action builds and a goal is scored, strangers come together to celebrate and share the moment, all while **Frank Sinatra’s “Cheek to Cheek”** plays.

This ad is a wonderful example of how great ads are grounded in true consumer insights. It lands in the top 25% of US ads for its ability to drive short-term sales and long-term brand equity (Sales impact: 81, Brand impact: 75).

The key message — sharing a Heineken turns strangers into friends — lands as clear and believable, and 58% of viewers say the ad communicates that **Heineken is “great for socializing”** — exactly what the ad was trying to convey.

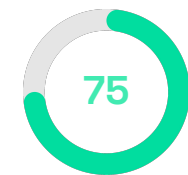
People walked away saying: *“I didn’t realize how much they said drinking with strangers brings people together — that’s actually a great thought.”*

A strong result for an unofficial sponsor trying to carve out World Cup territory!

Sales
impact



Brand
impact



Love 🥰

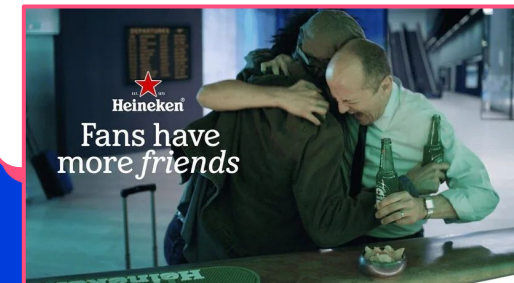
34%

Norm 27%

Laughter 😂

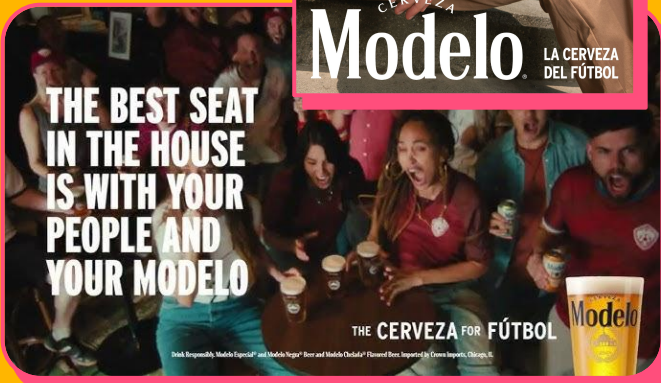
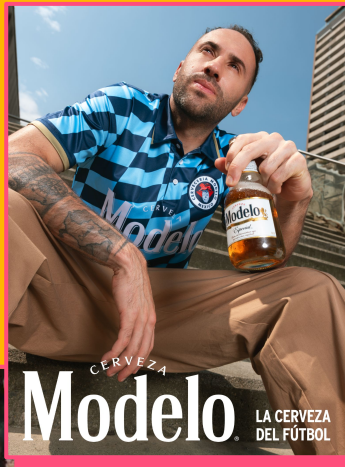
12%

Norm 7%



Modelo





The fighting spirit of fandom

Sponsorship status: Not a sponsor

Ownership: The fighting spirit of fandom

Even as an unofficial sponsor, Modelo is approaching the 2026 FIFA World Cup with a platform that feels unmistakably on-brand: celebrating the fighting spirit of soccer fans (building on Modelo's long-running **"Fighting Spirit" platform**). As the self-proclaimed **"Cerveza for Fútbol,"** the brand is positioning itself around the passion of the fans who show up for every match, wherever that may be.

It all comes to life through the **"Best Seat in the House" campaign**, which challenges the idea that the best place to experience the World Cup is inside stadiums. Modelo instead focuses on the everyday spaces where passionate fandom lives — whether that be in living rooms packed with friends and family, backyard watch parties or your local neighborhood bar.

The brand is supporting this campaign with its largest ever investment in soccer media, which includes **limited-edition packaging**, retail sweepstakes, exclusive merchandise, an **advertising series** and **partnerships with football stars** including **Edson Álvarez, Raúl Jiménez, Diego Luna, David Ospina and Raphinha.**

It's a strategy that feels authentic to both the brand and the audience, with the simple message that the best seat is wherever passion, community, soccer and a Modelo come together.

