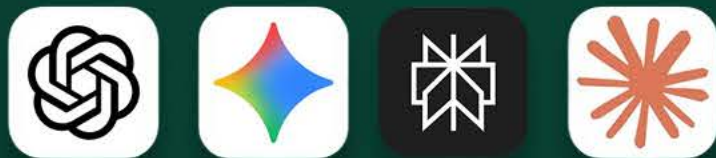




YOU PAID FOR THE CATEGORY. AI GAVE IT AWAY.

WORLD CUP 2026 SPONSOR AI VISIBILITY STUDY

AI assistants



50 prompts
across four question phases

2 runs, 1 week apart
Jul 1 & Jul 5, 2026

English, US locale
held constant across run



AGENDA

The Hero Finding

Perplexity gave Adidas's category to Nike - twice

03

The Thesis

Exclusivity ends where the AI conversation begins

05

Methodology

What was measured, methodology and scoring

06

The Mechanism

Why AI recall follows the web

07-10

Per-Model Breakdown

Four AI, four different sponsor stories

12

The Playbook

What each sponsor should do next

13



PERPLEXITY GAVE ADIDAS' CATEGORY TO NIKE TWICE.

Which sportswear brand is the official partner of the **2026 World Cup**?

Perplexity answered



Paid nothing for sportswear rights

The correct answer



Held the official FIFA sportswear rights

Wrong in both runs, on the same prompt. Nike's "X2" ambush campaign generated heavy press coverage; web-grounded Perplexity read it and drew the wrong conclusion about who holds the rights. An AI accuracy failure not an ambush violation.

THE BOTTOM LINE

What AI assistants actually say about 2026 World Cup sponsors.

01

AI GIVES PAID RIGHTS AWAY

Perplexity named **Nike, a non sponsor**, as the official kit partner of **the 2026 World Cup**. In both test runs. Adidas has held that right since 1970.

02

TIER DOES NOT BUY AI VISIBILITY

A top-tier FIFA Partner scored **0.8%**
A junior 2026 sponsor scored **32.5%**

03

VISIBILITY SWINGS UP TO 8X BY MODEL

Hisense:
25% on ChatGPT,
3% on Perplexity.
Same sponsor, same question.

| RIGHTS BUY THE CATEGORY. COVERAGE EARNS THE AI RECALL. |

The Thesis

EXCLUSIVITY ENDS WHERE THE AI CONVERSATION BEGINS.

Brands pay FIFA to own a category: the sportswear partner, the soft drink, the payments brand. That exclusivity is a legal right. AI recall is not.

Where exclusivity is enforceable

- ✓ **In stadiums**
Signage and category rights
- ✓ **On broadcast**
Ad and sponsorship slots
- ✓ **On merchandise**
Official licensing

Where it is not

AI conversations

ChatGPT, Perplexity, Gemini and Claude answer sponsorship questions from web signals — not from contracts.



OPTIONAL Don't have brand guidelines yet?

ADD-ON: We can build them. Tone of voice, creative platform,. Available as a standalone add-on.

WHAT WAS MEASURED.

4

AI assistants



50

prompts

across four question phases

2

runs, 1 week apart

no brand named the real test

65%

fully unbranded

no brand named the real test

Tracked: 15 confirmed official sponsors (FIFA Partners + WC Sponsors) and 3 non-sponsor ambush brands (Nike, Pepsi, Mastercard). Scores count prominent, substantive mentions only – a passing mention does not count. 400 prompt-model units per tracked entity across both runs.

