

The business of football

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Week 1: Football: a business like no other

Introduction to Week 1



Audio content is not available in this format.



Course leaders Ben Oakley and Jacky Hinton introduce you to the course and Week 1.

This free course explores the business of football and has been developed by The Open University in partnership with the EFL Trust – the educational arm of the English Football League. We are very fortunate to be working with the Trust. They have been able to provide us with access to a wide range of people working within football, who you will encounter as you progress through the course.

One of the first challenges of this course is to explore football as a business that is different from many others. You'll begin by considering two questions:

- What is the business of football?
- How and why does it differ from other businesses?

The [English Football League](#) (EFL) (formerly the Football League) is based in England and Wales and is the world's original league football competition. The 72 member clubs make it the largest single body of professional clubs in European football. The EFL celebrated its 134th anniversary in 2022.

The [EFL Trust](#) is a registered charity that governs, advises and audits the charitable trusts associated with the professional clubs of the English Football League, who have a combined annual turnover of over £44 million, and 2,500 members of staff, including teachers, coaches, professional health and social workers and many others to tackle community challenges.

Using the 'Power of Football', the Trust continues to flourish, delivering life improving projects, which engage with over 1.5 million people per year, focusing on education, sport, inclusion and health.

Before you start, The Open University would really appreciate a few minutes of your time to tell us about yourself and your expectations of the course. Your input will help to further improve the online learning experience. If you'd like to help, and if you haven't done so already, please fill in this [optional survey](#).

Learning outcomes

After studying Week 1 you should be able to:

- begin to understand the business of football within and beyond football clubs and explore how it might differ from other businesses
- use theory to explore the internal and external business environment of football and the factors affecting decision-making in the football business
- understand the business challenges associated with developing women's professional football.

1 A business like no other

We started this course saying that football was a business like no other, but what is the 'business of football' and how does it differ from other businesses? More fundamentally, is it a business at all?

To start to answer some of these questions you will now take a look at the business of football as it operates away from the pitch. The following video, voiced by Eleanor Oldroyd, gives you a fascinating insight into the football business by giving behind-the-scenes access to people working across the industry. As you are watching this video consider the statement outlined in the box below and ask yourself the question 'how does football not only survive but thrive as a business?'

Ever since we first published our Annual Review of Football Finance almost thirty years ago, Championship clubs have consistently reported operating and pre-tax losses, and those losses have increased even as revenues have increased, with record operating losses reported each year since 2014/15. COVID-19 has further highlighted the financial struggles of these clubs with all-time high operating losses (£434m) and pre-tax losses (£508m) reported in 2019/20. Even without the impact of COVID-19, the structural reasons for such significant losses are clear:

1. the rewards for reaching the Premier League are so high that clubs (and their owners) are willing to take substantial financial risks to secure them; and
2. there is intense competition and inevitably most aspirants fail in their objective with only three clubs out of 24 achieving promotion each season.

(Deloitte, 2021)

Activity 1 Football and more 'conventional' businesses

Allow about 30 minutes

As you watch the video, note down the ways in which you think that football may differ from businesses usually considered more conventional, such as supermarkets like Sainsburys or Aldi.

Video content is not available in this format.

[The business of football](#)



Provide your answer...

Discussion

These are some of the differences you may have noticed between football and more conventional businesses:

- The nature of competition is different – football clubs compete with one another for customer and sponsorship income but also can't survive without competition within their league. If you were running Sainsbury's you would see the demise of another large supermarket chain as an opportunity – as a football club the demise of another club would be treated differently.
- Brand loyalty – football fans are probably the most loyal customer base a business can have – can you imagine feeling the same way about your local supermarket? This means that supermarkets and other businesses have to work much harder than football clubs to attract and keep their customers.
- Financial sustainability – if most clubs were conventional businesses they would go out of business – more conventional businesses such as supermarkets can't afford to run themselves in this way.
- The emotional commitment to football that many owners have goes beyond what would be seen as a sensible financial decision in many other businesses.
- Much of the talk in the film is about money – we wonder if supermarket executives and staff were interviewed they would talk more about aspects such as products, the shopping experience and customers needs.

1.1 The economics of football

Read this [article by Professor Stefan Szymanski](#) of the University of Michigan, author, with Simon Kuper, of the book *Soccernomics* (2009). Open the article in a separate window or tab. He explores in more detail some of the ideas raised in the video and your discussion.

As you read the article, look out for any ideas which were not raised in the previous activity.



Figure 1 A Sainsbury's supermarket sits on the site of Scunthorpe United's former home, The Old Show Ground.

1.2 Alternative football business approaches

As you have seen, football can seem like an odd or peculiar form of business – at least in England. But are there alternatives to this approach or is the business of football run the same way across the world?



Figure 2 Borussia Dortmund fans form the famous 'yellow wall' during the 2013, Champions League Final at Wembley Stadium

In the following article journalist Stephen Evans (2013) outlines why he thinks the ['German football model is a league apart'](#).

Activity 2 German football model: a league apart

Allow about 30 minutes

Read the article and make notes on key differences you identify which vary from the approach in the English leagues, including elements of Professor Stefan Szymanski's analysis in Section 1.1.

To what extent do you agree with Stephen Evans' views that this is a more effective approach to the running of a football business than that in England?

Provide your answer...

2 Analysing the external environment

One clear difference between the German and English systems is the external environment in which they operate. The two systems seem to reflect to some extent the values of each society. A key success factor for any type of business is an accurate understanding of the external environment in which they operate. An ongoing, long-term analysis of what is happening in all facets of the external environment means that changes which impact on the business can be monitored, anticipated and dealt with appropriately.

The extract below explores one way that businesses understand the external environment: the STEEP model. As you read start thinking about how this model might apply to the business of football.

The STEEP model

The STEEP model uses the five headings of sociological, technological, economic, environmental and political factors.

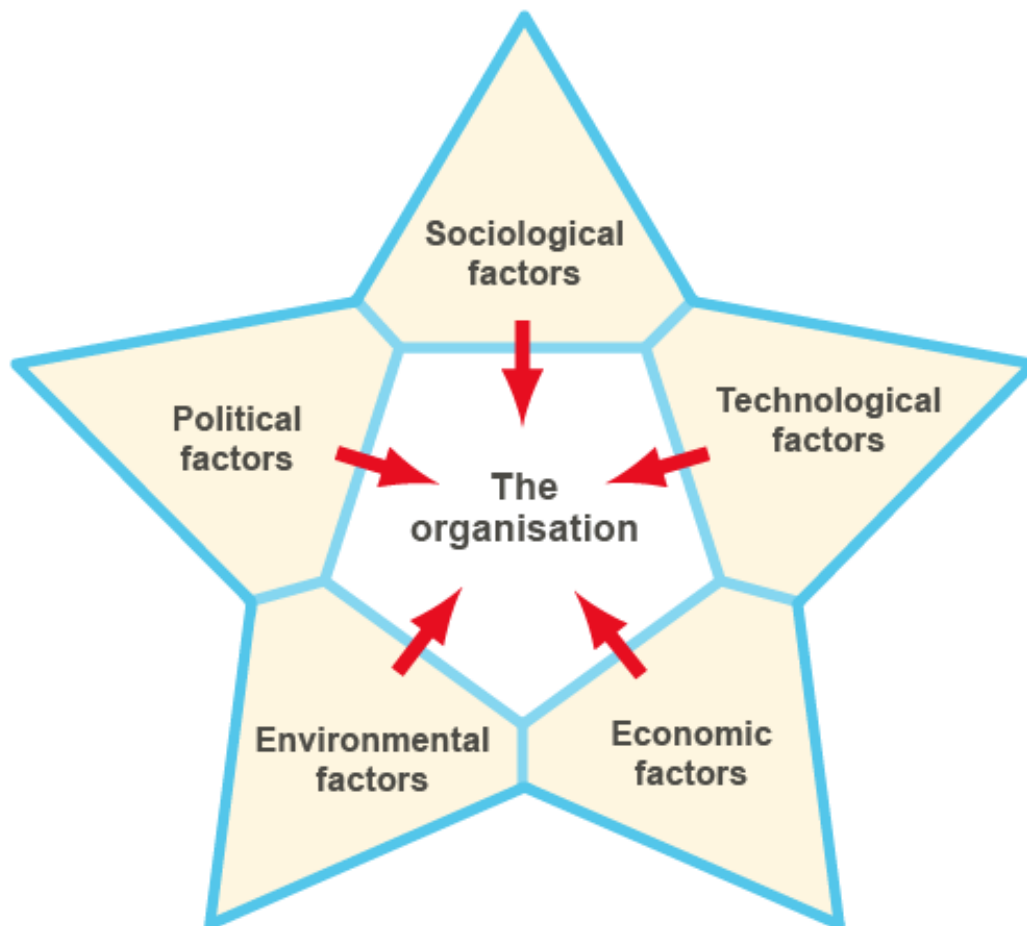


Figure 3 Five STEEP factors

Sociological factors

Sociological factors that are likely to affect businesses include demographic changes in the age and structure of populations, patterns of work (part/full time), gender roles, patterns of consumer consumption and the ways in which the culture of a population or country gradually changes and develops.

Technological factors

Internet and digital technologies place challenges on the ability of business to meet customer demands. It is difficult to predict where developing technologies will take us next, but it is possible to focus on the process of technological change and its implications for business.

Economic factors

The activity of world money markets and financial institutions affects businesses in a number of ways. Important variables include the rate of economic growth, interest rates, inflation, energy prices, exchange rates, wages and levels of employment. The state of a country's economy pervades all aspects of business life. It affects the level of demand for goods and services, the availability and cost of most importantly labour but also raw materials, buildings and land.

Environmental factors

Environmental issues are of growing importance as people all around the world are more concerned than ever before about the impact of businesses on the natural environment. Businesses need to consider a number of factors including legislation (governmental changes requiring firms to be more environmentally aware) and the pressure from customers for them to operate to high environmental standards.

Political factors

Political influences control or affect most of what we do. There are political influences on business in terms of rules and regulations imposed by government (local, national and global), as well as the influences of such organisations such as chambers of commerce, trade unions and other bodies concerned with protecting public health and safety.