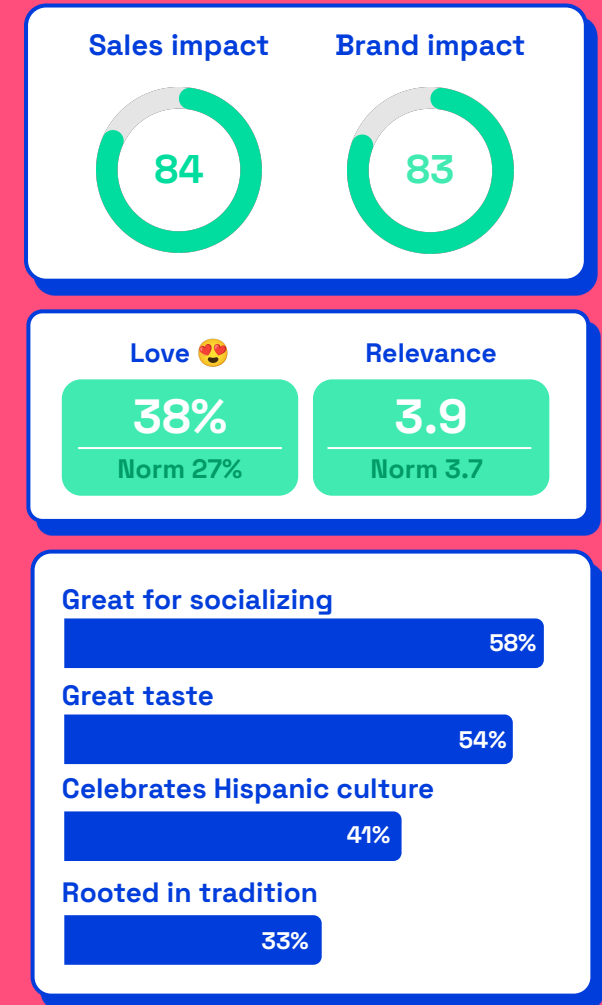
“The Cerveza for Fútbol: Hometown Seats”

One ad in the campaign, [“Hometown Seats.”](#) is a strong ad from Modelo that lands in the top 25% of US ads for both short-term sales potential and long-term brand equity (Sales impact: 84, Brand impact: 83).

What makes it stand out in a crowded World Cup advertising landscape is how quickly it makes its point. The opening shot appears to show a packed stadium while the narrator says “This isn’t the best seat in the house” — then the camera pulls back to reveal a television screen as the voiceover completes: “this is.” The key point lands in the first four seconds of the ad, making the very first frame feel clever and original.

And it’s an idea that resonates with people. **Love is the dominant emotion** at 38% (vs 27% norm), with the abuela figure and the family atmosphere being at the center of that emotional response. The ad shows soccer uniting generations and that’s a sentiment people love.

It shows very clearly that you don’t need official sponsorship rights to own a cultural moment. By sponsoring every Telemundo pre-game broadcast and showing up across all 104 Spanish-language matches, Modelo makes sure to build cultural credibility first and foremost. This is reflected in the data, with the ad scoring highly on brand attributes like **“celebrates Hispanic culture” (41%)** and **“rooted in tradition” (33%)**.





Modelo Especial 24-pack

Modelo also partnered with designer Jon-Paul Wheatley (known for his viral hand-stitched soccer balls) to develop a **custom ball that celebrates Latino fútbol fandom**. The ball is available for sale and featured on its bright blue 24-pack of Modelo beer.

The 24-pack generates **high trial potential** (79) and average breakthrough potential (59) — though with a very strong advantage score. So while people don't necessarily see it as different than what's available in the category (understandable considering it's Modelo's regular bottles with new multipack packaging), they do see it as **better than what's available**.

Modelo has earned its place in the sport through decades of showing up for soccer fans, and the new packaging acknowledges the moment, with people saying, *"I like Modelo and I like soccer so this is cool to me."* and *"It's perfect for the World Cup. My go-to brand."*

And the 24-pack format amplifies that this is a product designed to be consumed with a group, with people saying, *"The 24 pack is great for sharing during watching a game at home."* and *"It would be great at a get together."*

Modelo is currently the number one selling beer in the US, so this limited-edition packaging is **giving the brand's fans a reason to reach for what they already buy**, but with something new that makes the moment feel more special. And since the brand only updated the multi-pack wrap and not the individual bottle labels, it's a very successful lower lift activation!

