

EXPERIENCE INTELLIGENCE

MOBILITY
EDITION

BY GPJ

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From dumbed-down EVs to immersive life drives, and city-wide fan destinations, a new mobility imperative is emerging: moving people from place to place is the baseline—giving them a reason to connect with the journey itself is the differentiator.



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FIFA fanscapes redefine the host city



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The rise of the life drive



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The digital simplification of EVs



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FIFA fanscapes redefine the host city

Trend spotted by **Hadley Cook**

01



Despite transportation woes, the FIFA World Cup has delivered unforgettable fan experiences.

More than halfway into the FIFA World Cup, one thing has become abundantly clear: the most memorable fan experiences aren't necessarily happening inside the stadiums. While [transportation challenges](#) have been a topic of concern in several host cities, the biggest success stories have come from cities that have [embraced the cultures traveling](#) with the tournament.

Boston offers one of the most compelling examples. Despite long journeys to Gillette Stadium and [well-documented transportation constraints](#), the city quickly became a temporary home for [Scotland's "Tartan Army"](#). Local bars expanded imports of Scottish beer, officials extended bar hours, and neighborhoods transformed into spontaneous cultural celebrations—creating an experience visitors described as feeling "just like home."

Meanwhile, [New Jersey's transportation challenges](#) have reinforced an important lesson ahead of the 2026 Final: infrastructure matters, but fan perception is shaped just as much by hospitality and the feeling of being welcomed as it is by travel times. The tournament is revealing a new reality for experiential marketers. Fans may forgive a longer journey if the city itself [becomes part of the celebration](#).

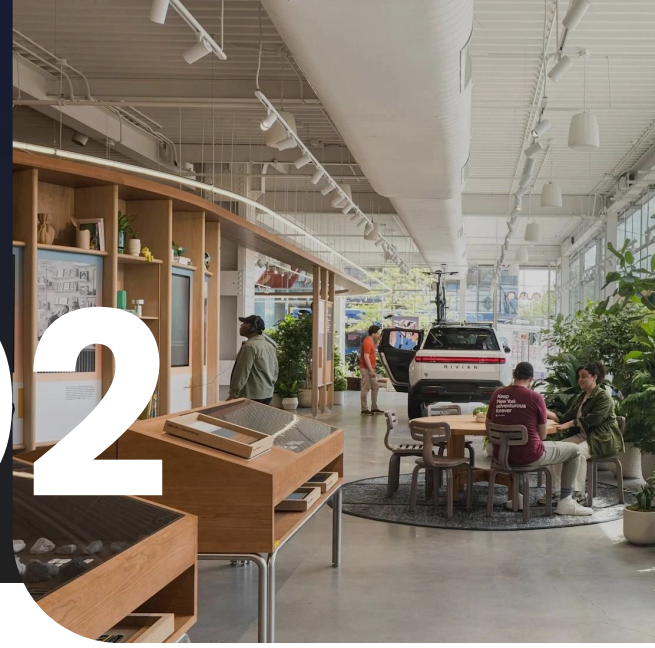
What it means | The biggest lesson from the World Cup isn't that every host city needs flawless transportation. It's that every host city needs a [strategy for welcoming people](#). Transit, public spaces, businesses, cultural programming, and fan festivals are becoming part of a single, connected experience ecosystem. For experiential marketers, the opportunity extends far beyond venue operations. The cities creating the strongest memories are those turning airports, train stations, pubs, parks, and pedestrian corridors into places where international communities feel [seen, celebrated, and connected](#). As global events continue to grow in scale, the most successful destinations won't simply move fans efficiently—[they'll make visitors feel like they belong](#).



The rise of the **life drive**

Trend spotted by **Doug Schultz**

02



Today's brands embed vehicles within the adventures, communities, and lifestyles consumers already crave.

Many consumers have stopped buying vehicles solely based on specs and a brand name. Instead, they evaluate on possibility. To stand out in an increasingly crowded market, they're creating stories people see themselves in, where the vehicle has become the enabler of the experience.