(Adapted from The Open University, 2012, pp. 17–24)

The next section looks at how to apply STEEP to the business of football.

2.1 Using STEEP to analyse a football business

In the next activity you'll start using the STEEP model to examine an element of the football business in more detail.



Figure 4 Tottenham Hotspur stadium, London.

Activity 3 STEEP factors and football

Allow about 30 minutes

Choose one of the five dimensions of the STEEP model (sociological, technological, economic, environmental or political) and list the ways in which you think that a football club in a particular country would be affected by it.

Provide your answer...

Discussion

Some of the factors that may have affected your chosen football club are outlined below:

Sociological: The increase in women and children going to football matches and changes to make grounds more appealing to these audiences might be significant. Other social change factors are the changes in attitude regarding sexuality, the moves to eradicate racism within football over the last 20 years and the increasing pressure on the football community (particularly players and managers) to change as a result.

Technological: The trend towards digitisation and the internet has meant companies like Newscorp (including Sky) and BT have strongly influenced the way football is broadcast across all countries. Furthermore, improvements in internet speed have created opportunities to stream matches to mobile and other devices. Companies like Amazon have entered the football broadcasting market and offer a streaming service through Amazon Prime. This type of broadcasting is known as an 'Over-the-Top' (OTT) service. The implementation of goal line technology has also had some impact as had the introduction of VAR (video assistant referee) in some competitions.

Economic: The economic situation is very different in different countries. There has been an economic impact on the way in which television rights have influenced player wages and attraction of players from overseas to Europe.

Environmental: There might be moves or rhetoric within football clubs to 'go green' – this is perhaps more apparent in some countries than others.

Political: Governments have taken action in the past to ensure that football stadiums are safer. Tragedies at Ibrox (1971), Bradford (1985), Heysel (1985) and Hillsborough (1989) eventually stimulated regulatory action in the UK in the 1990s. The political will to deregulate broadcasting allowing multiple channels might also be considered a political factor – this obviously links to the technological element. Another interpretation of political elements at play might be in the workings of various ruling bodies such as The FA, UEFA and FIFA. For example the introduction of the financial fair play rules by FIFA in the Premier League in the 2013–2014 season had a big effect on the wages to revenue ratio of the clubs.

The STEEP model provides a useful structure for the discussion of the external environment. However, the distinction between the factors is rather artificial. Many political decisions have an economic impact, and almost all economic factors have a political dimension. Social behaviour is influenced by new technology, and in turn influences political decisions. Environmental issues have strong social, political and economic elements, and the introduction of environmentally acceptable solutions often depends on the adoption of and investment in new technology.

3 What makes up the business of football?

The STEEP model provides one way of looking at the environment within which the football industry operates. But what makes up this industry and what do we mean when we talk about the business of football? How are football clubs shaped and how do they make their money?

As Pete Winkelman, chairman of Milton Keynes (MK) Dons, said in 2014:

The MK Dons has lost about £1.5 million a year over the 10 years that I have been involved. In a bad year it can hit £3 million so it really is a very hard thing to keep going. ... Of course what football is, is a great emotional driver. It does drive our other businesses here at Stadium MK but most of all it drives a community, it's about identity, it is about a place and it is about celebrating the place you are in. So clubs need income from much more than gate receipts for individual clubs to survive.

For the next activity we are very fortunate to have the insight of John Cove the Chief Executive of MK Dons Football Club Sport and Education Trust. John has worked in the football industry for many years and in many different roles.

Activity 4 Shape of a club

Allow about 30 minutes

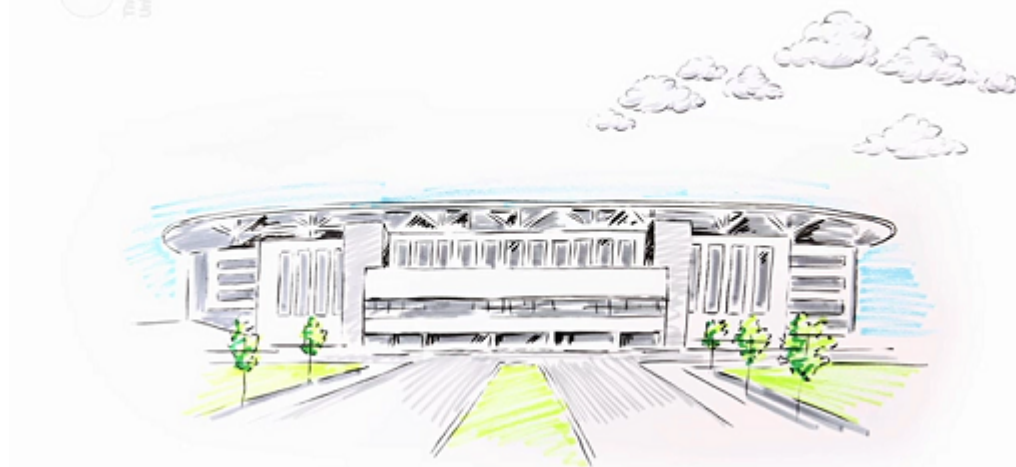
Watch the animation, accompanied by a short interview with John in which he explores some of the different ways in which clubs can be configured. As you listen, note down the differences he explores. Also look at the final image in the animation of 'the shape of a club' (reproduced below), then see whether you can create a visual representation of the football club you support. This could be a drawing, a Powerpoint slide or something else.



Figure 5 The shape of a club

Video content is not available in this format.

MK Dons Director, John Cove talks about how the club is structured



3.1 Stakeholders in the business of football

As you saw in John Cove's fascinating analysis there are a range of internal and external elements that make up a club, no matter how that club is configured. Football clubs have complex interactions with their communities and society more generally. This makes a football club both a supplier to wider society and dependent upon it – and, like all forms of interdependence, this provides benefits, but also imposes obligations on both parties. So a football club, like other businesses, has a range of people and groups who have an interest in the club and the way it is run. These groups of people can be referred to as its *stakeholders*.

The extract below explores this concept in more depth. As you read consider the stakeholders that might be critical to a football club.

Stakeholders

Stakeholders are people or groups who have a legitimate interest in the activities of businesses and other organisations in their society. Employees, customers and shareholders are all examples of stakeholders. Figure 6 summarises some of the potential stakeholders that might affect a business.



Figure 6 Stakeholder groups

In the private sector, stakeholders include the owners, employees and customers. In the voluntary sector, they include funders, sponsors and donors. In the public sector they include the general public in their capacity as citizens (through elected representatives), as taxpayers (funders) and as beneficiaries of public services (customers).

There are four important points to bear in mind about the stakeholders of a business:

1. All businesses have internal and external stakeholders.
2. Different stakeholders have different interests, and these interests may be in conflict.
3. The culture, structure and control systems within a business will determine how these conflicts, or trade-offs, are resolved.
4. Some stakeholder interests are protected by law, but not all.

The quote below from John Cove illustrates how these important features impact upon the football business:

For my club MK Dons there are clearly a number of both internal and external stakeholders. These include those employed in all areas of the business, the fans, the owner and even the other clubs we compete with.

They all have differing interests – most people will be aware of the one obvious area in most clubs between the interests of say fans, who want their team to be successful no matter what and the owner who needs to achieve financial stability. Like any business we have to balance these interests appropriately.

The culture, structure and control systems within the business determine how these conflicts, or trade-offs, are resolved on a day-to-day basis.

Why do stakeholders matter?

It is important to explore the concept of stakeholders for two reasons. Firstly, it helps us understand that stakeholder groups have different interests, and secondly, it helps us understand the relationship between businesses and their external environments.

Because these 'individuals, groups and other organizations ... have interests (their stake) in the activities and outcomes of the organization' (Hatch, 1997, p. 121) they are highly influential in their running.

(Adapted from The Open University, 2012, pp. 24–28)



Figure 7 Manchester United fans protesting against their owners, the Glazers, in April 2021.

3.2 Stakeholders, power and interest

The two articles that you will read next are about a debate that started in 2013 and 2014 over the change of name of *Hull City Football club* to *Hull Tigers*. As you read the articles consider the different stakeholders or stakeholder groups who are involved and what their interest might be.

[Hull City told they can reapply for Tigers name change](#) (BBC, 2015)

[Supporter's trust calls on Allam to rethink Hull City name change](#) (ITV, 2015)

The three key stakeholders mentioned here are the Football Association (FA), the owner (Assem Allam) and the fans. But what role is each playing and how much influence will they have on the outcome? To understand that we need to explore each stakeholder in more depth looking at the interest each has in the outcome and the extent of their power.



Figure 8 Raging Tigers – Hull City owner, Assem Allam in conflict with fans about his wish to change the name of Hull City to Hull Tigers, 20 June 2014

3.3 Mapping stakeholders' power and interest

Read the extract below on power and interest mapping. This is adapted from work by Claire Capon, a leading writer on strategic management. As you read consider into which category each of the three stakeholders from the previous articles – the FA, the owner (Assem Allam) and the fans – falls.

Power and interest mapping

Power and interest mapping is a tool to help you explore the influence that each organisational stakeholder might have. It provides a way of considering the reactions and position of stakeholders when a particular new strategy or course of action is to be introduced (as in the Hull City example). Once you had identified your stakeholders you would map each of them onto the matrix in Figure 9.

