

The Effects of Megatrends on Football Team Management

Written Assignment

submitted to

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1 Introduction

1.1 Objective

The world we live in is constantly evolving but “strategic planning is worthless -- unless there is first a strategic vision.”¹

The duties for a football team manager are not immune to strategic change among the ever-changing trends of the world. Aligned with many other businesses, the game of football will inevitably see changes and the ways in which we perform specific tasks will be updated in the years to come. The question for most is not whether and when changes will occur but rather how one reacts when changes happen.

Analyzed within this written assignment are some of the current and future megatrends that affect and may affect the roles of a football team manager. Football is the world’s most popular sport and due to its popularity, external and internal factors will ultimately lead to innovation.² Whether a team manager for a national team or for a club team, megatrends will shape the way in which the job is performed.

1.2 Abstract and Limitations

Within this assignment, the specific megatrends relevant to a football team manager will be analyzed. It begins with a definition of team management as well as an overview of the average team manager’s duties. Then a definition of megatrends is given before an overview of some of the top megatrends affecting the football industry will be discussed. Following this framework, examples will be provided explaining how a couple of the mentioned megatrends could affect a team manager’s duties in the future.

However, this assignment does have limitations. Due to the fact that many clubs and national teams do not make their team manager’s tasks public, several assumptions had to be made. What is considered team management for one organization may not be the same job description for a team manager at another organization. In addition,

¹ Naisbitt 1982.

² Cf. Sawe 2018.

the job title of team manager within football clubs is often referred to as various names. Some examples of team manager positions include: Team Coordinator, Team Leader, Team official etc.³ Regardless of these facts, these limitations should not deter from the overall scope of how megatrends affect football and the team manager position.

2 Theoretical Framework

2.1 Team Management

“Team management refers to the various activities which bind a team together by bringing the team members closer to achieve the set targets.”⁴ Team Management revolves around the components of strategic planning, communication and teamwork. In football, in particular, the team manager has similar responsibilities and tasks. Among many other skills, team managers are expected to have good leadership and communication abilities as well as the ability to make key decisions in high pressure situations.⁵

The job of a team manager has many responsibilities. The team manager directly or indirectly manages almost all of the departments, leading to a smooth functioning of the team. The main tasks for a team manager can be categorized into three different domains: logistics and event management, personnel management, and budget and material administration.⁶

Logistics and Event Management: Logistics and event management mainly consists of preparation and coordination of matchday, organization of training camps, and arranging travel necessities for away fixtures. A lot of planning is required prior to these events since the team manager has to keep in mind the various departments involved, such as transportation, hospitality, security, accommodation, etc.

Personnel Management: Personnel Management includes player support i.e. helping a player integrate into the team and boosting team spirit when the team is going

³ Cf. Nikolai 2020.

⁴ Juneja 2015.

⁵ Cf. Halvorson 2019.

⁶ Cf. Lee 2020.

through a period of bad run. Team Managers are also responsible for coordinating with sponsors and the press. It is important to maintain good relationships with all necessary stakeholders; clear and effective communication will help in this regard.

Budget and Material Administration: The team manager has to create a comprehensive financial plan for the upcoming fiscal year. This budget plan must contain all of the operating costs, salaries, and expenses. It is necessary to execute the same process for equipment and other materials which are required to be stocked in the team's inventory. This planning of inventory is called equipment inventory administration.

As a result, the team manager's duties are not limited. Therefore, being current on issues and processes is a must. By understanding how these duties affect the entire process, a team manager should also be aware of what is likely to come in the future. Therefore, trends and megatrends play important roles in a team manager's decisions-making process.

2.2 Megatrends

Before understanding megatrends, one must understand the meaning of trends. According to the Merriam-Webster, a trend is "a prevailing tendency or inclination"⁷ This can have many relations. When defining a trend, it is viewed as something seen on a smaller scale. Megatrends, on the other hand, occur on a larger scale. According to Frost & Sullivan, "Megatrends are global, sustained and macroeconomic forces of development that impacts business, economy, society, cultures and personal lives thereby defining our future world and its increasing pace of change."⁸ With this definition in mind, megatrends can impact a significant number of individuals and enterprises.

Both trends and megatrends refer to change. However, with a trend "there is no guarantee that a trend observed in the past will continue in the future."⁹ Because megatrends are focused on a longer term, they are slower to form than trends. Therefore, it is not only crucial that influenced parties be alert to trends, but also to megatrends.

⁷ Merriam-Webster 2020.

⁸ Frost/Sullivan 2020.

⁹ Saritas/Smith 2011, p.294.

