

CASE STUDY

Commercial Bank of Qatar

A credit card built for a country hosting the world.

Where this started.

CBQ came to us nine months before FIFA World Cup 2022 — not with a campaign brief, but with a product. A limited-edition payment card tied to the most-watched sporting event in history, issued to priority customers and the arriving global traveler.

The problem wasn't awareness. Qatar was about to receive a million visitors and every brand in the country was shouting. The problem was making a piece of plastic feel like it belonged in that moment — a credential that read as a cultural object, not a loyalty promo.

SPEC

Client — Commercial Bank of Qatar

Role — Art Direction · System Design · Motion

Year — 2022

Industry — Financial Services

Scope — Product identity, launch campaign, digital onboarding, OOH, in-branch

Partners — CBQ brand team · FIFA rights

What this had to hold.

01 A co-branded lockup with FIFA's official partner mark, where neither brand was allowed to dominate the other.

02 Arabic and English set with equal optical weight — on the card, in digital onboarding, and across every OOH surface.

03 FIFA asset governance: zero tolerance on mark misuse, three-week approval cycles, no post-launch flexibility.

04 A system that held from a 3.5mm embossed chip to a 48-sheet OOH — the same brand readable at both extremes.

05 Nine months from approval to rollout across 32 branches, two airports, and three broadcast windows.

A card is usually a banking product.

For this launch, it had to feel like a cultural artifact.

05. SYSTEM

The system that held it.

MARK TREATMENT

Co-primary. 1:1. No hierarchy.

Both marks sit at equal optical weight. A 1-pixel rule between them becomes the third brand element — not a divider, a hinge. Neither logo surrenders hierarchy at any scale, from embossed chip to 48-sheet.

TYPOGRAPHY

Two scripts, one voice.

Neue Haas Grotesk + 29LT Zarid Sans. Matched x-heights and optical weights.

COLOUR

Gold as accent, never field.

CBQ navy as anchor, field color, and voice. FIFA gold capped at 8% usage — applied to the chip, the rule, the callout. The constraint kept the card from reading as commemorative coinage.

MOTION PRINCIPLE

Move like a pass.

Every transition runs on the rhythm of a ball pass: 240ms in, 340ms out. Named the "pass curve" in the system documentation so the in-house team could extend it after we handed off.

GRID

Non-negotiable breathing room.

A 12-column grid with a 4mm horizontal inset reserved for bilingual parity. Removed the temptation to squeeze Arabic to fit English — the single most frequent failure of bilingual banking collateral in the region.

How it showed up.

01 · Card — full viewport · studio

Navy. Embossed. One gold chip. The object had to carry the frame alone.

02 · standard

Arabic left, English right — identical weight. Shown side-by-side as proof of parity.

Every bilingual bank decision comes down to the same question: whose script sets the rhythm? The card had to refuse that question by answering it twice.

03 · Branch interior — takeover

In-branch takeover — the brand applied as architecture, not wallpaper. Wayfinding, teller banners, welcome threshold.

04 · standard

Digital onboarding — same rhythm across iOS and Android. Platform-native only where it helped the user.

05 · OOH — 48-sheet · environmental

West Bay. Hamad arrivals. Souq approach. The card placed where the audience was already looking.

06 · Governance document — spread

The governance document. The most under-credited deliverable — and the one that lets the system run without us.

Where it lived.

32 Branches

4 Airport activations

3 Broadcast cuts

2 Scripts · 1 voice

- OOH — 48-sheet · West Bay
- Airport arrivals · Hamad
- Branch architecture · takeover — full environmental

08 - OUTCOME

What held.

- The system became CBQ's template for co-branded products.
- The governance document has run in-house, unchanged, since launch.
- The lockup rule remains the house standard for partnership collateral.
- The card's bilingual parity set the bar for every CBQ launch that followed.

CREDITS

Art Direction — Yazan Urabi

Year — 2022