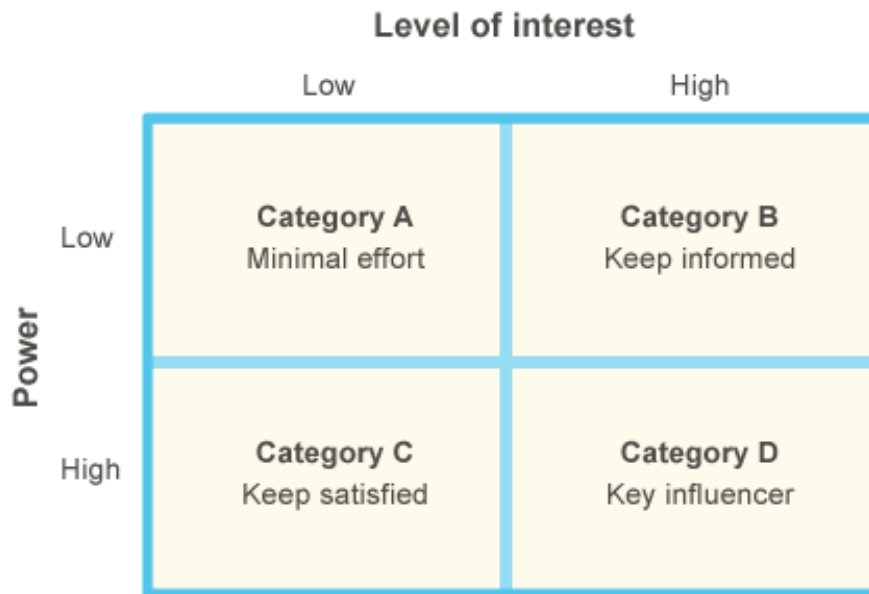


Figure 9 Power and interest matrix (Johnson and Scholes, 1999)

Stakeholders with high power and high interest (category D)

Stakeholders with high power and high interest are key influencers in the organisation and are often involved in managing the organisation and its future. If key influencers are not directly involved in managing the organisation, it is vital that they are given serious input in the development of long-term plans and the future direction of the organisation, as they have the power to block proposed plans and implement their own agenda.

Stakeholders with high power and low interest (category C)

Stakeholders with high power and low interest are those who must be kept satisfied, such as institutional shareholders. Institutional shareholders will often remain compliant while they receive acceptable returns on their investment and are satisfied with the organisation's management and activities. However, the ability of category C stakeholders to reposition themselves towards category D and increase in their level of interest should not be underestimated.

Stakeholders with low power and high interest (category B)

The stakeholders in category B are those with low power and high interest, who are able to exert relatively little power in influencing the organisation and its actions. However, these stakeholders have a high level of interest in the organisation and if they voice their concern loudly enough and in the right way, such as through lobbying or petitions, they may be able to influence one of the powerful groups of stakeholders in either category C or D and affect their behaviour.

Stakeholders with low power and low interest (category A)

Stakeholders with low power and low interest are those in whom the organisation need invest only minimal effort.

(Adapted from The Open University, 2012, pp. 87–92)

3.4 Stakeholders' passion and business

The passion aroused by football can shape the behaviour of many involved. It's probably fair to say that decisions made about football often don't stack up in purely business terms and this is because football inspires such strong emotions unlike most other businesses. This should be taken into account when you consider stakeholder interests – this additional drive may well sustain some stakeholders, who on paper appear to have little power and influence, to be creative about how they gain support for their views.



Figure 10 Endangered Tigers, fans protest to defend the club's history and remain as Hull City

Activity 5 Mapping football stakeholders' power and interest

Allow about 30 minutes

Consider the articles on Hull in Section 3.2 again then answer the following questions:

1. What power and interest category do you think the football fans fall into – A, B, C or D?
2. What do you think football fans are doing to try to increase their power?
3. What category do the FA fall into – A, B, C, or D?
4. What other stakeholder groups are likely to have an interest in this decision? These can be identified from within the article or wider.

Provide your answer...

Answer

1. Football fans have a high level of interest in the outcome but low power so would fall into category B.
2. In order to increase their power the football fans are calling on the FA to block the name change. This has succeeded once although that decision was subsequently overturned.
3. The FA in theory have high levels of power as they can block the name change (although this would seem to have been successfully challenged). Their level of interest is more debatable as arguably they would not have a high level of interest in the name change of a football club. However, all organisations, including the FA are run by people and it may be that more traditional views about the naming of

clubs are more likely to hold sway within the FA. They are also undoubtedly taking into account the views of fans when they make their decisions.

4. The football players, the manager, local businesses, the Premier League, the English Football League are a few of the other stakeholders. You may well have found many more.

In the next section you will apply the ideas covered so far to the challenge of developing women's professional football which, from a business perspective, is relatively new.

4 Women's professional football: the business challenges of growing the game

The number of women and girls playing football has grown steadily since the turn of the millennium and it is now the most popular female sport in England. This popularity has transformed the commercial potential of a previously much maligned and marginalised sport. Yet such growth has created several business challenges, not least the challenge of developing and sustaining a professional women's league where all players and coaches are full-time, paid employees.

Unlike men's professional football, which is organised by the Premier League and the Football League, women's professional football is being developed by The Football Association. Without the history associated with the men's game professional football for women is like starting a new business.

In the next activity you will start to identify some of the challenges associated with developing a fully professional women's league.

Activity 6 Developing women's professional football

Allow about 15 minutes

Can you identify how the business challenges associated with developing women's professional football are different to men's professional football?

Provide your answer...

Discussion

Women's professional football is like a new business, so it can be thought of as a 'start-up' business. For any start-up one major challenge is identifying and growing a market for their product. Only by growing a market, and an audience of customers, can sufficient revenue be generated to sustain the business in the long-term. While men's professional football has over 150 years of history, women's professional football is currently in its infancy, albeit rapidly growing. It is this difference in the history between the two that presents a significant business challenge as women's professional football grows its audience.

The Football Association has developed an ambitious strategy to grow women's professional football between 2021 and 2024. The three aims of the strategy are:

1. Produce and attract world-class talent
2. Maximise and engage audiences
3. Grow commercial revenues and financial sustainability.

In the next section you will learn about how one club, Brighton and Hove Albion, are putting this strategy into action.

4.1 The business of women's professional football: a club's perspective

The Women's Super League (WSL) was formed in 2010. It is the highest level of women's football in England. In 2018 the league became fully professional, and The Football Association awarded places in the league to clubs who could meet several criteria, such as operating an academy for younger players.

In 2019 Barclays Bank became the title sponsor of the WSL and committed £30m to supporting women's football. In March 2021 Sky TV and the BBC announced what was described as a 'landmark' and 'game-changing' broadcasting contract to televise WSL games.



Figure 11 The impressive training facilities at Brighton and Hove Albion FC.

In a period of exciting and rapid growth you will discover how Brighton and Hove Albion, a WSL club since 2018, is managing the process of operating a sustainable professional women's team.

Activity 7 Exploring women's professional football

Allow about 15 minutes

As you watch the video listen to Polly Bancroft, General Manager for Women's and Girl's football at Brighton and Hove Albion FC, and identify four business challenges the club are facing.

Video content is not available in this format.

[Brighton and Hove Albion FC](#)



Provide your answer...

Discussion

As Brighton develop their women's team the business challenges they have are:

1. Growing attendances at the women's games and trying to do so through knowing who their potential spectators are.
2. Ensuring they are financially sustainable such that their costs do not exceed their revenues.
3. Raising the profile of the women's team and using digital and social media to do so.
4. Attracting commercial sponsors specifically to the women's team and not just mirroring the men's team.

As Polly mentioned growing women's professional football presents a business challenge between accelerating the speed of growth while maintaining financial stability and sustainability.

If you're interested in learning about a women's football club doing things differently, including being majority owned by women, take a look at the video in the following link: [Angel City FC's story](#).

4.2 Equal pay as a business issue

So far, the United States women's national soccer team (USWNT) have won four FIFA World Cup tournaments and four Olympic Gold medals. They are the most successful national team in the history of women's football. Comparatively they are more successful than the US men's national team (USMNT) who have never won a major intercontinental competition. Despite this difference in success the women's team have been paid significantly less than the men, an issue that members of the USWNT decided to challenge in court.

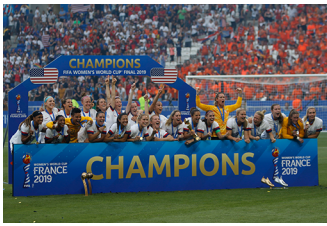


Figure 12 The United States women's national team celebrating winning the women's World Cup in France, 2019.

In the next activity you will discover more about the differences in pay between the US men's and women's teams and how they mirror the gender pay gap in professional sport more generally.

Activity 8 Striving for equal pay

Allow about 20 minutes

Read the following article from *The Guardian*:

[Revealed: the \\$730,000 gender pay gap in US World Cup bonuses.](#)

As you read, consider the following question: Who has the power to make the prize money between men's and women's international football more equal?

Provide your answer...

Discussion

The gender pay gap originates from the discrepancy in the prize money generated by the men's and women's World Cups. The men's World Cup generated \$400m in prize money in 2018 compared to \$30m generated by the women's World Cup in 2019. FIFA have the financial resources to make this prize money less unequal which would enable national federations distribute the prize money more fairly.

The USWNT settled their legal case with US Soccer before it went to court. A new arrangement that rewards more fairly US men and women players is being developed. But the case highlights the business and commercial challenge of providing equal pay when prize money, that originates from sources such as broadcasting rights and sponsorship, is very unequal.

Football is not the only sport where there is a large gap in the amount of money earned by male and female professional athletes. It is a common issue and understanding the business reasons behind this pay gap is important. It is also another aspect of why the business of football is different to other businesses since legislation around equal pay between men and women for doing the same job does not apply to football.

5 Final thoughts

In this week you have started to consider some insights into the business of football and you have explored how it is different from other businesses.

You started by examining some of the ways that the business and context of football in the English leagues differ from those of more conventional businesses. You learned about a number of factors including:

- the different nature of competition
- high levels of brand loyalty
- clubs often running at a loss
- the emotional commitment to football.

You then looked at the organisation in Germany and how it is different to the English system. Differences included:

- fans have more say over what happens in their club
- there is tighter control on spending
- clubs focus more on marketing for their revenue
- there appears to be more long-term thinking.

Next, you learned about using the STEEP model to explore some of the external factors that might affect a business. You applied this to the football business.

You listened to an interview with John Cove, Chief Executive of MK Dons who described how clubs are structured and the associated businesses that sit alongside them. Using stakeholder analysis power and interest mapping you explored the different ways in which groups or individuals might influence the decisions taken at club level.

Finally, you discovered the challenges, from a business perspective, of developing women's professional football. You heard how one club is placing a significant emphasis on social media and digital marketing techniques to grow their audience and generate the revenues to financially sustain their future.

Next week you will begin to explore motivation and look at the different reasons people have for coming to work.

You can now go to [Week 2](#).