There are a great number of future megatrends that will affect the world as it is currently understood. In addition, it is not possible to discuss all possible megatrends as different resources denote what a megatrend is considered. However, there are some megatrends that are perceived to be more relevant for a team manager than others. The rest of this section explains some of the top megatrends in team management and the application gives more detail about how a couple of them can be applied.

The internet has changed the way in which everyone lives their day-to-day lives. With the invention of the internet, interconnectedness has grown to an entirely new level. Now there is a way for many to communicate not only on the telephone but through different mediums including applications and chatrooms. The invention of the internet is just a glimpse of the entire digitalization scheme. Along with the internet came other megatrends that were quick to follow. As the internet became common, desktop computers were the common means of access. However, soon thereafter, laptops, tablets and smartphones became the norm. These devices have changed the way in which many companies work together within and outside of their organizations.

In addition to digitalization, transparency and security will become increasingly necessary.¹⁰ As individuals are becoming more sensitive to what is happening with data, it is important for companies to ensure that data is not only being secured but is also being used properly. Therefore, digitalization is not without its fair share of risks.

Environmental sustainability has been a somewhat overlooked topic, but it should continue to grow in significance as businesses develop.¹¹ In order to keep our world and people safe, there is a strong need to protect the environment. Especially as climate change is becoming increasingly evident, working together to sustain our ecosystem will be crucial.¹² Scientists agree that pollution and other forms of hazardous practices are adding to the problem of global warming.¹³ In addition, Animals are becoming extinct and the population is exhausting the world's natural resources.¹⁴

¹⁰ Cf. Konanykhin 2018.

¹¹ Cf. Haanaes 2016.

¹² Cf. Hawken.

¹³ Cf. IASS Potsdam.

¹⁴ Cf. Carrington 2018.

The megatrend of healthy living will also become increasingly relevant.¹⁵ In the past, vegan and vegetarian habits were seen as extreme.¹⁶ Nowadays, the rise of vegan and vegetarian eating is showing signs of growth and many fast food companies are losing revenue as individuals are starting to become increasingly educated on health.¹⁷ However, eating is only one part of the healthy living lifestyle. Included with healthy eating one must have a balance of exercise. As modern medicine is continuing to improve and the life expectancy number is growing, people are starting to live longer.¹⁸ However, this is a megatrend that could potentially see the masses favor natural remedies to ensure a better quality of life.

3 Megatrends in Football Team Management

3.1 Megatrends in Digitalization

Digitalization has become one of the most frequently debated subjects in modern football.¹⁹ Football is continually evolving, and the processes implemented will no doubt continue to trend toward change in the years to come. Digitalization of football also enhanced the experience with fresh innovations, problem-solving methods, and offering advanced technological tools for the teams and players as well.²⁰ Digitalization is a hot topic in current megatrends, it not only affects the current duties of team managers but also team management duties in the future.

3.1.1 Data Transparency

As the dissemination of data is becoming more common, team managers may have to think about securing the knowledge they have. This means that it will be necessary to ensure that there is not leakage of information between team managers and especially to other teams. This is especially relevant as team managers often deal with the press and sponsors. Data protection will be even more important, and privacy can be shattered if too much information is presented. It is inevitable that in the future data will be more accessible and privacy will be a thing of the past. Therefore, it is

¹⁵ Cf. Weinswig 2017.

¹⁶ Anon 2018.

¹⁷ Cf. Hancox 2018.

¹⁸ Cf. Griffin 2016.

¹⁹ Cf. Schluenz 2018.

²⁰ Cf. CIORReview 2019.

fundamental to maintain transparency. For example, Liverpool's scouting team was accused of accessing and stealing Manchester City's scouting database multiple times which consisted of future transfer targets. As a result, Liverpool ended up paying £1million once a contractual deal was established between the two parties, the payout was reported to have been rendered without the club or the person admitting the wrongdoing.²¹

3.1.2 Health and Fitness

In recent years, health and lifestyle have witnessed changes but there is scope for more progress in the future.²² Understanding how a player will function in terms of general health and fitness should be studied and discussed. It is important for players to stay fit even during off-season, especially in times like these with the corona virus outbreak where everything is digital, players must train separately at their own homes. Team managers are responsible for conducting training, analyzing and reviewing training sessions etc. The activities and dietary patterns of the players can be monitored in order to make the best out of virtual training. Wearables should be viewed as a facilitator for this mega-trend. These wearables measure key inputs such as heart and breathing conditions and further deduce these inputs into different parameters. Results from the wearables can be tracked and monitored in real-time.²³ This device can also be connected to other devices like a smart watch or to a smart phone app for seamless transition between different devices. These innovations will help team managers enhance their training philosophies.

3.1.3 Augmented Reality

Augmented Reality can be considered as next big thing in the world of sports and football.²⁴ Due to the corona virus, it is highly unlikely live sports events will be held with fans in the stadium.²⁵ The AR technology can be used as a substitute for this problem. Supporters can use AR powered glasses to watch a foot-ball game live staying at home and witness almost the same footballing experience. AR can also be used in team management. Unstructured large data can be processed using algorithms and can be organized into standardized data. Team managers will be able to get more

²¹ Cf. Brenna 2020.

²² Cf. Deloitte 2020.

²³ Cf. Sanyal 2018.

²⁴ Cf. Medal 2017.

²⁵ Cf. DW 2020.

information in real-time. This data can be analyzed and can be used as statistical information for players and potential fixtures.

3.2 Globalization

“From advertisers to spectators, soccer embodies globalization like no other sport. And for players, soccer embodies globalization like no other profession.”²⁶ Because soccer is the world’s most popular sport and is broadcasted internationally, many people can watch players from all over the country express their talent. This is especially true in the world’s most viewed league, the English Premier League, where participating teams were represented by players of 64 different nationalities.²⁷ The game of soccer is not only adapting on the field in terms of tactics, but also the players are becoming increasingly diverse.

3.2.1 Player Integration

One of the team manager’s main duties is to keep the morale of the team high. Even when everything is not running 100% as planned, the team needs to continue to function on the same page. As teams will likely be represented by more nationalities in the future, knowing how to communicate with all players will be critical. English is the world’s most spoken language²⁸ and 20% of the world’s population speaks English.²⁹ Therefore, knowing the English language may become a key quality that a team manager possesses. Although it is likely that not every new foreign player for every team will speak English, statistics show that the trend of being able to speak English is becoming the norm.³⁰

However, knowing English in most cases will not be enough. Understanding the different cultures of players may also play an important role in helping players adjust. Therefore, a psychological element of team management is also present. Obviously, a team manager cannot be expected to understand the language of every foreign player. However, a team manager could in theory better inform himself of the type of

²⁶ Subramaniam 2016.

²⁷ See appendix 5.2, p.10.

²⁸ See appendix 5.1, p.10.

²⁹ Cf. Lyons 2017.

³⁰ Cf. Harrow House International College 2020.

body language that foreign players are used to.³¹ Knowing subtle differences could reduce severe conflicts in the future.

3.2.2 Outside Communication

Brand management is important for every football team. If a football team wants to be successful, it not only has to perform on the field, it also has to maintain a positive image to everyone involved. This is a part of a team manager's as it is expected to use positive communication skills to keep everyone on the same page. This is especially true and a different kind of challenge when travel is integrated. A team manager must be informed of how to deal with situations even if the country is not the club's home country.

Summer tours have proven beneficial for football teams. In the summer of 2019, Paris Saint-Germain made the decision to expand their team awareness by going to China.³² This is not the only team to decide to play football outside of the country's borders. Teams like Barcelona, Real Madrid, Manchester United, and Juventus (among others) also consistently decide to play their summer preseason abroad.³³ Because teams are taking part in this form of this type of globalization, expanding their brand to new nations, team managers must be prepared to continue business abroad.

One of the main duties of a team manager is to organize. This means that everything must run smoothly regardless in which country the tasks are performed. In a country like China, for example, dealing with translators will be necessary. It is very that most of the staff and players do not speak the local language so making sure that everything important is completely understood is a must. In addition, exchange rates are important for team managers to be aware of. When dealing with exchange rates, it could be easy to overspend. Finally, knowing the laws of the country on a tour is also important. It would always be devastating to break a simple law that could have been easily avoided but this is especially important when one is in a foreign country where the justice system may be different.

³¹ Cf. Brake 2018.

³² Cf. White 2019.

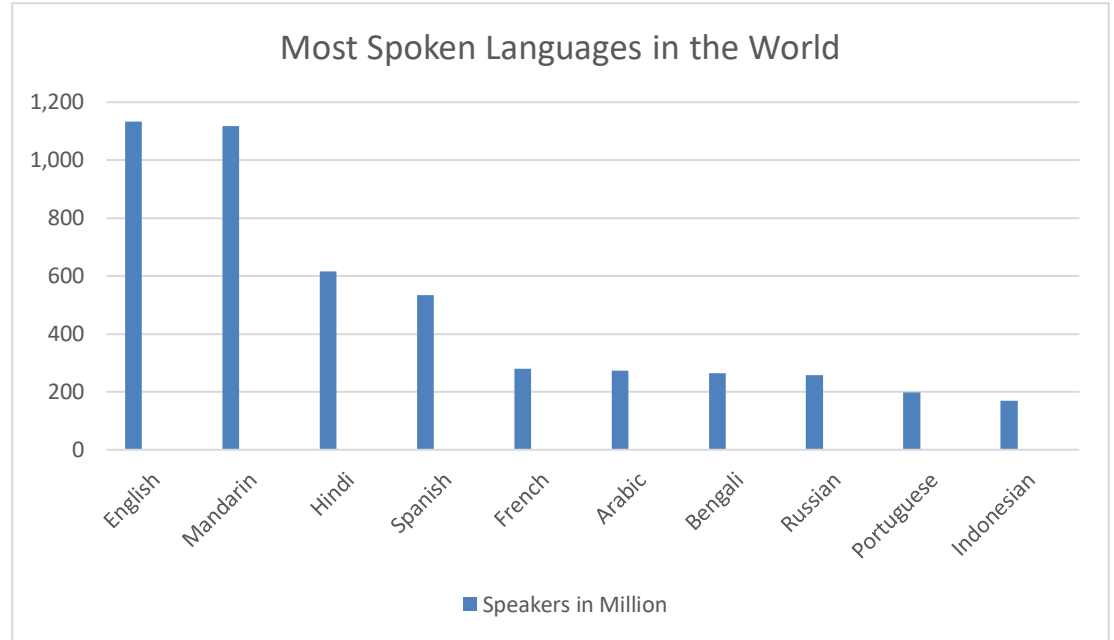
³³ Cf. World Soccer Talk 2019.

4 Conclusion

In recent years, fan engagement has evolved into a new, innovative approach that engages sports fans in the context of an international marketing and business strategy used by football teams and leagues to increase revenue and boost brand awareness. Football organizations have invested in innovative marketing and collaboration activations with a strong emphasis on the digital and social channels to connect with consumers around the globe. In the previous chapters it has been observed that there are significant differences in behavior when segmenting of football consumers occurs. The evidence reveals that devoted fans exhibit very different behavior relative to temporary and local fans. The fanatical fans that the idea of a football club is not just a team or brand, but an extension of themselves. The survey was completed by 91 people, but among those 91, only 45 people consider themselves as devoted. As a result, 50% of people are unsure about their football team and support more than one team or do not identify with just one team. This indicates the brand loyalty is really important and consumers will shift their allegiance depending on success or experiencing better prospect in supporting another team. After evaluating the results of the survey, football fans are active on social media, and most fans use various social media platforms to check on their football team or obtain any football related information. It was also observed that most football fans believe social media is effective in enhancing brand awareness, reputation and credibility.

5 Appendix

5.1 Most Spoken Languages in the World



III. 1: Most Spoken Languages in the World.³⁴

5.2 Premier League Nationalities

TAB: 1: Premier League Nationalities 19/20.³⁵

Rank	Nation	No. of Players
1	England	210
2	Spain	32
3	France	31
4	Ireland	26
5	Brazil	23
6	Netherlands	19
7	Portugal	19
8	Argentina	17
9	Scotland	16
10	Germany	15
11	Belgium	12
12	Wales	11
13	Denmark	8

³⁴ Cf. Klappenbach 2019.

³⁵ Cf. FBREF 2019.

14	Italy	7
15	Nigeria	7
16	Ivory Coast	6
17	Switzerland	6
18	Northern Ireland	5
19	Colombia	5
20	Austria	5
21	Senegal	4
22	Ghana	4
23	Norway	4
24	Greece	4
25	Croatia	4
26	Egypt	3
27	Poland	3
28	Sweden	3
29	United States	3
30	Bosnia and Herzegovina	3
31	Japan	3
32	Romania	3
33	Australia	2
34	Paraguay	2
35	Slovakia	2
36	Turkey	2
37	Serbia	2
38	Morocco	2
39	Mexico	2
40	Iceland	2
41	New Zealand	2
42	South Korea	2
43	Ukraine	2
44	Algeria	2
45	Mali	2
46	Jamaica	2
47	Congo DR	2
48	Cameroon	2
49	Czech Republic	2
50	Finland	1
51	Gabon	1
52	Zimbabwe	1
53	Uruguay	1
54	Cuba	1
55	Guinea	1

56	Tanzania	1
57	Chile	1
58	Iran	1
59	Armenia	1
60	Kenya	1
61	Albania	1
62	Curaçao	1
63	Liberia	1

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Affirmation

Affirmation

This thesis was written by me independently, and I have given indication of sources whenever content was taken directly or indirectly from other sources or media. Verbatim and analogous quotes have been indicated as such. Furthermore, I confirm that there is no factual concurrence with any dissertation, final paper or thesis that I may have submitted within the scope of any previous studies. This thesis has not been submitted to any other institution or individual within the framework of an examination.

Frankfurt, 04-05-2020

Place, Date

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