Truly



The power of believing

Sponsorship status: Official Hard Seltzer of US soccer

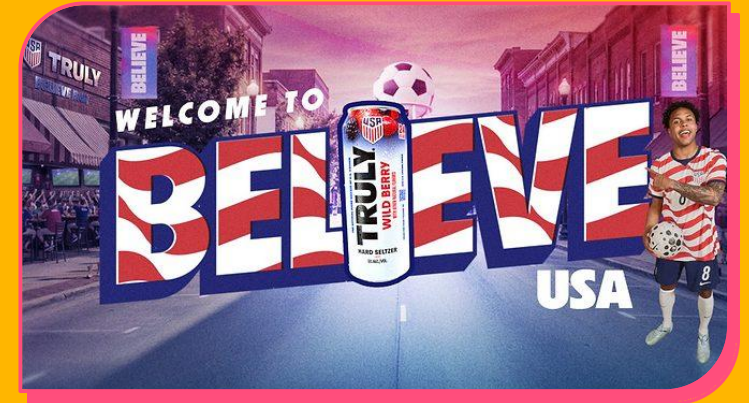
Ownership: The power of belief among fans

Truly's presence in the 2026 World Cup is best described as turning belief into a fan-first brand platform that sits around the tournament.

The brand's campaign, titled **"Drink like a Believer,"** taps into the emotion and optimism of US soccer fandom through **limited-edition packaging, advertising, collaborations with US soccer star Weston McKennie and experiential activations** designed to live in the spaces where fans actually engage with the tournament (local bars, watch parties, etc.).

One of the more standout activations is the brand's **"Believe" platform**, which includes stunts like finding a town whose "faith in US Soccer runs deepest" to **officially rename it Believe, USA.**

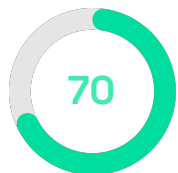
Overall, Truly is positioning itself as more of a **cultural participant in the World Cup** (specifically in the US), embedding the brand into the spirit of optimism that defines how fans experience the tournament off the field.



Priced trial
potential



Breakthrough
potential



Distinctiveness

75%

Norm 73%

Advantage

60%

Norm 49%



Lighter drinking experience for soccer gatherings

As part of its “Drink Like a Believer” campaign, Truly released its **Star Squad variety pack**, which includes four US Soccer-inspired flavors (Watermelon Wave, Orange Slices, Baller Berry and the exclusive Red, White & Tru). The design prominently displays the US Soccer logo and red, white and blue coloring — as well as visuals of the fruit to identify the flavors.

This multi-pack **generates strong trial potential (88) and breakthrough potential (70)** — driven by its high advantage score (60% vs. 49% norm) — which means people see it as better than what exists in the category.

The **patriotic soccer branding** was the most exciting part of the product to people — they thought it was timely and eye-catching. The “Red, White & Tru” name in particular was appealing. The fact that the pack **offered multiple flavors to try** was interesting and people thought it was **ideal for sharing**. They also liked that the seltzers were very fruit-forward.

Finally, one of the clearest themes we saw was appreciation for the **100 calorie count and moderate 5% ABV**, allowing for a lighter drinking experience — which is a key benefit of the whole seltzer category.

Alcohol is crowded category for World Cup participation, but these seltzers stand out as a lighter, fruitier option!

⇒ Key takeaway ⇒

Standing out in soccer's most crowded category

No category shows up for the World Cup quite like alcohol — official sponsors, team partners and unofficial players are all competing for the same watch parties and fan moments.

That's exactly why these three brands' activations work. Each one claimed a corner of fandom no one else had taken — and that fits the brand: Heineken owns the social side, Modelo the fighting spirit, Truly the optimism of belief (with a lighter product to match).

And notice that sponsorship status isn't what separates them. In a crowded category, find the part of the fan experience you can credibly own — then build around it!



LEGO



Togetherness through play

Sponsorship status: Official collaborator

Ownership: Bringing everyone together through play

Finally, while we've focused primarily on CPG brands in this report, we couldn't resist including this fun campaign from LEGO!

The **"Everyone Wants a Piece" campaign** brings together soccer icons Cristiano Ronaldo, Lionel Messi, Vinícius Júnior, Kylian Mbappé and a young boy in a playful spot centered around building a **LEGO FIFA World Cup trophy**.

In the ad, the players all sit around a table that spins faster and faster as they each try to add their LEGO character to the top of the trophy. Eventually a young boy comes in and adds his own at the top instead — a playful moment that shows how LEGO connects people through play (no matter the level of rivalry).

