

PILLAR

CASE STUDY · TRAVEL & ENTERTAINMENT

FanTravel.com: fifteen years of the Pillar playbook, written in public

FanTravel.com is the original Pillar property. Every other domain in the network — 100,000+ premium .coms reaching 500M+ monthly readers — benefits from what FanTravel taught us about authority, editorial cadence, and category ownership.

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By **Brian Bulcke**, Founder of Pillar Media & Entertainment · May 18, 2026

01 — The market.

Crowded — but only in the obvious places.

The English-language travel publishing space has roughly 12,000–15,000 active properties, but the top 200 absorb 80%+ of the demand signal. The category is dominated by five formats: OTA-adjacent content farms (Expedia, Booking, Kayak content arms), lifestyle/luxury editorial (Condé Nast Traveler, Travel + Leisure), creator-led wanderlust blogs, deal-aggregator newsletters (Scott's Cheap Flights, Going), and destination tourism boards. Sports-tourism and event-driven travel is a sliver of that landscape — arguably fewer than 50 properties globally treat “the trip you take because your team plays” as a primary editorial pillar, and almost none of them have direct league relationships.

Where FanTravel.com fits.

FanTravel sits in the event-driven travel niche — the trips fans take because their team plays an away game, their artist tours through, or a festival lands in a city they've never visited. The buyer pool is concrete: pro and minor-league team marketing departments, music tour promoters, hospitality groups in playoff-host cities, ticketing platforms wanting editorial pull-through, and DMOs in markets that host repeat sporting events. The alternatives either cover travel generically or cover sports generically — FanTravel sits at the intersection and has done so consistently for fifteen years, with active league partnerships most competitors couldn't replicate in a year.

Pillar's unique value propositions.

Fifteen years of continuous operation — not a relaunch, not a domain park, an actual editorial track record.

Direct partnerships with NFL franchises (49ers, Giants, Chiefs), NHL clubs (Sharks, Royals), MLSE, the CFL and the Toronto Argonauts — relationships that take years to build and cannot be bought.

Two-word .com on the exact category the property serves — “fan” + “travel” is the literal search behavior of the buyer.

Multi-league, multi-sport, multi-genre coverage — not locked to one franchise, one city, or one season.

Editorial credibility with both fan audiences and league business-side decision-makers — the rare property that is trusted on both sides of the deal.

Founder-operated within the Pillar network, with cross-property amplification across travel, sports, and entertainment verticals already in portfolio.

02 — The property that became a playbook

I bought **FanTravel.com** because the name said exactly what the category was. Fans, traveling for the games and the shows they care about. Fifteen years later it's the anchor of Pillar's Travel & Entertainment practice area, and it's also the property where every operating instinct that now runs across our 100,000+ domain network was first tested.

The Pillar thesis is simple. A **vertical-defining .com**, run as a serious editorial operation, in the right languages, compounds. Authority accrues to the property that keeps showing up. FanTravel is the receipt.

03 — What fifteen years of operating actually looks like

FanTravel covers event-driven travel — the trip you take because your team is playing, your artist is touring, the festival is happening. That's a different content engine than general travel. The calendar drives the cadence. Schedules drop, brackets seed, tours announce, and the property has to be ready with **editorial coverage** the reader can trust.

Over the years that meant working alongside the teams and leagues that shape the category:

NFL coverage anchored by relationships with the **San Francisco 49ers**, **New York Giants**, and **Kansas City Chiefs**

NHL and MLB coverage built around the **San Jose Sharks** and **Kansas City Royals**

Canadian sports coverage in partnership with **MLSE**, the **CFL**, and the **Toronto Argonauts**

None of this came from a media kit blast. It came from publishing well, consistently, for long enough that the partnerships were the obvious next step.

04 — The compounding curve nobody wants to wait for

The thing operators get wrong about authority properties is the shape of the return curve. The first two years look like a cost center. Year three the search footprint starts to stack. Year five the property is showing up for the queries the category actually cares about. By year ten it's a citation, not a competitor — other outlets start linking to FanTravel because that's where the coverage lives.

The properties that win in Travel & Entertainment aren't the loudest in year one. They're the ones still publishing in year ten with the same byline standards. That's the part you can't shortcut, and it's the part Pillar productized. We run the editorial operation so the property gets the years it needs without the operator burning out in month eighteen.

05 — Multilingual is not translation

FanTravel scaled across **English, Spanish, French, and Portuguese** because the audience does. A Liga MX fan traveling to a U.S. stadium, a Brazilian following the Formula 1 calendar, a Québécois driving down for a Bills game — these are not edge cases, they're the category. We learned early that machine-translating an English post is not the same as running an editorial operation in four languages. One earns citations. The other gets ignored.

That lesson is now baked into every Pillar launch. Of the **6,608 domains in our launch inventory**, the serious ones go out multilingual from day one.

06 — What FanTravel taught the rest of the portfolio

Every property in the Pillar network — every **Studio** site, every **Authority** coverage program, every Institute engagement — runs on patterns that were first stress-tested on FanTravel:

Lead with the .com. The category-defining domain is the moat. Everything else is rented.

Editorial cadence beats editorial volume. Reliability earns citations. Spikes don't.

Cross-property amplification compounds. A network of 100,000+ properties reaching 500M+ readers monthly means new launches don't start from zero.

Languages are markets, not features. Four launch languages, four real editorial operations.

o7 — Apply the model to your vertical

FanTravel is the proof. The Pillar playbook works when an operator commits to a vertical-defining property, runs the editorial operation seriously, and gives the curve time to stack. If you have a category and you want it run the way we run Travel & Entertainment, that's an Authority engagement — **Multi-Market** or **Category-Wide**, depending on how much of the vertical you want to own.

The fifteen-year version of this conversation is already on the page. The next one starts with a call.

[See the Travel & Entertainment practice area → \(/institute/travel-entertainment\)](/institute/travel-entertainment)

o8 — Apply the same playbook.

Every case study above shares the same operational backbone: premium domain inventory, editorial coverage at scale, and the citations that compound into category authority. Pillar runs that backbone for new operators every month.

[Explore an Authority Multi-Market engagement → \(/contact?tier=authority-multi\)](/contact?tier=authority-multi)

09 – Other case studies.

[TVCeleb.com: the always-on pop culture engine \(/case-studies/tvceleb\)](#)

[Same backbone, opposite audiences \(/case-studies/eldoa-fascia\)](#)

[The Spanish-language Finance gap \(/case-studies/spanish-finance\)](#)

[PropiedadIA.com: the canonical address for Spanish-language AI in real estate \(/case-studies/propiedadia\)](#)

[AncientCivilizations.org: the archive, not the algorithm \(/case-studies/ancient-civilizations\)](#)

[Blushless.com: your website deserves to be beautiful \(/case-studies/blushless\)](#)