How FORMIA elevates amenity kits through sport and cultural partnerships

This is a special feature from the June/July 2026 Amenities & Comfort issue of *PAX International*, on page 28.

Designed to move “from the plane to the game,” the stadium-ready U.S. Soccer kit is built for use beyond the flight

As the worlds of sports, culture and lifestyle become increasingly interconnected, airlines are rethinking partnerships and onboard experience to create deeper emotional connections with passengers. This summer, *PAX International* caught up with FORMIA to learn more about how amenity kits can turn a moment of passion into long-term brand affinity.

“Airlines are increasingly using partnerships to connect with the cultural moments and passions that matter most to their passengers, bringing those stories into the travel experience in new and meaningful ways,” says Roland Grohmann, CEO & Managing Partner, FORMIA.

According to travel intelligence and insights platform Skift, one in five travelers now plan trips around specific events. Grohmann says this presents airlines with a unique chance to engage passengers while anticipation for those experiences is already building.

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FORMIA Chief Marketing Officer Marisa Pitsch says these partnerships are reinforcing the amenity kit's role as an important touchpoint in an airline's broader brand strategy.

"As airlines align themselves with major sporting and cultural moments, the amenity kit becomes a powerful way to bring that story into the passenger experience," she says. "It transforms a partnership from something passengers see into something they can hold, use and remember."

Uniting fans long after landing

Major sporting events capture global attention and unite fan communities across borders. Wilbert De Louw, Co-CEO at FORMIA, says these moments give airlines a special role: physically carrying fans to the event while making the journey part of the build-up.

American Airlines launched U.S. Soccer amenity kits in May ahead of a summer of soccer across North America, facilitated by FORMIA. Designed to move "from the plane to the game," the stadium-ready bags are created for use well beyond the flight itself.

The program was supported by a broader launch campaign, including a New York event attended by U.S. Soccer legend Cobi Jones, American Airlines and U.S. Soccer executives, media and influencers. The amenity kit formed part of a wider effort to engage fans before travel and extend the partnership into the passenger journey.

“Together, these moments helped build anticipation around the partnership before passengers ever stepped onboard, while the amenity kit carries that experience into the journey itself,” De Louw says. “By creating something fans can see, use and carry with them, the program helps connect the airline, the sport and a global community of fans long after landing.”

Sport as a storytelling platform

FORMIA says sport becomes a powerful storytelling tool when it reflects the identity the airline already holds.

Pitsch points to Alaska Airlines’ “The Big Seat” campaign as an example. Seattle-based Alaska partnered with Major League Baseball team Seattle Mariners’ catcher Cal Raleigh to celebrate its move into long-haul routes. The airline even brought its new lie-flat seats onto the field at T-Mobile Park along mascot Mariner Moose to create enthusiasm around its expansion. The campaign also features Filson onboard, a Pacific Northwest heritage brand.

“What makes the storytelling resonate is how naturally the pieces fit together. The sport partnership, the airline and its brand partnerships all spring from the same Pacific Northwest roots,” Pitsch explains. “An airline, a team and a brand that share a region and an identity, telling one connected story.”

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The Aeroméxico kit features Mexico’s national colors and Nopalera botanical skincare inspired by the nopal cactus

Shared interests and communities
FORMIA tells *PAX International* that airlines are deepening connections to passengers by designing amenities around experiences that passengers already feel attached to.

“National identity is one of the most powerful of these connections,” Pitsch reveals.

Aeroméxico's special-edition Premier One kit, created with Nopalera, celebrates the contemporary spirit of Mexico. The designs are accented with the country’s national colors and paired with botanical skincare built around the nopal cactus, an ingredient deeply connected to Mexican heritage, marking “a very special moment for Mexican culture,” in the words of Andres Castañeda, Chief Customer and Digital Officer & EVP at Aeroméxico.

"When airlines connect amenities to a culture, community or shared passion, they create something passengers are more likely to value, keep and remember," says Pitsch. "That is when the kit starts to become part of the experience itself."

Infusing cultural moments
The intersection of sport, culture and lifestyle will continue to converge, offering airlines new opportunities to engage with broader cultural moments.

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Pitsch tells *PAX International* that the amenity kit has the potential to become the collectible artifact that passengers associate with a moment, a team, a place or a brand they love.

“That carries real value for an airline. A kit tied to a cultural moment is not experienced once and forgotten; it is used, kept and often shared, carrying the airline's story beyond the cabin and long after the flight,” she says.

Pitsch continues, “At FORMIA, this is how we think about our work: curating meaningful moments that keep the airline and its partners in the foreground, and designing so brand equity carries further.”

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