FOUR PROMPT PHASES

1

CATEGORY
FORMATION



2

ATTRIBUTE RECALL



3

PROOF & TRUST

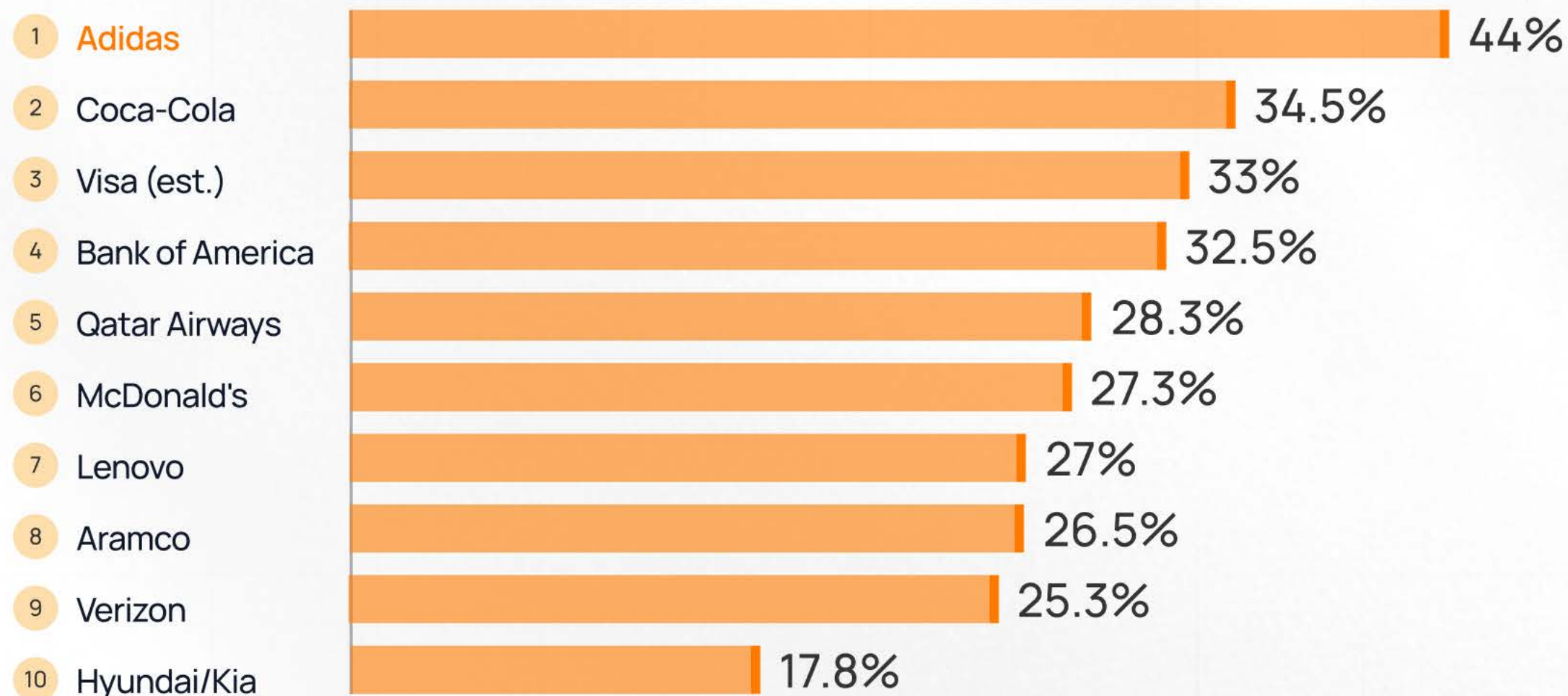


4

COMPETITIVE
SELECTION

ADIDAS LEADS AND NO ONE BREAKS 50%

Average mention rate across both runs and all 4 models top 10 of 15 official sponsors.