Beyond the ad itself, LEGO has released **new, buildable sets** (including the FIFA World Cup Trophy seen in the ad) and other soccer-themed collectible sets that highlight each of the players.



Sales impact



Brand impact



*"I like the comedy in it, the music is playful.
The sports stars, the soccer fans.
Everything about the ad was great."*

*"It was very clever and engaging to see how
they represented famous athletes in a fun,
toy-like way that appeals to both kids and
adults."*

Fun & playful



Brings people together



Encourages creativity



An ad that could only be for LEGO

As the hero of the campaign that helps deliver the message about the brand's new limited-edition sets, LEGO's ["Everyone Wants a Piece"](#) ad is a great example of how to show up for a big event like the World Cup.

To start, it makes sense for LEGO to have a role in this event because the brand already has well-established partnerships among other sporting events like F1, making this an extension that naturally fits.

The ad's **clever use of soccer celebrities** Cristiano Ronaldo, Lionel Messi, Vinicius Jr. and Kylian Mbappé as well as a **storyline focused on the LEGO trophy** both cue the connection with the cultural moment and show it to clearly be an ad that could only be for LEGO.

And people agree, noting **how distinctive it is, which allows it to stand out and drive great reach** among the sea of brands advertising for the World Cup.

On top of that, the ad itself **has a very playful yet competitive tone** to it, further amplified by the music (Musical appeal: 4.1 vs. 3.8 norm), which plays into the competitive spirit of the World Cup as well as what LEGO is all about — play!

This approach clearly connects LEGO to the World Cup in a way that fits the brand, without getting lost in the hype or overpowered by the four soccer players.

Key takeaways

We've shared a lot of data and takeaways throughout this report — but let's take a second to summarize a few of our learnings about how to nail your marketing for the next major sports event.



Get creative about how to get involved

There is no one right way to get involved in a major sports moment. Sponsoring the event itself, or sponsoring individual teams or players are possibilities, but that's not the only way. We saw plenty of brands without a sponsorship effectively capitalize on the moment.

Think about what works for your brand (and budget) and do your research to uncover what matters to consumers — like Heineken did by realizing that sports can bring people together. Then get creative about how tie into the moment!

KEY TAKEAWAYS KEY TAKEAWAYS KEY TAKEAWAYS KEY TAKEAWAYS KEY TAKEAWAYS

Own a moment, not the match

Winners own a moment around soccer, rather than soccer itself. You can see it in how deliberately each brand staked out its territory. AB InBev took the habitual rituals. Coca-Cola claimed the emotional rollercoaster of the sport. Heineken owns the social side of fandom. Powerade owns the preparation behind the game.

Pick an element of the overall experience that ties to your brand so it feels like a cohesive part of the moment.



Lean into what you're already known for

Use the moment to reinforce what a brand is already known for — rather than try to create new associations just for this event.

Budweiser leaned on 40 years of heritage to be the beer of the people. Michelob ULTRA extended its long-running “superior” idea and “playing for an ULTRA” into soccer. Coca-Cola is always about emotion. Dove brought its decades-old mission to the pitch. None of them treated the tournament as a reason to become a different brand.

Consider what your brand is known for and think through how to make that pop for this event.

Bring the global event to local culture

Fans still experience global events locally. Some of the strongest global campaigns this year paired a global platform with localized execution. AB InBev used different brands in different markets, with Corona focusing on the spirit of the Mexican people and Michelob ULTRA tailoring different versions of the same ad to Canada and the US.

Think about what elements are global and which need localization to be truly relevant to each market.



Cast for the audience you want to reach

Athletes give you depth and credibility with the core audience, while pop culture figures give you reach with everyone else. Casamigos cast Gabrielle Union and Keegan-Michael Key rather than soccer icons, and the ad appeals to everyone while still being relevant to the game.

The most effective player-led work treats athletes as cultural figures first and soccer players second.



Make the brand the main character

Celebrities and big-budget spectacle are everywhere in massive sporting events — so there's a risk your brand can get lost behind them. Always use your DBAs and give your product or brand a clear role in the story to make sure the brand shines.

Budweiser's specific shade of red drove the highest brand recall of any AB InBev ad we tested. All of Unilever's FIFA-branded products still maintain the core of the Dove Men+Care, Dove and Axe visual brand identities.

Don't let the event overpower your brand — your brand needs to be the main character.