Week 2: The secrets of motivation and teams

Introduction to Week 2



Audio content is not available in this format.



Ben and Jacky introduce you to Week 2.

In this week your focus will be on the people, including players, who work in football clubs. This enables us to investigate what motivates people at work. By asking those working behind the scenes at football clubs, from the boardroom to the boot room, what they find satisfying and dissatisfying in their job we can explore how leaders and managers might shape the working environment to get the best out of people. You'll be asked to apply this to your own situation and to reflect, for example, on what motivates you to get up in the morning and go to work.

The second main theme this week is also one that you are likely to have had experience of – working in teams. You'll be considering the factors that may make teams more likely to succeed and how teams influence an individual's motivation. We draw on a rich seam of our own specially produced films to respond to the following questions:

- What can leaders and managers do to help enhance employees' motivation and to make work satisfying in different parts of the football business?
- What makes some teams more likely to succeed than others and how do teams affect individual motivation?

These are complex issues and some of the research findings may well challenge your thinking.

Learning outcomes

After studying Week 2, you should be able to:

- identify factors most likely to motivate people to succeed in their work in different parts of the football business

- begin to explain how you and others are driven and respond to different aspects of your workplace, including leaders' and managers' influence on the working environment
- describe what makes teams more likely to succeed and how to develop more effective teams.

1 What motivates people to work?

Some football players are highly paid and receive strong recognition for their work, but this does not automatically lead to them being motivated individuals. In football it certainly isn't always the case – there have been many examples of high-profile footballers in teams apparently lacking the motivation to play well.

If the 'perfect' job as a professional footballer isn't enough, what is? And what motivates all of us to work and perform well? You'll start to explore this in the following sections.

Apart from financial necessity, there are many reasons why people go to work. Happy, motivated people are a key component in both a successful football team and a business.



Figure 1 Japan's Kozue Ando, Nahomi Kawasumi and Homare Sawa celebrate beating Canada at the 2012 London Olympic Games.

Activity 1 What motivates you to work?

Allow about 15 minutes

Consider your workplace and what motivates you to go to work each day. Jot down the main words or phrases that come to mind.

Provide your answer...

Discussion

These are some of the words or phrases that you may have come up with:

Some people are seeking **rewards**, whether these be financial or aspects such as **recognition** or a sense of **self-worth**. Some people go to work to thrive and need **social interaction** whilst other personality types prefer **independence** and like to

work alone. Those whose work is their passion are likely to use phrases like **job satisfaction**.

Two other aspects often feature:

- Work can give people an **identity**. We feel that we belong to a group of people, such as being a physiotherapist or an accountant or being an integral part of a team. Belonging and identity are an inherent part of a football club too.
- Some people are drawn to their work which might involve **doing good for others** – social workers, school teachers, nurses or those who work for community or charity schemes for example.

1.1 Listening to football club employees and players

You have started to think about what motivates people in general terms. You'll now hear directly from football club employees and players in a fascinating, specially made video that uses behind-the-scenes interviews from Football League clubs MK Dons and Chesterfield.

Activity 2 Comparing your work motives with those in football

Allow about 25 minutes

The following video contains a unique range of perspectives from the boardroom to the boot room. Note down the different reasons people state for workplace satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Consider how the motives described for a football club compare with or extend beyond the reasons highlighted in the previous activity (including job interest, social interaction, self-esteem, identity, doing good and any other reasons).

Video content is not available in this format.

[Job satisfaction](#)



Love and enjoyment of being part of the game shines through for most interviewees but what else brings them job satisfaction or dissatisfaction?

Provide your answer...

2 Theories about motivation

Motivation is concerned with the factors which cause us to behave in certain ways. When we talk about motivation in our personal and working lives we often come back to ideas about our individual needs and expectations. For example, in this short film clip former player Fabrice Muamba summarises his insight into what football players find dissatisfying with their job. He talks about footballers' general expectations of everything happening immediately. This was filmed before he suffered a cardiac arrest during a match in March 2012.

Video content is not available in this format.

Fabrice Muamba



2.1 Job satisfaction and dissatisfaction

There are many theories about motivation at work but the influential ideas from American psychologist Frederick Herzberg are a useful starting point. He developed a theory of workplace motivation that identified factors that affected job satisfaction. This theory has proved popular with managers for many decades; it has been included here because it has become part of the 'language' of management.

Read the adapted extract below about Herzberg's 'Motivation–Hygiene Theory' and some of the investigations that contributed to his theory.

Herzberg's 'Motivation–Hygiene Theory'

Herzberg (1975) tested the different needs people have in the workplace. This was a more formal and wide-ranging investigation than the short interviews in a football club you viewed in the last section.

Herzberg and his colleagues asked people to recall times when they had felt especially satisfied or dissatisfied by their work, and to describe what factors had caused these feelings. The researchers found that two entirely different sets of factors emerged. Herzberg and his team called the factors connected with satisfaction, 'motivators', and those connected with dissatisfaction, 'hygiene factors'. For example, a person who had listed low pay as a source of dissatisfaction did not necessarily identify high pay as a cause of satisfaction. Herzberg argued that improvement in some areas (the 'hygiene factors') would help to remove dissatisfaction, but that this would not increase satisfaction: that is, improving the 'hygiene factors' alone would not motivate people. For example, the absence of information about what is happening in an organisation may be a cause of dissatisfaction to an individual, but when that information is provided they are not necessarily more motivated; it is just that the dissatisfaction has been removed.

By asking people to categorise the causes of satisfaction and dissatisfaction under a number of headings Herzberg was able to record, for all the individuals in the group, the frequency with which each category had been noted as a satisfaction or dissatisfaction. A typical result is shown in Figure 2.

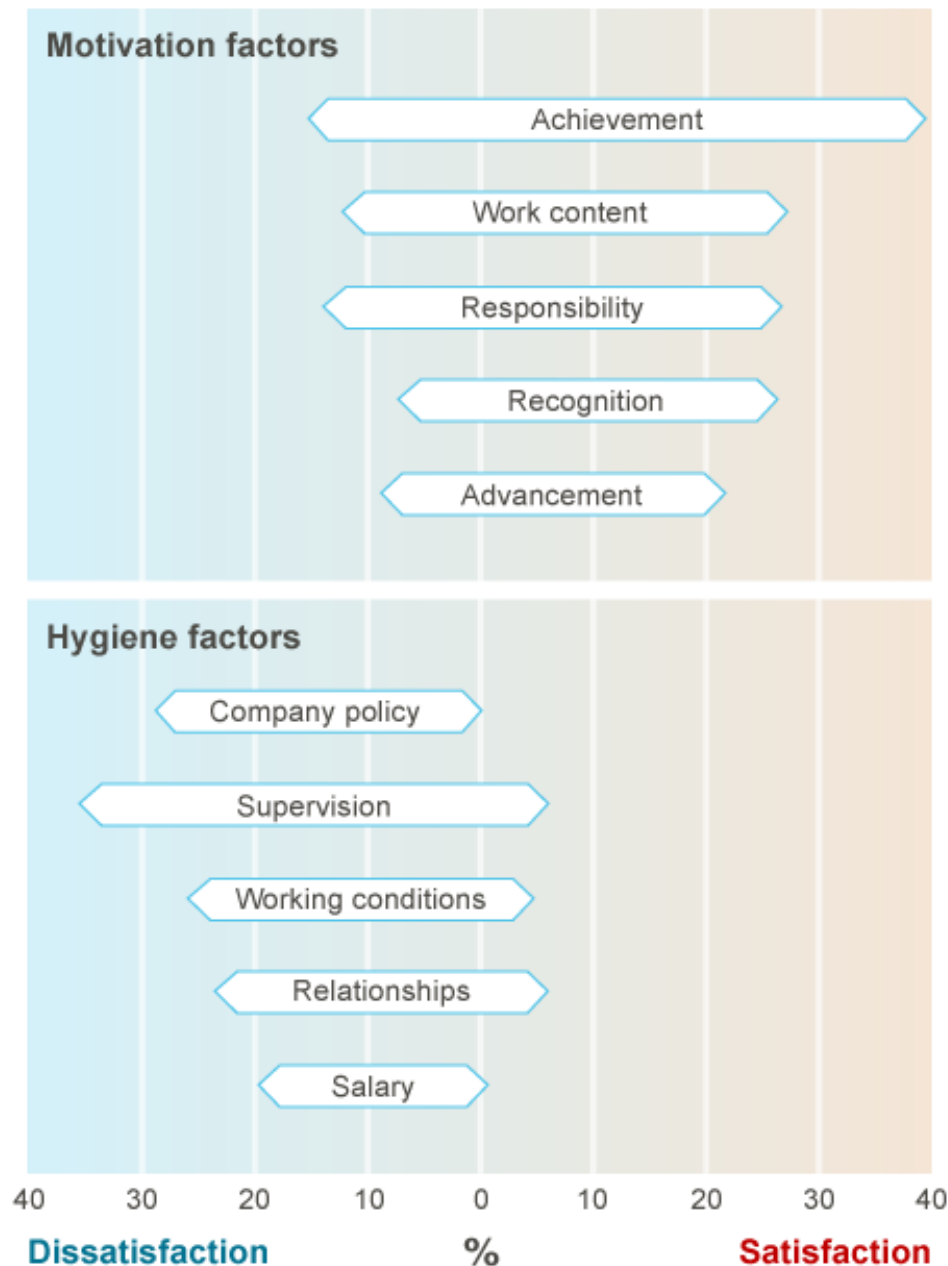


Figure 2 Motivation and hygiene factors (Herzberg, 1975)

This shows that people's work content (what they did in their work) was identified in this instance by 12% as a source of dissatisfaction, but it was mentioned by 26% as a source of satisfaction. Work content is viewed as a motivator, something more connected with satisfaction. If you were to ask about people's work content in a football organisation it is likely that their passion for the game and the place it plays in their lives and the community would bring satisfaction.

Let's consider the two main sources of job dissatisfaction in Figure 2, the hygiene factors. Company policy and administrative procedures were identified as an irritating source of

dissatisfaction by 29%, but it was supervision (leadership and management) that was the greatest hygiene factor, singled out by 35% in this example. Notice that the proportions mentioning these factors as part of their job satisfaction was far lower (0% and 5% respectively).