BOTTOM OF THE TABLE

Hisense 14.5%

Frito-Lay 11.8%

AB InBev 6.8%

Mengniu 0.8%

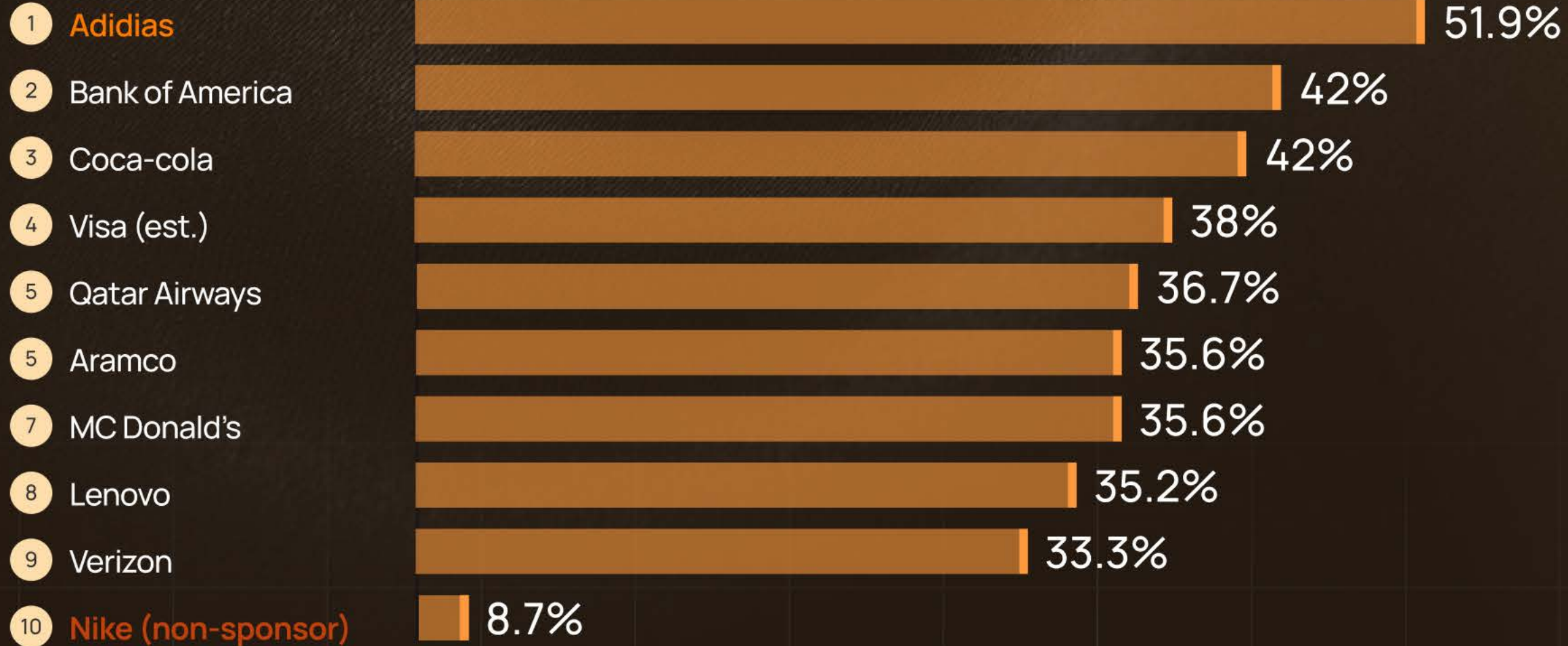
*Visa estimated from raw answer-text analysis due to a platform configuration error; conservative figure. Corrected run to follow.

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The Real Test

WHAT AI VOLUNTEERS WITHOUT BEING ASKED.

Unbranded mention rate the query names no brand; AI must volunteer the sponsor unprompted
(264 prompt-model units per entity)



*Visa estimated from answer-text analysis. Rates here run higher than the combined leaderboard because the denominator excludes prompts anchored to other brands

ONLY ADIDAS CLEARS 50%

Nike gets volunteered into World Cup answers at 8.7% - unasked **10x more than** Mengniu (0.8%), a paying FIFA Partner.

American Airlines, a context-only Tournament Supporter, surfaced at 22.7% ahead of several official sponsors.

THE AMBUSH GAP: A NON-SPONSOR MATCHED A PAYING SPONSOR



COMBINED MENTION RATE

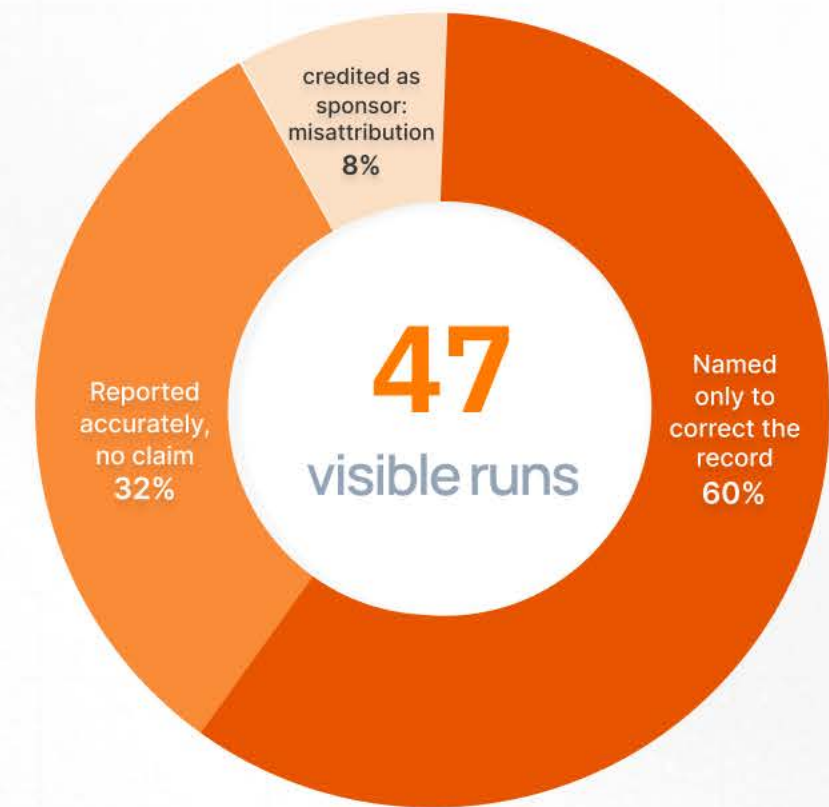
A brand that paid nothing achieved the same combined mention rate as an official World Cup sponsor—driven by the X2 campaign, 12 national-team kit deals, and the press coverage that followed.