Tie your limited-time products into the overall campaign

Some of the strongest products we looked at are those that fit best with the overall campaign. Casamigos' ready-to-drink margaritas are built for repeat purchase at the watch party — which is exactly what the campaign is about. Lala's line of historic Mexican jersey products fits with the campaign's ideas of Mexican identity and pride.

The products are one piece of the overall campaign and it should feel like all of it is sharing the same message.



KEY TAKEAWAYS KEY TAKEAWAYS KEY TAKEAWAYS KEY TAKEAWAYS KEY TAKEAWAYS

Aim for broad appeal with your limited-time products

Products timed with a sporting event are, of course, only available for a short time — so in most cases they need to appeal to a broad audience to be successful. Niche CPG products that appeal only to sports fans are unlikely to generate strong ROI.

There are so many ways to appeal to everyone for a global event like this — global flavors, patriotic shapes and packaging, etc.

Do your research to make sure your product will drive the burst in sales you're looking for.

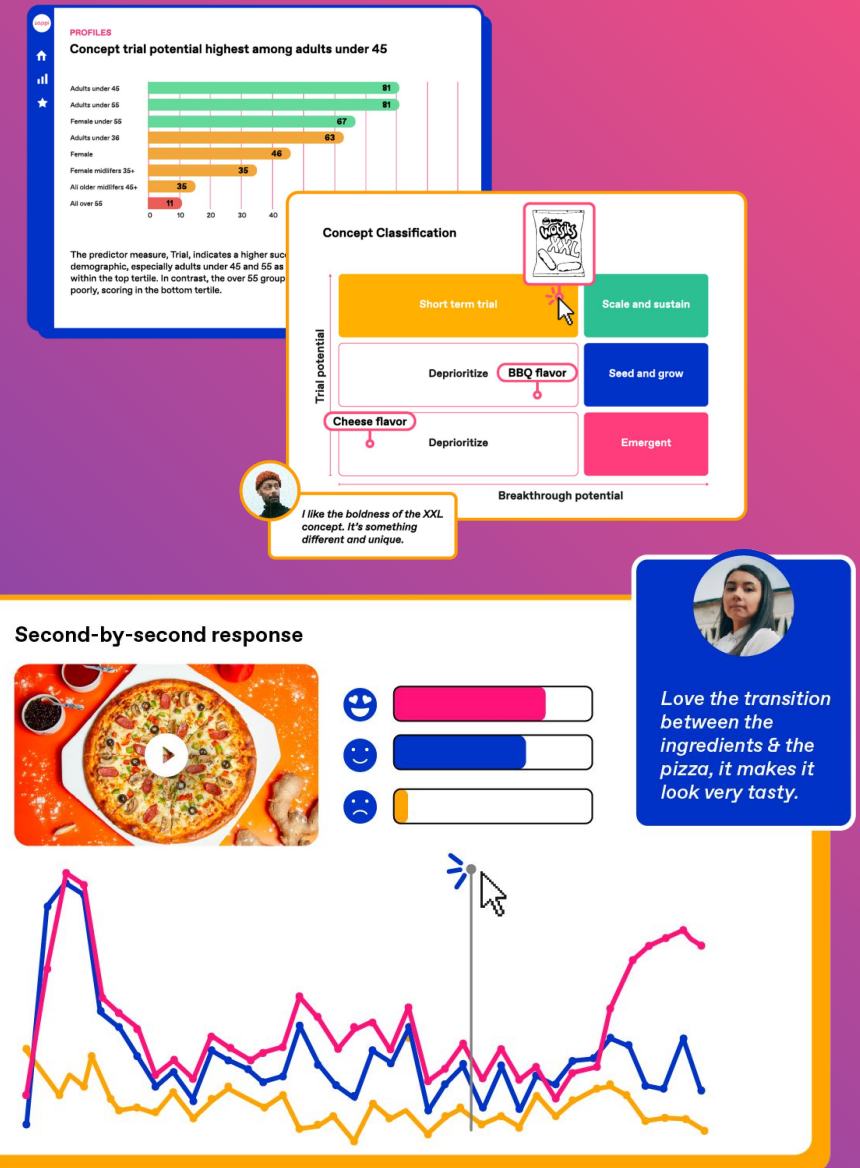
The consumer insights platform that helps brands win

All of the data in this report comes from the Zappi platform — software that combines the power of consumer data and AI to deliver connected insights. Create successful products, develop better ads and build winning brands.

With Zappi, you get:

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