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WHY THE BEST TEAMS WIN

The winning goal may have been the most visible moment of the match, but it was ultimately the result of collaboration, trust, preparation, and collective effort.

At that moment, I realized how closely football resembles successful organizations. In business, we often focus on results, strong leaders, or exceptional individuals. Yet long-term success is rarely built on a single star. It is built by teams that work together, continuously develop their capabilities, and move toward a common goal. This is one of the clearest parallels I see with the social dimension of ESG.

Over the past few years, ESG has become firmly embedded in business reality. While environmental topics such as decarbonization and energy efficiency are frequently discussed and measured, the social dimension often receives less attention. Many still associate it primarily with employee benefits, corporate culture initiatives, or, more recently, pay transparency. In reality, the social pillar is about something much more fundamental: how organizations engage with their people, build trust, develop talent, and create environments where individuals and teams can thrive. Increasingly, these factors determine competitiveness and long-term success.

TALENT ALONE IS NOT ENOUGH

In football, identifying talented players is relatively

straightforward. Building a winning team is far more difficult. Many clubs have spent fortunes on star players without achieving the success they had hoped for. Individual talent, no matter how exceptional, does not automatically translate into team success.

Businesses face a similar challenge. Competition for talent is intense, and organizations invest significant resources in recruitment. Yet, attracting talented individuals alone does not guarantee results.

Success depends on turning a group of individuals into a cohesive team. It depends on whether employees understand a common purpose, trust one another, collaborate across functions, and have opportunities to grow. These are precisely the elements that form the foundation of the social pillar of ESG.

GREAT TEAMS INVEST IN THE BENCH

The world's most successful football clubs do not focus solely on their starting lineup. They invest in talent development and prepare future leaders because they understand that winning one season is not enough. The same philosophy applies to business.

Technological advancement, digitalization, and artificial intelligence are transforming job requirements and skill sets at an unprecedented pace. Some skills that are valuable today may become less relevant tomorrow, while entirely

new ones are emerging. Organizations that want to remain competitive cannot wait until skills shortages become a problem. They must invest systematically in learning, reskilling, and workforce development. Just as football clubs prepare future players for the first team, companies must prepare their people for the future of work.



Long-term success is rarely built on a single star.

TRUST IS THE MOST VALUABLE ASSET

During a football match, players cannot constantly question teammates' decisions. They must trust one another and believe that everyone will make the right decision when it matters most.

Without trust, teams fall apart. The same is true in business. Trust influences collaboration, innovation, knowledge-sharing, and decision-making. Organizations with high levels of trust adapt more quickly to change, navigate crises more successfully, and implement transformation more effectively.

In a world shaped by geopolitical uncertainty, technological disruption,

and economic volatility, trust has become one of the most important drivers of adaptability. Although it does not appear on a balance sheet, its value may exceed many tangible assets.

WELL-BEING IS NOT A PERK

If a football club ignored players' fitness, recovery, or injury prevention, it could hardly expect consistent results on the pitch.

Many organizations still view employee well-being as an optional benefit rather than a strategic priority. Recent years have shown that mental health, physical well-being, and a supportive work environment directly affect productivity, engagement, and the ability to adapt to change.

Beside competitive compensation, the employees today seek meaningful work, growth opportunities, flexibility, and respect. Organizations that meet these expectations gain a competitive advantage because they create the conditions for sustained performance.

ONE GOOD SEASON IS NOT ENOUGH

Many football teams enjoy brief periods of success. Only a few sustain excellence year after year. The difference is strategic thinking. The best organizations do not focus only on the next match or the next quarter. They invest in the future.

As a passionate football fan and a permanent ticket holder, I regularly watch matches from the stands. Not long ago, I attended a game that was decided by a single goal. While most fans were celebrating the player who scored the winner, what stayed with me was the work of the entire team behind that moment.

Businesses face the same challenge. Competitiveness increasingly depends on the ability to attract, develop, and retain talent. For this reason, the social pillar of ESG should not be viewed as a standalone HR agenda. It is a boardroom issue and a key driver of long-term performance and stability.

WINNING IS A TEAM EFFORT

Football teaches us a simple lesson: individuals score goals, but teams win matches and trophies. The same principle applies to business. As organizations invest in technology, automation, and innovation, we must not overlook the factor that remains at the heart of every success story: people.

Trust, talent development, learning, and well-being are not "soft" topics. They are drivers of competitiveness. If we want to build strong organizations, a thriving economy, and a prosperous society, we must view the social dimension of ESG the same way a great coach views a team: not as a collection of individuals, but as a system where strength comes from working together.

In football, as in business, results matter. But behind every victory lies something less visible: trust, collaboration, talent development, and a shared purpose. That is why the social pillar of ESG is far more than a question of employee benefits. It is a strategy for building teams that can perform today and remain competitive tomorrow.