Herzberg's environmental factors which are capable of causing unhappiness, the 'hygiene' factors, can be thought of as having to be reasonably well 'cleaned up' as a prerequisite for satisfaction. Among the hygiene factors are:

- company policy
- supervision
- working conditions
- interpersonal relationships
- money, status and security.

The work content factors which lead to satisfaction, Herzberg's 'motivators', are as follows:

- *Achievement*. This is a measure of the opportunities for someone to use their full capabilities and make a worthwhile contribution. It includes the possibilities for testing new and untried ideas.
- *Responsibility*. A measure of freedom of action in decision-taking, style and job development. Some people call this autonomy.
- *Recognition*. An indication of the amount and quality of all kinds of 'feedback', whether good or bad, about how you are getting on in the job.
- *Advancement*. This shows the potential of the job in terms of promotion – inside or outside the organisation in which you currently work.
- *Work itself*. The interest of the job, usually involving variety, challenge and personal conviction of the job's significance
- *Personal growth*. An indication of opportunities for learning and maturing as a person.

From these types of findings, Herzberg drew some important conclusions:

1. The things which make people feel motivated at work are not simply the opposites of the things which make them dissatisfied, and vice versa. The two sets of things are different in kind. People will not become motivated simply by removing causes of dissatisfaction.
2. The things that make people dissatisfied are related to the job environment. In contrast the things that make people satisfied are related to job content. This is an important distinction.
3. While those who have a satisfying job may have a higher tolerance of dissatisfiers, the dissatisfying factors can be so strong that the job becomes intolerable.
4. Managers must therefore be concerned with ensuring both that causes of dissatisfaction are removed (or reduced as far as possible) and that opportunities for satisfaction are increased – that, in Herzberg's terms, the job is 'enriched'. Managers often fail to provide enough opportunities for employee satisfaction. Instead of drawing on real motivating factors and appealing to their employees desire to do a satisfying job, they use rewards and threats. In other words, managers can get it badly wrong, that is, they can demotivate. But getting it right won't necessarily motivate people either, unless managers focus on those areas

that make staff more satisfied, such as the content of their work and their responsibility levels and opportunities for self-fulfilment or development.

Involvement

Where staff at any level are 'involved' in decisions taken by their superiors, peers or even subordinates, all the motivators are brought into play. This is particularly the case where the decision under discussion will affect the person involved. For example, an experienced football team that have some involvement, however small, in the tactics they adopt in a particular match are more likely to commit to the approach if they feel they have contributed to it.

Involvement should produce the commitment to goals on which a sense of achievement depends. By involving people, leaders begin to recognise that their input matters and leaders increase people's sense of responsibility. Interest in their job should be increased and leaders are providing their team with a broader view which provides both a learning opportunity and experience, of possible use in people's further development.

(Adapted from Everard et al., 2009, pp. 88–90 and Everard and Wilson, 2004)

2.2 From theory into practice

Herzberg's theory raises some interesting points about how organisations and managers might operate: people work at their best when they are achieving the greatest satisfaction from their work.

Thinking about the people who featured in the film in Activity 2 we might link some of the phrases they used to the Herzberg factors. For instance:

The work itself

Waking up every morning, and going to a job that you love doing.

(Lee Hodson)

Achievement

The best thing ... is the development of young players and, ultimately then, prepare in a week to try and win a football match, and then winning it.

(Karl Robinson)

Working conditions

I get a real buzz from being out here [the stadium development], and seeing this amazing space, it's very inspirational.

(Angela Novell)

The thing I like the least, I would say, is the pressure.

(Ian Evatt)

Recognition

Praise from your superiors ... from supporters, other groundsmen, it's very important ... you are recognised within the trade so that's a great motivation when your peers look at you in that light

(Joe Aylett)

You can now refresh your knowledge of the various motivation and hygiene factors and consider how these apply to the video insights into football clubs and players you recently watched. You'll then address the question, 'does money motivate?'

Activity 3 Revisit what motivates those in a football club

Allow about 5 minutes

Match each of the motivation factors below to the relevant definition.

Achievement
Responsibility
Recognition
Advancement
Work itself
Personal growth

Match each of the items above to an item below.

The opportunities to use your full capabilities and make a worthwhile contribution
Freedom of action or autonomy in decision-taking and job development.
The amount and quality of all kinds of job 'feedback' (e.g. praise, pay rise, media attention, admiration of colleagues etc.)
The potential of the job for internal or external promotion to higher levels
Job interest, variety and personal conviction to the job
Opportunities for individual learning and maturation

Match each of the definitions below to the relevant hygiene factor.

Business procedures and protocol
Supervision and leadership of staff
The environment and hours of work
Interactions and bonds with others
Salary

Match each of the items above to an item below.

Organisational policies and administration
Management and leadership
Working conditions
Interpersonal relationships
Money, status and security

3 Does money motivate?

Money will always be important to us because it is required to fulfil our most basic needs to live and it provides a degree of security and welfare. But the relationship between money and motivation is far from clear-cut especially in football where there are huge differences in wages between players and other staff.

To some, money may only be a potential source of dissatisfaction, because they work for other reasons. Herzberg himself viewed salary as a hygiene factor but our relationship with pay is probably more complicated than this.



Figure 3 Money on the mind, sponsored steps at Molineux offer a reminder of its influence within the game

Activity 4 Do you think money is a motivator?

Allow about 15 minutes

Having considered all that you have learned so far, do you think money is a motivator in the workplace generally and specifically in professional football? Make some notes on your thoughts.

Provide your answer...

3.1 Further thoughts on money and motivation

In the workplace generally there is a real mix of people, some of whom respond to financial incentives and others who are more ambivalent. Those motivated by money will be energised only if they can clearly link higher performance to the rewards of more money. This is the role that performance-related pay or bonuses play in motivating individuals: think of sales-related jobs in particular.

Another feature of pay as a reward is that it may help to boost self-esteem and self-worth. Also, for some, extra money for extra work will have no effect because they are happy receiving what they earn for the effort they expend, that is, they would rather spend their time doing things other than working.



Figure 4 England player Nikita Parris celebrates with manager Mark Sampson after scoring the opening goal during the FIFA Women's World Cup Qualifier between England and Russia, September 2017.

4 From individuals to teams

So far you have focused on individual motivation and satisfaction at work. But what about the added complexity of people working together in teams? One of the main representations of a team in football is the playing team itself. This leads us towards considering what stimulates effective motivation and collaboration within teams. What can we apply to the workplace from the way successful sports teams operate?

You will now consider these questions drawing on your own experience of being part of a team and observing both successful and unsuccessful football teams.



Figure 5 England manager Gareth Southgate with player Marcus Rashford, July 2018.

4.1 Team development

Many activities at work and in sport are undertaken as a group or team. It is likely that you have experienced being part of a team that has functioned well, and one that has been dysfunctional in some way. The study of how teams function is broadly known as team dynamics. The effective functioning of teams is vital to success in sport and the workplace.

The important point about teams is that if they function well they can influence and enhance individuals motivation. This is vital knowledge for anyone leading a team. But first you'll consider your experience of how teams develop in stages.

Anyone who has coached or worked with a team of any sort will know that teams need to be allowed time to develop. Tuckman and Jensen (1977) identified various stages that teams may pass through as they move towards effective performance (Table 1).

Table 1 Stages of team development

Forming	the pre-team stage where people are still working as individuals
Storming	the stage of conflict that many teams need to go through to achieve their potential. During this stage the team becomes more aggressive and challenges previously agreed or taken-for-granted rules and restrictions
Norming	the consolidating phase in which the team works out working procedures and the team starts to build its own identity and understand how to use the resources they have
Performing	the optimal stage in which the team works well with mutual trust, support and cooperation and strives to be even better by concentrating on learning and improvement
Adjourning	the stage when the team disbands and individuals move on

These stages illustrate something that occurs quite naturally in teams if managers let it happen – Tuckman and Jensen's stages allow you to understand what stage a team might be in and not be threatened by it. However, consider the things that can affect this pattern: new members joining the team; the team leader continually switching things around (often a complaint in football teams); the leader not being comfortable with the conflict of the storming stage and trying to intervene because it feels threatening.

An interesting parallel in football is the arrival of new star players and the impact this can have on the rest of the team. Consider the experiences of the return of Cristiano Ronaldo to Manchester United, or Romelu Lukaku at Chelsea in 2021. The expectation is that a star player will have an immediate impact but actually this might take time or even disrupt what is already a performing team.



Figure 6 Cristiano Ronaldo on his return to Manchester United.

Activity 5 Thinking about team development

Allow about 15 minutes

Think of a particular team of which you are or have been a member. Make some notes on the following:

1. To what extent did your team reach the 'performing' stage of Tuckman and Jensen's framework (Table 1)?
2. Identify either what helped with team cohesion to reach this stage **or** what prevented team cohesion, thereby potentially thwarting the team's ideal development.

Provide your answer...

Discussion

A number of different actions and processes might be identified.

The following actions may be appropriate for helping the team move on from each of the various stages of development:

- **forming** – helping members to clarify roles and responsibilities; helping the team develop a sense of identity; giving approval and praise for achievements
- **storming** – encouraging effective ways of communicating within the team; letting development and dealing with conflict to naturally happen; empowering members to take responsibility for team decisions
- **norming** – getting the team to define its own goals; encouraging the team itself to confront issues rather than turning to the team leader for solutions; enabling the team to coordinate its own work; encouraging creative and innovative thinking
- **performing** – delegating responsibility to the team for monitoring and controlling tasks and procedures; encouraging team members to coach and learn from each

other leading towards open communication and trust; enabling the team to evaluate its own work and seek to improve it.

You may also have identified how rare it is to work in a team that truly 'performs' and how fleetingly this can happen.

5 What helps teams succeed?

You have just seen that teams progress through various stages of development and the ideal is that they reach the 'performing' stage. You have also seen some of the factors that help teams reach this stage. But why does this not happen more often, and what can we learn from teams that seem to outperform their potential?