Across automotive segments, brands are shifting from product demos to world-building. "Life drive" programs enable prospects to experience vehicles in their natural habitat—navigating mountains, driving winding roads, and arriving at remote locations—with the drive itself as the payoff. Rivian [Adventure Drives](#) invited consumers to trade a morning of dull routine for an afternoon of exciting exploration beginning at a dealership reimagined as an urban oasis and landing at the whimsical gardens of the MET Cloisters. [McLaren](#) combined luxury driving with breathtaking scenery across 600 kilometers of Austria and Italy landscape. [Porsche's travel experiences](#) turned luxury road trips into multi-day cultural itineraries for affluent buyers, and [Jeep x The North Face winter basecamps](#) merged outdoor communities interests through masterclasses and workshops in an alpine setting. This shift isn't unique to the automotive industry. [Nike Run Clubs](#) create running culture before selling footwear; [Sephora's Summer Club](#) transformed resorts into immersive beauty-wellness destinations; and [M&M's](#) leaned into entertainment and participatory experiences—embedding themselves into culture rather than advertising around it.

What it means | The most effective automotive experiences no longer ask consumers to imagine ownership—they let them temporarily occupy the identity that ownership represents. Success depends on designing experiences where the lifestyle is compelling enough to stand on its own. Brands foster trust through authentic interaction, creating a lasting emotional connection by embedding the vehicle within a story-driven weekend experience rather than a typical test drive. In turn, these experiences generate considerable social currency, creating shareable moments and credibility within consumers' personal networks.



The **digital simplification** of EVs

Trend spotted by **Hadley Cook**

03



A new generation of EVs is moving away from screen-heavy spectacle and toward simpler, more tactile forms of ownership.

After years of EVs being positioned as smartphones on wheels, a countertrend is finally emerging: automakers and entrepreneurs are rethinking what electric mobility should feel like.

Slate is perhaps one of the clearest examples. Its [new electric truck](#) goes all the way back to basics: no infotainment screen, crank windows, minimal finishes, and a modular accessory model that lets owners build up the vehicle over time. Similarly, on the grassroots end of the spectrum, projects like [Mutiny Motors](#) are exploring small-format electric utility vehicles with a DIY spirit, turning EV ownership into a platform for tinkering, modification, and community.

Yet, simplification isn't just about the bottom line. Volkswagen is bringing [physical buttons back](#) into its EV interiors, responding to growing fatigue around touchscreens and over-digitized driving. At the luxury end, [Ferrari's Jony Ive-designed Luce](#) leans into refined simplicity, analog-digital hybrid controls, and a more tactile relationship between driver and machine.

Together, these design choices point to a broader shift. The future of EVs may not just be defined by bigger screens, smoother software, and frictionless autonomy—it will also be defined by vehicles that feel understandable, ownable, and [emotionally connected to the act of driving](#).

What it means | For experiential marketers, this signals a new mobility mindset. Consumers are not just asking what technology can do for them; they are asking how much technology they actually want between themselves and the experience. In the same way Gen Z has embraced dumb phones, film cameras, and analog hobbies as antidotes to digital overload, simplified EVs offer a different kind of future-facing experience: one rooted in control, customisation, and physical interaction. The next wave of EV experiences may be less about showcasing screens, sensors and automation, and more about inviting people to touch, modify, personalise, and understand the product.



OUT-THERE EXPERIENCES

People, brands and marketers continue to push the boundaries of physical and digital experiences, with new and creative executions popping up across the globe.

The Sweetest Stop

To celebrate America's 250th birthday, McDonald's installed a 35-foot Fried Apple Pie monument on Route 66, turning the iconic highway into a giant roadside attraction complete with retro merch and free dessert.



Yoga on the Great Wall

Lululemon gathered over 2,000 people on the Great Wall of China for an epic sunrise yoga festival, featuring Tai Chi flows, traditional drumming, and a synchronized light show.



The Miami Fuel Fest

Monster Energy took over the Miami Grand Prix with citywide fan experiences to launch its Lando Norris Zero Sugar flavor, featuring a 20-foot helmet-wrapped can, racing simulators, and a trackside TikTok Clubhouse packed with a tooth gem station and watch parties.



The Anotherland Theater

Hendrick's Gin launched its permanent cacao and orange blossom expression with a multi-city, "Sleep No More"-inspired immersive theater pop-up, actor-led scavenger hunts, sensory greenhouses, and apothecary cocktail tastings.

