

UK consumers set to provide world cup boost to economy

As June approaches and the nation anticipates a summer of football frenzy, new research from Mintel, a UK-based market intelligence company, reveals it is not only the fans who are anticipating cheering a good result. Mintel's exclusive research reveals that nearly two thirds (63%) of Brits can be expected to increase their leisure spending as a consequence of the 2010 FIFA World Cup - rising to almost four in five hardcore football fans. In addition, nearly three quarters (71%) of UK adult population are planning to watch the world cup at some level and just 28% Brits claim to have no interest in the tournament.



With in and out of home sectors looking to cash in, manufacturers and retailers are eagerly awaiting a result. Over one in five (23%) consumers say they will probably place one or more bets on the World Cup - rising to 37% of those who watch a lot of football.

Amongst fans who will be going to pubs to watch games, four fifths (81%) predict an impact on spending, suggesting that they will go out and spend money over and above their usual social activities. Meanwhile, 31% say they will be buying alcohol as a result of the world cup, 29% food and snacks and 13% say they will buy a newspaper more often.

Sport can drive that 'feel good factor'

Richard Cope, principal trends analyst at Mintel, said: "Despite edging back into growth at the end of 2009, the UK economy remains in need of the boost to spending that can be delivered by the World Cup, ideally underpinned by a successful tournament for the England team. Sport can be a significant driver of the 'feel good factor' that encourages happy consumers to spend - and the opportunity of the World Cup this summer could prove just the ticket for both retailers and the wider economy."

Highlighting our national passion for the 'beautiful game', more than 70% of adults in the UK - and more than 60% of women - will watch at least some of the tournament.

Interest is not dependent on home success either - only 13 % of those following the tournament will switch off if or when England is knocked out. Indeed, even those with the most casual interest in the World Cup (the 24% of Brits who don't normally watch football, but will tune in for the world cup) are buying into the whole event experience - only 26 % of these will depart with the national team.

Mintel's research reveals that the majority (83%) of UK adults following the World Cup will be cheering for England. Of the remainder, 5% will be following Brazil and 2% for Italy and Spain respectively. However, Mintel's research reveals that many consumers have also have a reserve in mind when it comes to team support - with brand Brazil leading the way with 9% of consumers, followed by England and Italy with 5% each.

British reserve, and all that

Meanwhile, it seems committed football fans used to showing their support for their team are planning to take that attitude into the World Cup - with 42% saying that they 'regard myself as patriotic and am proud to show it'. Indeed, one in 10 consumers (equating to 4m Brits) overall claim they are planning to buy the shirt or a flag of the team they will be supporting. However, it seems that casual followers adopt a more typically British reserve, with 46% saying they are patriotic, but don't feel the need to show it.

The in-home sector is also set to see the benefit. Mintel's research reveals that 61% of those who plan to watch the majority of cup games in home with their family (and 56% of those planning to watch alone) say that the World Cup will have an impact on their spending over and above their normal household expenditure. In addition, a third (31%) of Brits say they will probably buy alcoholic drinks specifically for entertaining during World Cup games.

It also seems regionality - and high-profile club locations - also have a part to play in patriotism and interest in world cup prospects. The highest levels of football and World Cup interest are apparent in the North West (32%) and Greater London (29%), where the greatest concentrations of professional clubs also exist. Intermediate interest then peaks in Yorkshire / Humberside (26%) and the Midlands (25%) where the next highest concentrations of clubs are found. Scotland / North (27%), South East / East Anglia (27%) and South West / Wales (22%) regions follow.

But it seems consumers are failing to get a kick out of watching games with latest 3D technology as yet. Just 5% of Brits say they would like to watch World Cup games in 3D in pubs or cinemas.

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