Ideas of how to make teams succeed are the holy grail for business and psychology researchers and experts. A football club is significantly interested in getting this right since it is the main product of the team. The likelihood is that you and those studying this course with you will be able to develop your own theory of what shapes effective business and football teams. Here we draw on observations from within professional football, where team performance pays in all sorts of ways, to see what can be learned about effective teams.

Consider the case of Leicester City who in 2008–2009 were playing in League 1. They won promotion to the Championship in 2009 and in 2014 they returned to the Premier League. They finished 14th in their first season back in the Premier League and then in their second season they won the title. In the space of seven seasons Leicester had gone from playing in League 1 to becoming Premier League champions.



Figure 7 Leicester City's owners, Vichai and Top Srivaddhanaprabha, celebrating winning the Premier League in 2016.

In the next section you will listen to some interviews with national team managers and experienced club professionals, to hear their thoughts on what shapes successful teams.

5.1 Players and managers making sense of teams

The following BBC radio extracts and video consider two leading managers' and players' perspectives of team success, or lack of it. Using their thoughts as a stimulus we hope that an incremental blend of ideas of what shapes effective teams should emerge.

Activity 6 Making sense of effective teams

Allow about 30 minutes

First listen to extracts from a BBC interview, from the series, *The Managers* (2014), with Pia Sundhage (gold medal winning women's national coach). Then listen to Jurgen Klinsmann (national coach for Germany and the USA at successive World Cups) from the same *The Managers* (2014) series. Finally, watch the video with players from Chesterfield and MK Dons who talk about what they call 'team spirit'. Combine these views with your own experience to develop a list of factors that help

explain what shapes effective teams. Listen out for the differences between a manager's and players' views



Figure 8 Pia Sundhage

Audio content is not available in this format.



The Managers 1

Pia Sundhage is one of the world's top women's coaches having led Team USA to two consecutive Olympic gold medals before moving on to coach Sweden and then Brazil. Note down what you learn about how she managed the severe discord in the US team when she took over in 2007 (early in the clip) and the way she develops and uses 'team goals' (second half of the clip). Note that when she mentions 'the role' and 'respect' for it, she is talking about an important aspect of team effectiveness – clarity of team roles. The transcript may be useful to you here.

Audio content is not available in this format.



The Managers 2

Jürgen Klinsmann talks more about players taking responsibility making interesting comparisons between football and American team sports such as baseball, basketball and the NFL. Interestingly he also mentions conflicts within teams.

Now watch the video.

Video content is not available in this format.

Team spirit



Listen to how their understanding of team work is different to a manager. But also note down the factors, represented by key words or phrases, these players identify as helping explain team success or lack of it.

Where possible try and quote phrases or key words from the video and audio pieces and also consider your own examples of *ineffective* football teams.

We can learn a lot from unsuccessful teams, indeed, as much as from successful teams. The fascinating accounts of players and a manager, as you would expect, differ considerably in the depth of their analysis. There might also be potential differences between club and national teams.

Provide your answer...

5.2 Team effectiveness framework

To help think about the complexity surrounding team effectiveness in both football and business it is useful to have a framework that acts as a map to help explore different avenues. There are a number of theories and models of team effectiveness but Cohen and Bailey's (1997) model is particularly useful.

It identifies seven avenues to explore when looking at teams.

1. **Environmental factors:** the external business environment in which the organisation is embedded and its influence on how the organisation operates.

In football the characteristics of the football business we've studied here, the stability of the football club's ownership and the turbulence or otherwise of the team's league standing will partly influence the team's workings and culture.

2. **The design features:** The way the team task is set up and designed by leaders including the clarity of roles within the team.
In football design features include the degree of autonomy of the manager the extent of clear playing roles within a side, the way support staff report and how players interact with other parts of the club hierarchy. Consider the extent to which football clubs design aspects of their business operation to support team success.
3. **Team composition:** How big should the optimal team be; how long should they be contracted; what is the best mix of ages and nationalities?
In football consider the most effective blend of a squad of 25 players, youth versus experience, the player options available for different defensive or attacking configurations and the proportion of overseas players from one or a mixture of nationalities.
4. **Organisational factors:** The design of aspects such as rewards, training and types of resources available to a team.
In football this relates to wage structure, win bonuses, training facilities and spending. For example, small gestures, such as the dressing room design and layout or the travel arrangements to matches, may contribute to how players and staff feel about the team. Also consider a financial incentive such as 'clean sheet bonus' payable to the whole team rather than just the defence.
5. **Processes:** Interactions such as communication and conflict resolution both within the team but also outside it.
In football processes include the mechanisms, if any, for internal squad dialogue, discussion, the induction of new players and how the squad approaches external demands such as the fans, media, sponsors and community engagement.
6. **Psychological and social attributes of the team:** Shared team understandings, characteristics, beliefs, objectives, identity, emotional tone, cohesiveness and team members having similar mindsets.
This connects closely to a cohesive football squad who would have shared norms and a strong team identity – many small details, processes, design and organisational features interact with cohesion.
7. **The measures of effectiveness:** In business, team effectiveness can be measured in a number of different ways which influence teams, such as productivity, quality, job satisfaction, trust, staff turnover, staff absenteeism.
In a football team, effectiveness is normally measured by results on the pitch, translating to league position. Other measures might include the quality of the performance, and the cohesiveness and resilience of play. The financial performance, the degree of recent investment in new players and emergence of young talents within the squad might also be a further measure of effectiveness.

Cohen and Bailey's ideas have had a huge influence on the study of effective teams. Two points are worth highlighting at:

- The psychological and social influences on the team are only one factor – it is often tempting when a team is failing to blame one team member for their apparently 'difficult' behaviour. Individual contributions are rarely if ever the only reason why teams succeed or fail.
- While teams are made up of individuals these teams are in turn part of an organisation which itself is part of a wider context – all of these factors will play a part in team success. There is no one single magic or simple explanation.



Figure 9 Arsenal players Alex Scott and Kelly Smith with manager Pedro Martinez Losa after winning the FA Cup in 2016.

6 What factors work in your environment?

You'll now move from football teams to look at what works in your own environment. You'll also be able to see how this compares with the views of others on this course by taking part in a poll.

Activity 7 Identify important team factors

Allow about 20 minutes

Think about an *ineffective work or business team* that you are involved with. Using some of the ideas in Cohen and Bailey's (1997) framework and players' and managers' perspectives from Activity 6 identify the factors that contributed to the ineffectiveness of the team.

Use this [poll](#) to vote for the three most significant factors that, if changed, can have an impact.

This vote will help establish the most influential factors from a large group of people following this course.



Figure 10 An underdog story: Bradford City fans proudly follow their club to the 2013, Capital One Cup Final at Wembley

7 Final thoughts

In this week you have explored some of the issues surrounding work satisfaction, individual motivation and the success and effectiveness of teams. The week has provided a look behind the scenes at football clubs and has included the voices of players and managers. You have also considered how motivation and teamwork apply to business and workplaces more generally.

You have examined:

- some of the ways that leaders should ensure both that causes of job dissatisfaction are removed and that opportunities for job satisfaction and motivation are increased
- our complicated relationship with pay in which money motivates people in different ways and to different extents
- influences that help or hinder the development of teams
- how learning about team effectiveness might apply to your own environment drawing on Cohen and Bailey's analytical framework.

The effectiveness, and success, of a team and motivation of its members of course impact the wider business of football. Next week you will investigate the enthralling story of how football is increasingly operating globally and look at some of the power relationships that contribute to the worldwide business it has become.

You can now go to [Week 3](#).

Week 3 Globalisation and power relationships

1 What is the global football business?

Football, like many other businesses, is often described as having a global reach or being global – but what do we mean when we say this? How does this relate to ideas of globalisation more generally?

Below is a short extract adapted from an article by two Scandinavian professors: Harald Dolles and Sten Soderman (2005). They explored some of the ideas of globalisation as they related to European football and the World Cup. As you read this piece think about the various different ways in which the football business might be considered to be 'global'. You'll use these ideas in Activity 1 that follows.

Globalisation: European football and its business challenges

European football is a huge and fast growing business operating worldwide and it is of increasing importance to ongoing research in international business and business administration.

The game is famous because it is linked to tradition and culture. It formed part of many of our childhoods, and its professional teams are on top of pyramid-like organisations of several leagues, with amateur players at all levels, from silver-aged veterans' teams to kids' teams. Football today is also an international business, as players are transferred frequently around the globe, international professional leagues thrive, and the European Cup finals or the FIFA World Cup finals are top media events (Beech and Chadwick, 2004).

The world of football has been referred to more and more as an industry in its own right. Arguably, its characteristics have been drawing closer to those of the service industry or the entertainment business. The ranking of football as a business activity has risen in the economies of those countries where football is promoted as the national sport. In many of these countries, it represents a significant percentage of a nation's GDP, because football events also drive volume in a considerable number of other sectors, such as media, merchandising, advertising and brand promotion as well as in services like transport and catering. The globalisation of the football industry has provoked a concentration of resources in the hands of a few big European and South American clubs, which have had the ability and the economic resources to face down increased competition from emerging clubs and other businesses in the entertainment industry.

The game's common worldwide rules (Figure 1) enable skilful players regardless of their ethnic and social background to play in teams which create enormous media interest. The problems and challenges in the field of football such as amateurism versus profession-

alism, young players going to big clubs, league teams versus national teams, branding and sponsorship growing as a source of revenue and the increasing reliance on the media for revenue, are the same everywhere on the globe.

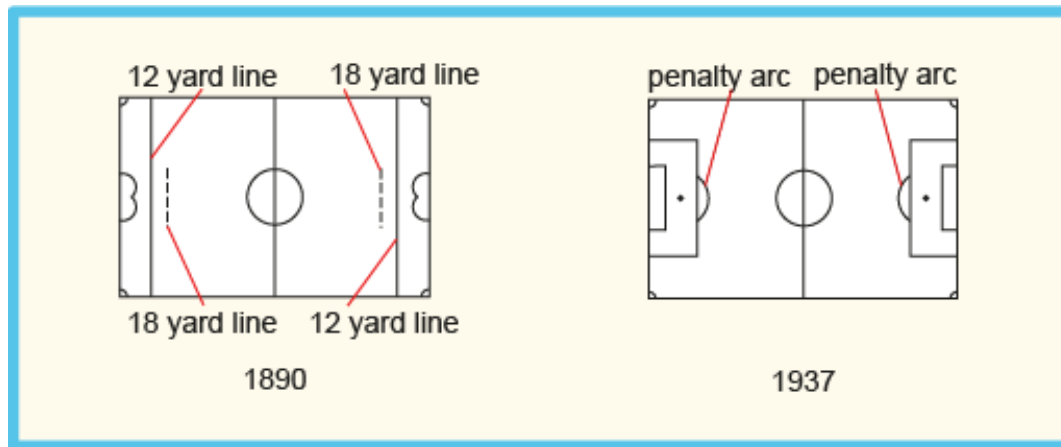


Figure 1 One of the things that made the globalisation of football so easy was common worldwide rules. The changing layout of the football pitch: 1890 and 1937 (Bale, 1994)

In the US, football has successfully outmanoeuvred many other team sports, such as ice hockey, basketball or handball, and has been accepted as the number one sport as far as media attention and worldwide audience numbers are concerned. In 2009 the Champions League became the world's most watched sporting event eclipsing the NFL Super Bowl for the first time (Kuypers, 2014). According to the football international governing body, Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) statistics the FIFA World Cup 2010 was viewed by around 46% of the world's population.

We can also consider the role of government in its relationship to sport including football. In this context, it is worth noting the philosophy of FIFA, and the environment for mega sports events created by governments worldwide. Staging mega sport events such as the World Cup is not merely an economic matter:

Football has always been one of the most convenient sports for serving political aims.

Through successful performance of national teams football provides a platform for displays of national capability and the instilling of national pride.

(Butler, 2002, p. 43).

The 2002 World Cup was jointly hosted in Japan and South Korea with the governments of both countries having their own reasons for wanting the competition. The Koreans aimed at introducing the finals as a 'catalyst for peace' (Sugden and Tomlinson, 1998, p. 118) on the Korean peninsula, and the Japanese focused their bid on its ability to promote political stability, high technology and the country's infrastructure (Sugden and Tomlinson, 2002). With its decision to award the tournament for the first time in history to Asian hosts and to more than a single nation, the FIFA moved strategically towards the globalization of football. In the bid to host the 2006 FIFA World Cup South Africa failed, losing to Germany by only a single vote in the final round. The BBC argued that a vote for South Africa was seen as a vote for Africa – which at the time had never hosted a World Cup tournament before, despite exporting some of the world's finest soccer players to Europe and other

parts of the world – as well as a vote for developing countries. Later that decade history was made when Africa and South Africa were chosen to stage the 2010 FIFA World Cup.

It should be obvious by now that football is a global business, rapidly expanding and developing on a worldwide scale.

(Adapted from Dolles and Söderman, 2005)

1.1 Football globalisation and history

Given the development of football into a global business, how did this start and how did football spread across the globe?

You'll now listen to part of a BBC radio programme, 'Sport and the British', presented by Clare Balding, which gives some surprising insights into the development of football from its early roots. The piece provides a particularly fascinating focus on the rise of the game in South America.

Audio content is not available in this format.



Sport and the British

Activity 1 Factors affecting football's initial globalisation

Allow about 15 minutes

It is interesting to note from the BBC radio clip how football started its global spread. In particular you may not have been aware that football started as an elite game – a contrast perhaps to how many see the game now.

Make some notes on the factors that have provided the impetus for the globalisation of football.

Provide your answer...



Figure 2 USA player Hope Solo warming up before a game.

1.2 Making sense of globalisation in business

Football may be considered as one industry but in reality the situation is much more complex than this. Globalisation of the football industry is multifaceted and affects far more than just the clubs. If we can start to make sense of the business drivers of globalisation for football then we can learn a lot about how the drivers affect other industries.

If you search for explanations of globalisation online you'll typically find descriptions of a process by which the world is becoming integrated through global trade, migration, communication and transportation helped along by technological developments. You'll now explore this further.

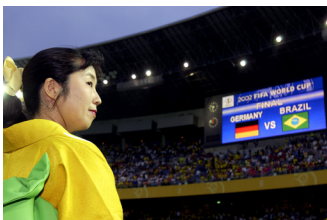


Figure 3 East meets West – woman in traditional Japanese costume awaits Germany and Brazil, as 1.1 billion individuals watch the 2002 FIFA World Cup Final.

A business perspective of globalisation

The extract below explores some of the general factors which play a role in increasing globalisation across industries. As you read this consider how each factor might have affected the globalisation of the football industry.

Factors increasing globalisation: a business perspective

The factors increasing globalisation can be thought of as pressures or opportunities that have stimulated businesses to move into global markets.

Market

Market drivers emerge through the development of a world market:

- the establishment of global brands (e.g., McDonald's fast-food outlets, Nike trainers and sportswear)
- global consumers with a growing convergence of lifestyles and tastes
- growing disposable income across the world, not only in the developed economies of the West, but in the emerging industrial and services economies such as India.

Government

Here nations collaborate to increase the possibility of trading internationally to create economic advantage and wealth. Examples include:

- a reduction in trade barriers through the removal of tariffs on imports and exports (as has happened across the European Union)
- the creation of more open and freer economies as a result of, for example the ending of the closed economies of Eastern Europe and the opening up of the Chinese economy.

Competition

Increased competition arising from the opening up of economies or businesses creates an environment in which more organisations can enter the marketplace, whether nationally or internationally. This is brought about by:

- the cross-border ownership of domestic firms by foreign organisations; for example, Rupert Murdoch's USA-based News UK group's ownership of key media organisations, such as *The Times* and *The Sun* newspapers
- movement of companies to become globally centred rather than nationally centred through strategic alliances and takeover
- the growth of global networks which make countries interdependent within specific industries (e.g. the car industry which pulls in different components from different parts of the world).

Cost

Various cost drivers and enablers can encourage a firm to globalise:

- they enable an organisation to gain economies of scale
- the development of communication technology particularly through the internet simplifies communications and makes it easier to control costs and to globalise

- cheaper labour and other resource costs in developing countries provide an incentive, e.g. many companies have outsourced their call centres to India
- the development of improved infrastructure allows for faster and more efficient transportation systems.

Underpinning many of the points listed above is the growth in international financial markets. This growth means that close financial relationships are established on a worldwide basis and these in turn facilitate a complex and sophisticated international system of lending, borrowing, transmission and storage of money.

(The Open University, 2012, pp. 34–36)

Activity 2 The impact of globalisation factors on football

Allow about 30 minutes

As you can see from the extract above, there are many factors which drive or enable globalisation of business, each of which affects particular industries to a greater or lesser extent. How do you feel these factors affect the globalisation of the wider football industry? Choose **one** of the four factors – market, government, competition or cost – and note down some ways in which this has impacted football.

Provide your answer...

Discussion

Your ideas might be along these lines:

- **Market:** The creation of global brands through clubs such as Manchester United and Barcelona and the impact of the global market for players might be viewed as market phenomena. The ease of travel has opened up international competitions and exposed a wider audience to football.
- **Government:** Governments themselves have not had much direct effect on the globalisation of football; although football's own governing bodies, such as FIFA, have made changes which have facilitated globalisation, such as player transfer rules.
- **Competition:** The importance of competitions such as the Champions League in driving the global image of football has shaped contemporary football. The effect of TV rights on football has helped enable a global market to develop.
- **Cost:** Economies of scale don't really apply directly to the football industry although perhaps cost drivers have affected many of the industries related to football. For example, the manufacture of sport shirts is usually carried out in other countries where labour is cheaper.

1.3 Globalisation: a force for good in football?

So far you have explored how football has become a global industry and some of the factors that have played a part in this. The next question we will address is the extent to which this globalisation of football is good, bad or a bit of both.

Revisit the second half of the 'Business of Football' video which you watched in Week 1 (from 05:56 on the time display) in which ideas about the global spread of football broadcasting and the possibility of digital interconnections between fans are explored. A chairman of a Premiership club might view the globalisation of football broadcasting differently from a chairman of a Championship club due to the way broadcasting revenues are distributed.

Video content is not available in this format.

[The business of football](#)



Now listen to a [professor's perspective](#). Susan Segal Hall (former Professor of International Strategy with The Open University Business School) explores the arguments for and against globalisation being a good thing for business generally. As you are listening consider which of the points she raises would be relevant to the owner of a Championship club.

Is then the globalisation of football a good thing for the football industry? It's now time to do your own research on this.



Figure 4 A moving tribute is held on stage during the FIFA 2014 World Cup Draw to Nelson Mandela, who believed 'Sport has the power to change the world'.

Activity 3 Your own research

Allow about 40 minutes

Using the internet (putting 'football globalisation' into a search engine is a good place to start) see what you can find on this subject. Use your findings to inform your own ideas about the benefits and disadvantages of globalisation for the football industry.

Provide your answer...

2 Understanding power

So far this week you have explored the globalisation of football and examined some of the factors that have played a part in spreading football and its wider industry across the globe. These final sections explore power and how power relations operate from a commercial, political and organisational perspective.

This subject has been chosen because having a grasp of how power works, among individuals within organisations, between organisations and within societies as a whole, is central to understanding any industry, including football.

Now listen to the BBC radio programme clip 'FIFA, Football, Power and Politics' which charts the rise of FIFA as a powerful organisation in football. As you listen, note the different ways in which the former head of FIFA, Brazilian João Havelange, worked to raise the profile and global reach of the organisation.

Audio content is not available in this format.



FIFA, Football, Power and Politics

The awarding of the 2022 World Cup to Qatar might for some be an inspired decision that brings the tournament to a part of the world that has never hosted the tournament before. For others it is deeply troubling. Qatar's strict laws on sexuality and attitude towards the rights of LGBT+ fans, alongside the treatment of the thousands of migrant workers who have built the stadiums for the tournament, are serious concerns for many people.

Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch for example have called on FIFA to set aside income from the tournament to financially support the families of migrant workers who have died building the stadiums.



Figure 5 Handling history: FIFA's President, Sepp Blatter holds the ball used in the first ever World Cup in 1930, whilst Gordon Brown holds the 1966 ball, 24 October 2007.

2.1 The dimensions of power



Figure 6 Former FIFA President, Dr João Havelange

Now read the BBC article, [FIFA election: Sepp Blatter and Prince Ali battle for power](#) (2015).

While the reputation of both has been damaged by allegations of accepting bribes it is clear that they exerted a huge influence over FIFA.

To understand the power that each wielded it is necessary to look at the different ways in which power operates within organisations. Read the extract below about power. As you read consider the ways in which both Havelange and Blatter exerted their power

Power: a feature of organisational life

Power is an integral feature of organisational life. We can distinguish between two main types of power. One type relates to authority, or formally legitimated power, and comes from people's formal job role – thus managers have authority in relation to their staff. The other type of power is influence – informal power that can affect decisions and outcomes and this is based on people's personal expertise and characteristics.

The following main sources of organisational power can be identified (Pedler et al., 2007):

- **Positional:** based on authority, linked to people's official status and role within the organisation
- **Resources and rewards:** control of finance, budgets, staff salaries, pay rises and other incentives
- **Information, knowledge and expertise:** access to information and ideas, including professional expertise and skills
- **Personal influence:** based on prior track record and experience, exercised through interpersonal skills, persuasiveness and the capacity to inspire confidence; staff without positional power may have considerable influence and weight as opinion leaders in organisational decisions and actions
- **Networks:** access to ideas and information from formal and informal groups and networks inside and outside the organisation; the views of people who know what is happening or what is likely to happen from these sources are frequently given weight in decision making.
- **Energy and stamina:** enthusiasm, adaptability and persistence are important aspects of the power to pursue decisions and actions through to a conclusion.

Clearly, senior managers and others in higher-level positions possess considerable degrees of authority and influence and, thus, the ability to play a major part in organisational decisions and actions. However, as indicated by the list above, all staff have

some power, even junior members (e.g. the ability to provide or withhold information), based on their access to knowledge, expertise and personal influence.
(The Open University, 2009, pp. 229–230)

Activity 4 Power can work in mysterious ways

Allow about 40 minutes

Note down the different sources of power that Havelange and Blatter used to move their agendas forward. Give examples of how they each used at least two different sources of power.

Provide your answer...

Discussion

Here are some thoughts:

Positional: Both had the authority of being the FIFA president and used that to make the changes that they wanted. Writing for the New York Times in 1994, Jere Longman noted that Havelange 'ran FIFA ... with a combination of autocratic rigidity and progressive reform'. Sepp Blatter was dogged by allegations of corruption throughout his tenure and arguably this reduced his positional power, particularly within Europe. Blatter maintained his positional power by extensive lobbying in developing countries, where the balance of FIFA's voting power lay.

Resources and rewards: Havelange had major plans for FIFA and insufficient funds to make these happen. It was him that bought in key sponsors such as Coca-Cola and Adidas to underwrite these. Blatter reinforced his influence in developing countries by allocating resources to support football development, however distributing resources if not done transparently can lead to allegations of corruption, as we have seen with Blatter.

Networks: Both were strong at building networks and were aware of the power of football icons. Both also focused on the developing countries, recognising their relative voting power in FIFA presidency. In the build up to the 1974 FIFA presidential election (which he won), Havelange visited 86 different countries to build up support and in a canny move, often took Pele with him.

Energy and stamina: Havelange was 82 when he finally stood down from the FIFA presidency in 1998, having served in the post for 24 years. Blatter survived in the presidential role for 17 years, despite many calls for him to step down.

The final legacy of the 40 year reign of Havelange and Blatter may not be known for many years, but Stefan Szymanski reflected in 2015 on his hopes for FIFA moving forwards.

The core of the problem is that, especially in Africa, FIFA was seen as neo-colonial project run by Europeans who still wanted to play football with apartheid South Africa in the 1970s. The election of first Joao Havelange and then Blatter created a new dispensation which promoted the development of football in Asia, Central America and especially Africa. This not only channeled funds into development, but also promoted their participation in the World Cup and, arguably, has had a real effect on the standing of these nations in football. In a nutshell, football has advanced far

more rapidly in Africa under FIFA than the continent's economies have under the western dominated IMF and World Bank.

My conclusion ... is that practical reform must preserve the mission developed by Havelange and Blatter to promote football in the service of the developing nations, while minimizing opportunities for senior football administrators ... to line their own pockets.

In the next section you will explore one more example of power in global football, one that proved highly contentious.

2.2 A biennial world cup?



Figure 7 FIFA president Gianni Infantino during the 2018 World Cup.

In another example of power, globalisation and the business of football you will examine the proposal for the men's World Cup to be held every two years instead of four.

FIFA proposed the biennial World Cup and provided several reasons why it was a positive development for world football. These reasons included:

- The opportunity to generate more revenue which could be redistributed to national associations to support the development of football in their country.
- This extra revenue would support the development of better players and enable more countries to become competitive and challenge those countries who have traditionally won major international tournaments.
- The opportunity to revamp the international football calendar making it more streamlined and efficient.

The plan attracted much criticism from the powerful European and South American football federations. Both UEFA (Europe) and CONMEBOL (South America) feared it would undermine the commercial value of their own competitions such as UEFA's Champions League and Euros. However, the proposal did gain the support from the Confederation of African Football (CAF).

In the next activity you will explore why CAF were enthusiastic supporters of the proposal. It concisely illustrates the business and politics of global football.

Activity 5 Biennial World Cup: a different perspective

Allow about 15 minutes

Watch the following video. Using the STEEP model, that was introduced to you in Week 1, can you identify which of the five dimensions are primarily present in the argument for a biennial World Cup?

Video content is not available in this format.

Biennial World Cup: why is Africa keen?



Provide your answer...

Discussion

Three dimensions of the STEEP model are principally involved in the argument for a biennial World Cup. First, the economic dimension that a World Cup every two years will increase the revenue that all competing countries will receive. Second, a sociological dimension whereby with this additional revenue African countries can invest more into the development of their football and aim to compete more equitably with the powerful and privileged countries in Europe. There is also a third political dimension that revolves around the personal relationships between key figures in world football. It was noted that the FIFA president, Gianni Infantino, is a close friend of the President of the Confederation of African Football (CAF). They both supported the biennial World Cup proposal.

By applying the STEEP model you can better understand the relationship between the dimensions that both support and resist the biennial World Cup proposal.

The proposal for a biennial World Cup illustrates the competing interests of different countries and different 'blocks' of countries. Proposals like the biennial World Cup are often presented as being in the best interests of players, fans and the wider public. Instead they are often the means for different organisations to acquire more power, more income and more control over world football. It is arguably the business and commercial interests in football that come before the sporting interest.

2.3 Sportswashing: cleansing a reputation through sport

Sportswashing is a term used to describe the process whereby an individual, company, group or government use sport to improve a poor reputation or suppress awareness of questionable behaviours. The takeover of Newcastle United football club by the Saudi Arabia Public Investment Fund (PIF), a part of the government of Saudi Arabia, has been criticised for being a clear attempt to sportswash the country's human rights abuses.



Figure 8 St James Park, the home of Newcastle United FC.

The 2021 takeover of Newcastle United is one of many examples of purported sportswashing in football, and the trend is increasing. But there are further reasons for organisations and governments like Saudi Arabia to make investments into football clubs. Like many countries on the Arabian Peninsula, Saudi Arabia has accumulated a vast wealth through the exploitation of its oil reserves. Now it is using this wealth to invest in its economy and make it less dependent on oil revenues. Football not only has reputational value but, at the highest level, it is an increasingly good financial investment as well.

Activity 6 Should football reject the petro-money?

In Week 1 you learned about the various stakeholders in football. Read this article from *The Guardian* newspaper and identify the key stakeholders and what their interests are in the takeover of Newcastle United:

[Saudi takeover of Newcastle leaves human rights to fog on the Tyne.](#)

Provide your answer...

Discussion

The supporters of Newcastle United welcomed the takeover of the club by the Saudi Arabia PIF. From the fans' perspective the promised investment into the club might enable it to compete successfully at the very top of the Premier League. From the UK government perspective investment into Newcastle and the wider region may have a positive economic benefit, while for the Premier League the takeover symbolises the economic strength of the league and its attractiveness to global investors. For organisations like Amnesty International the deal is further evidence of how football is being used to deflect attention away from controversial issues.

As you learned in Week 1, the power and interests of each stakeholder can be mapped to develop a more detailed understanding of a complex business issue in football. The increasing number and diversity of stakeholders shows how the game has travelled a long way from when local entrepreneurs owned their local club and saw themselves as benefactors and custodians of the club for the community.

Through the preceding examples you have learned how football has become entangled within the power relationships of global politics and business. When we speak now of the business of football there are an increasing number of global, multi-billion pound business operations in action. The business of the top Premier League clubs have certainly become increasingly removed from the business operations of clubs like MK Dons and Chesterfield.

3 Final thoughts

In this week you have started to gain some insight into globalisation and power and how it affects the business of football and other businesses.

You began by examining some of the ways that the business of football has spread across the globe. You considered a number of aspects of globalisation including:

- the history of the globalisation of football
- some of the factors that have driven the globalisation of the football industry in particular the market for global players
- the often conflicting relationships between different countries and different blocks of countries.

You then examined dimensions of power and explored how both João Havelange and Sepp Blatter worked to increase the influence, commercialisation and reach of FIFA during their time in office.

Finally you explored how the proposal for a biennial World Cup was a bitter battle between competing global football organisations with different interests to protect and develop.

Well done for completing *The business of football*!

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Acknowledgements

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Text

Week 1 Football: a business like no other

'Assem Allam's misguided stance shows action must be taken to protect clubs', Tony Evans, Football Editor, *The Times*, 2 December 2013. © The Times

Week 2: The secrets of motivation and teams

Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory, adapted from Everard et al., 2009, pp. 88–90 and Everard and Wilson, 2004

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Audio-visual

Week 1 Football: a business like no other

Video: Brighton and Hove Albion FC. Thanks to Brighton and Hove Albion FC for the drone footage.

Week 2: The secrets of motivation and teams

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Week 3: Globalisation and power relationships

Extract from BBC radio programme (audio) 'Sport and the British', presented by Clare Balding © BBC

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