PERPLEXITY IS THE SPECIFIC RISK

All 4 misattribution runs occurred on Perplexity, on the highest-stakes query a user directly asking who holds the rights. That user left with the wrong answer, both times.

HOW NIKE APPEARED



Net effect: ~4.7% share-of-voice presence across all sponsorship prompt-model units

The Mechanism

TOP TIER. NEAR-ZERO IN AI

The tier you buy does not decide whether AI remembers you.



FIFA Partner top tier, same as Adidas & Coca-Cola

0.8%

BANK OF AMERICA 

WC Sponsor tier two, new for 2026

32.5% Ranks above every FIFA Partner except Adidas and Coca-Cola.

MENGNIU FIGURE REFLECTS ENGLISH-LANGUAGE AI. NATIVE-LANGUAGE VISIBILITY DIFFERS.

The pattern holds across the leaderboard:

Brands with significant English-language press score well regardless of tier; brands with thin English web presence score low regardless of what they paid. AI visibility follows whether the web has absorbed your story, not which tier you bought.

WHY THIS HAPPENS

01

AI ABSORBS PUBLIC WEB SIGNALS

AI models learn from **press, official pages, and structured** sources. Fresh coverage updates recommendations fastest.

02

PRESS VOLUME SHAPES RECALL

Bank of America reached **32.5% AI visibility**. Nike's ambush campaign reached 11.8%. What gets written gets recalled.

03

LEGAL RIGHTS ARE INVISIBLE TO MODELS

AI can't surface what isn't publicly documented. Mengniu reached **only 0.8% visibility** despite being a FIFA Partner.

| RIGHTS BUY THE CATEGORY. CONTENT EARNS THE RECALL. |

Per-Model Breakdown

FOUR AI, FOUR DIFFERENT SPONSOR STORIES.

Per-model mention rates show where each sponsor's web signal is landing and where it is not.



- 1 Adidas
- 2 Coca-cola
- 3 Hisense
- 4 Verizon
- 5 Frito-Lay
- 6 Nike (non-sponsor)

1 Adidas	45%	45%	43%	43%
2 Coca-cola	28%	37%	37%	36%
3 Hisense	25%	19%	11%	3%
4 Verizon	23%	29%	30%	19%
5 Frito-Lay	8%	12%	18%	9%
6 Nike (non-sponsor)	10%	15%	11%	11%

8X

Hisense gap

25% on ChatGPT vs 3% on Perplexity same prompts, two different AI landscapes.

2X

Frito-Lay gap

Claude 18% vs ChatGPT 8% the clearest model-specific content gap.

The right question isn't "what's our average score?" It's which model shows the biggest gap, and why? The gap is diagnostic.

WHAT EACH SPONSOR SHOULD DO NEXT.

The diagnosis is content , so every fix below is a content fix, not a media buy.

ADIDAS

Fix Perplexity's retrieval signal: put authoritative, structured claims about the FIFA partnership and its 1970 provenance on the sources Perplexity indexes.

HISENSE

Close the English-language content gap behind the 8x ChatGPT-Perplexity divide. The asset (the sponsorship) exists; the gap is distribution and structured claim density in web sources.

MENGNIU / AB INBEV

Near-zero English AI visibility is a presence problem, not a prompt problem. The English web has almost nothing to index build coverage of the World Cup role.

FRITO-LAY

Claude 18% vs ChatGPT 8% is the clearest model-specific gap. Target the publications each model indexes while the tournament is live.

NEW 2026 SPONSORS

BoA, Verizon, Unilever, Frito-Lay ride announcement coverage. Convert the spike into evergreen structured content before the press cycle ages out.

EVERY SPONSOR

Stop asking for one average score. Ask which model is your outlier and why the gap is diagnostic, and per-model numbers are the only way to see it.



THE NEW SPONSORSHIP BATTLEGROUND IS

AI RECALL.

Is your sponsorship visible in AI?
Find out before fan conversations peak.





“Thanks for joining us. We started Visiblie with a simple belief: the brands that show up in AI search today will lead their markets tomorrow. Today we're going to answer all your questions, with specifics.”

Gilles & Domien— Founders



WHO ARE WE



Questions ?

Let's build what's next for AI visibility together.

Talk to us →

Connect with us:

