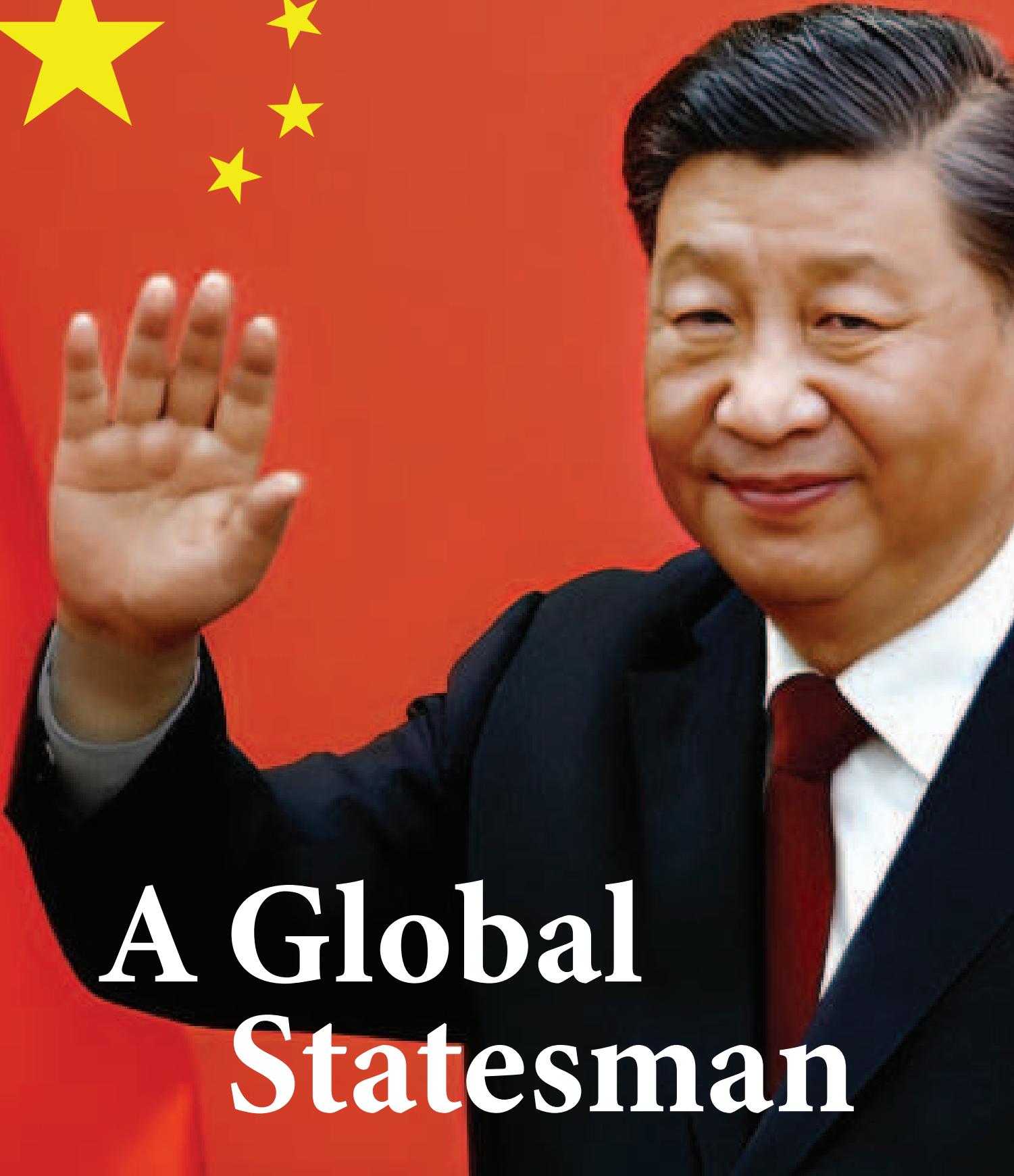


# Boardroom

Empowering Businesses



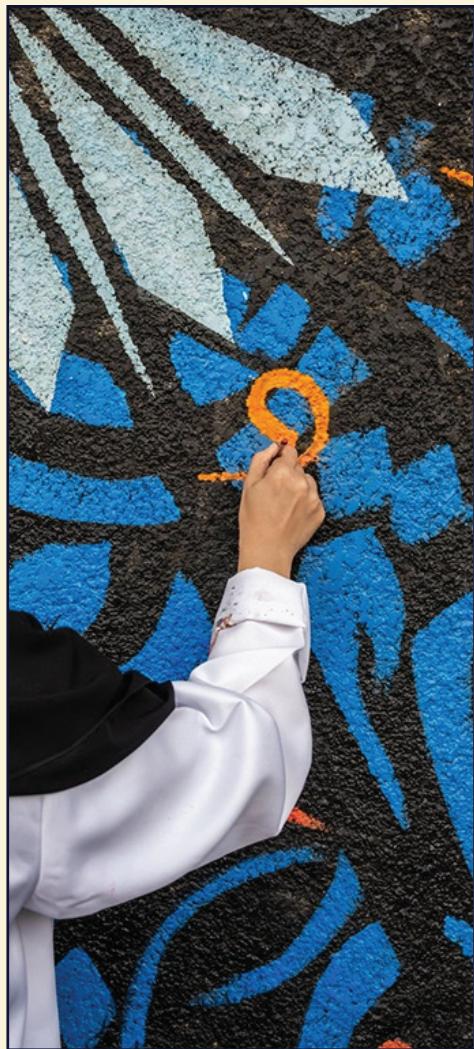
## A Global Statesman

**Don't waste your time  
in anger, regrets, worries,  
and grudges.  
Life is too short to be unhappy**

Roy T. Bennett



## VIBRANT SOCIETY



## Thriving Economy



## Ambitious Nation



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# Editor's Note

## When Governance Sinks with the Floodwaters

Punjab is reeling under one of the worst floods in its recent history. Nearly ten million people have been displaced. Homes have vanished under water, livelihoods washed away, and families left without food, shelter, or medicine. Women, children, and the elderly sit exposed under the open sky, waiting for relief that rarely arrives.

History teaches us that natural disasters are followed by outbreaks of disease and social dislocation. Yet, in Pakistan, the response of our political and economic elite remains disturbingly indifferent.

Media discourse remains focused on gated communities in Lahore. Political leadership is preoccupied with optics and image-building. Policy circles are consumed with extensions, appointments, and institutional turf wars. Meanwhile, the affected communities require the most basic of essentials: tents, fodder for livestock, medicines, and a single meal a day.

This contrast is not simply tragic; it is symptomatic of a deeper failure of governance. The “corridors of power” have become increasingly detached from the realities of rural Pakistan, where resilience is stretched to its breaking point. The lexicon of “stakeholders,” “civil society,” and “rule of law” means little to those whose crops, cattle, and shelters have been swallowed by the floodwaters.

For boardrooms, policymakers, and institutional leaders, the message is clear: crises of this scale demand more than charity drives and photo opportunities. They require strategic attention—investment in disaster preparedness, resilient infrastructure, community health systems, and an accountable framework for relief distribution.

If Pakistan’s leadership—political, corporate, and military—fails to realign its priorities, public trust will erode further and once that trust collapses, so too does the legitimacy that sustains every institution.



# Compassionate Leadership

## ***Being Compassionate is key to build Successful Companies.***

It's hard to make better decisions faster when a company's culture lacks trust and empathy. At the age of 30, I came across a book called The Art of Happiness. It's about the teachings of the Dalai Lama. That's how I first learned the difference between empathy and compassion. Empathy is feeling what another living thing feels. Compassion is putting yourself in the shoes of another person and seeing the world through their lens for the sake of alleviating their suffering.

Though most people in western society typically use the two words interchangeably, there is a fundamental difference. The Dalai Lama explains it this way: Picture yourself walking along a mountainous trail. You come across a person being crushed by a boulder on their chest. The empathetic response would be to feel the same sense of crushing suffocation, thus rendering you helpless. The compassionate response would be to recognizing that person in pain and doing everything within your power to remove the boulder and alleviate their

suffering. Put another way, compassion is empathy plus action.

That was a pretty profound realization for me, so much so that that book has remained a fixture on my nightstand ever since. It was my introduction to the meaning of compassion. However, it wouldn't be until several years later that I had the opportunity to put it into practice. In 2001, with the encouragement of my then boss and mentor, Terry Semel, I moved to Silicon Valley and became an executive at Yahoo. A journalist once described my management style at Yahoo as "wielding his fierce intelligence as a blunt instrument." At least the first part was flattering.

**Compassion is putting yourself in the shoes of another person and seeing the world through their lens for the sake of alleviating their suffering**

Though I was not a yeller, I was pretty intense. If I saw something in a presentation that did not make sense, I could barrage the team with

questions. I would listen with the intent to reply, and not seek to understand. I expected other people to do things the way I did and grew frustrated when they did not. Over time, I realized how unproductive this approach was. Rather than inspire and lift people up, it was a good way to shut people down.

**It is hard to make better decisions faster when people on the team lack trust in one another and are constantly questioning each other's motivations**

So, I decided to change. I vowed that as long as I would be responsible for managing other people, I would aspire to manage compassionately. That meant pausing, and being a spectator to my own thoughts, especially when getting emotional. It meant walking a mile in the other person's shoes; and understanding their hopes, their fears, their strengths and their weaknesses. And it meant doing everything within my power to set them up to be successful.

I have now been practicing this approach for well over a decade. And I can tell you with absolute conviction that managing compassionately is not just a better way to build a team, it is a better way to build a company. I have three examples based on my experience at LinkedIn.

The first example is how Reid Hoffman transitioned me into the company. Reid is not only the visionary founder of LinkedIn; he is one of the most thoughtful people I know. In 2008, when I joined, we had agreed I would start as interim president to preserve our options. The night before I began, I called Reid, and asked, "So how is this going to work? You still have the title of CEO, I am going to be interim president. Which decisions should I make and which decisions will you make?"

He said, "That's easy, it is your ball. You run with it." I was like, "What?" He said, "Yeah. I just went through this with the previous CEO and want to avoid making the same mistakes."

But Reid went further than establishing clear lines of authority. For the first 10 or so weeks I was at LinkedIn, Reid was out of the office for at least eight of them. He scheduled conferences and travel because he understood that as the founder of the company, if he were still around, people would reflexively go to him for decisions, instead of me. So, he removed himself from the situation altogether until I could build that connective tissue myself. Talk about managing compassionately. I hope all of you meet someone equally invested in your success. It will make all the difference.

That's the first example. The second example is less a story than it is an observation.

The long-term value of a company is based on the speed and quality of its decision-making. It is hard to make better decisions faster when people on the team lack trust in one another and are constantly questioning each other's motivations. In an environment like that, you will spend most of your time navigating corporate politics, rather than focusing on the task at hand. I have been there, and it is no fun.



Contributed by:  
Jeff Weiner  
Executive Chairman at LinkedIn



# DEVELOPING A SUSTAINABLE E-LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The rapid growth of online education has brought numerous benefits, but it also raises concerns about environmental sustainability. As institutions increasingly adopt eLearning platforms, it's essential to consider the ecological footprint of these digital ecosystems. A sustainable eLearning environment requires a holistic approach, integrating technology, resource management, stakeholder engagement, and continuous evaluation.

## Leveraging Energy-Efficient Technology

The backbone of a sustainable eLearning environment lies in its technological infrastructure. Cloud-based Learning Management Systems (LMSs) eliminate the need for energy-intensive on-site servers, reducing the energy demands of individual institutions. Energy-efficient devices, such as laptops and tablets with Energy Star certifications, further minimize power consumption. Software optimization also plays a critical role, with lightweight applications that require less processing power enhancing performance while conserving energy.

**Replacing printed textbooks with eBooks, PDFs, and online materials eliminates paper waste and the environmental costs associated with production and distribution**

## Promoting Digital Resources

Transitioning from physical to digital resources is a cornerstone of sustainable eLearning. Replacing printed textbooks with eBooks, PDFs, and online materials eliminates paper waste and the environmental costs associated with production and distribution. Open Educational Resources (OER) offer a cost-effective and eco-friendly alternative to proprietary materials, providing freely accessible content that can be adapted without significant resource expenditure.



## Encouraging Sustainable Practices

Sustainable eLearning extends beyond technology to encompass the practices of educators and learners. Virtual classrooms and asynchronous learning options reduce carbon emissions associated with travel and minimize prolonged device usage. Integrating sustainability education into curricula fosters eco-conscious behaviors among learners, teaching them to adopt habits such as powering down devices when not in use or optimizing settings for energy efficiency.

## Optimizing Accessibility and Inclusion

A sustainable eLearning environment must be inclusive, avoiding resource inefficiencies caused by redundant content creation. Implementing Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles ensures that materials are accessible to diverse learners, incorporating features like captions, screen-reader compatibility, and adjustable formats. Localized content reduces the need for external resources while enhancing learner engagement.

## Minimizing Data and Energy Waste

Efficient data management is critical to reducing the environmental impact of eLearning. Compressing multimedia files lowers bandwidth usage and energy consumption during content delivery. Scheduling access to content during off-peak energy hours can further alleviate strain on power grids. Regular maintenance of platforms ensures optimal performance, preventing energy waste from outdated or inefficient systems.

## Engaging Stakeholders

The success of a sustainable eLearning environment depends on the active participation of all stakeholders. Educators must be trained in sustainable practices, and learners should be encouraged to adopt eco-friendly habits. Partnerships with green vendors, including hosting services that prioritize renewable energy, further enhance sustainability.

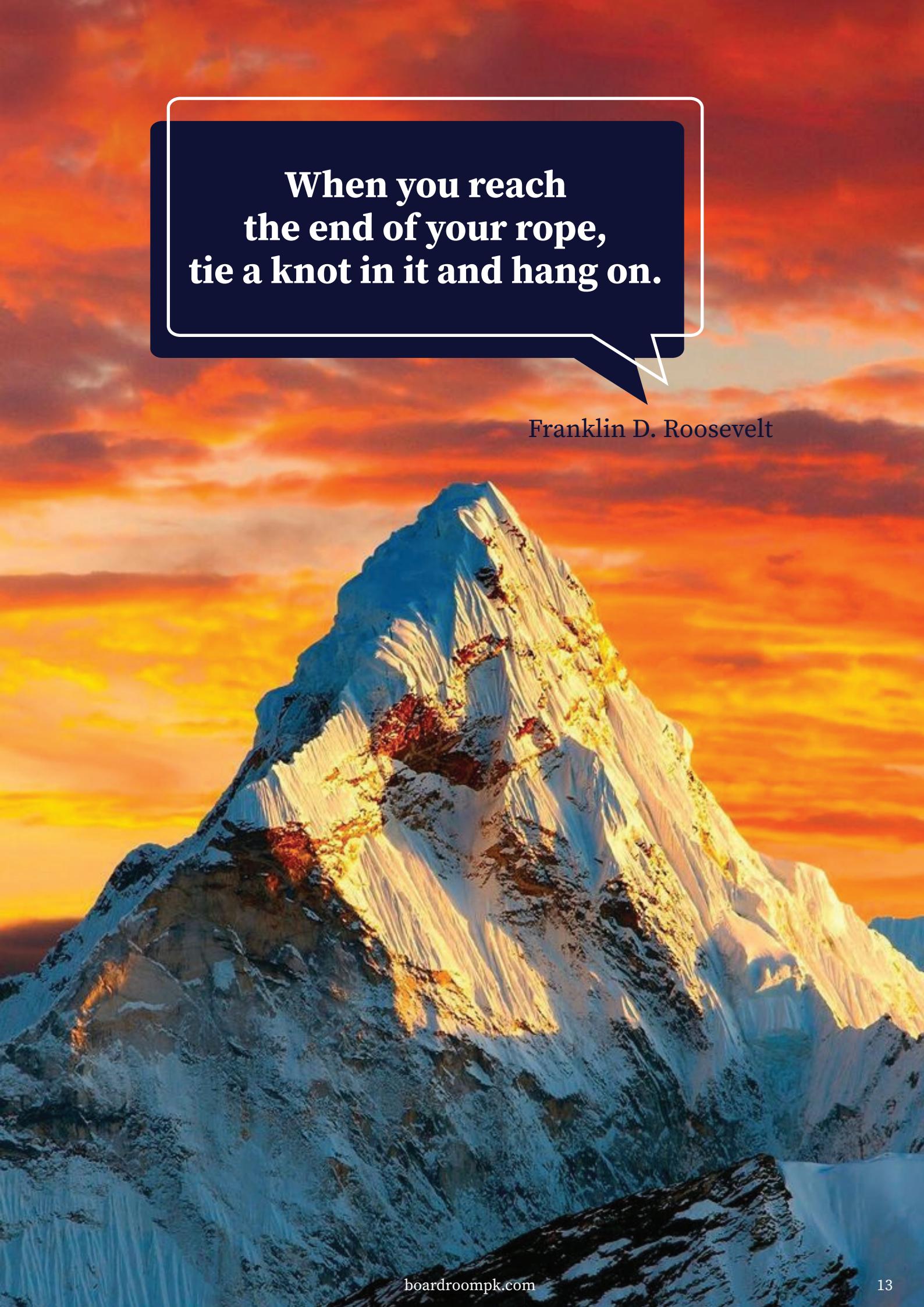
## Monitoring and Evaluating Impact

Continuous evaluation is essential to ensure the long-term sustainability of eLearning environments. Institutions should track energy usage, calculate carbon footprint, and gather feedback from learners and educators to identify areas for improvement. Publicly reporting sustainability metrics promotes accountability and encourages ongoing commitment to eco-friendly practices.

Building a sustainable eLearning environment requires a multifaceted approach as the demand for online education continues to grow, embracing sustainability in eLearning is not only an ethical imperative but also a practical strategy for fostering resilient, inclusive, and eco-conscious learning ecosystems.

**Contributed by:**

**Mr. Afaq Ahmed**  
**Educationist**



**When you reach  
the end of your rope,  
tie a knot in it and hang on.**

Franklin D. Roosevelt

# REDEFINING THE GAME

Mr. Zeeshan Ijaz

Council Member - ICAP,  
Tax Partner - KPMG  
Taseer Hadi & Co,  
Lahore



**Boardroom: What key milestones or experiences have most significantly shaped your career path?**

**Zeeshan Ijaz:** Throughout my career, two influences have played a defining role in shaping my professional journey: my mentors and my alma mater, the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Pakistan (ICAP), which I proudly regard as my mother institution. The values, discipline, and vision instilled by ICAP laid the foundation for my growth, while my mentors provided the guidance and perspective needed to navigate challenges and opportunities alike.

At every important juncture of my professional career the wisdom and encouragement of my visionary seniors helped me recognize the importance of staying the course. Their belief in my potential inspired me to rise to the challenge, enabling me to contribute meaningfully to both ICAP and KPMG. That turning point not only defined my career path but also reaffirmed my commitment to leadership, excellence, and service to the profession.

**Boardroom: Could you share insights into your career transition from a tax expert to a leadership role at ICAP?**

**Zeeshan Ijaz:** My focus had always been on excelling in my field as a hardcore tax specialist. However, it was the encouragement of my well-wishers and professional peers that compelled me to contest the ICAP elections and contribute for the betterment of my mother institute and its fraternity.

To my honor, I secured the second-highest number of votes an outcome that was both humbling and significant. This strong mandate reinforced my belief that professional integrity and performance speak volumes.

Serving as council member for the term 2022 –2025 (and serving as the Vice President for the 2024), I remain committed to contributing meaningfully to the profession and to ICAP's continued evolution as a progressive, forward-thinking institution.

**Boardroom: What led you to specialize in tax, considering other areas like audit were also options?**

**Zeeshan Ijaz:** I owe my career path in taxation to my mentors; Mr. Farid ud din, Mr. Danish Kamal and Mr. Kamran Butt, who guided me with visionary leadership and deep insights into the profession's future. Apart from that my past and present colleagues have played an important role in my professional career and growth.

Taxation is incredibly dynamic and intellectually stimulating filled with both innovation and challenge. It aligns perfectly with my competitive spirit, which has always driven me, whether in my profession or in sports. This mindset has enabled me to contribute meaningfully at KPMG, including expanding into direct taxation, navigating the complexities of other jurisdictions, and helping clients address increasingly sophisticated tax challenges.

**Boardroom: Keeping in view the tax evasion mindset, how do you balance client advocacy with regulatory compliance in an evolving fiscal landscape?**

**Zeeshan Ijaz:** I hold a different view on the general perception that the business community lacks regulatory compliance. I firmly believe that our business community is sincere and committed to contributing to Pakistan through taxes. However, as professionals, we have sometimes fallen short in equipping them with effective tax planning and management tools, and in addressing their concerns proactively. Fortunately, we are now seeing a growing presence of professionals dedicated to guiding businesses in full in accordance with the law.

**Boardroom: How do you believe qualifications and expertise impact the integrity and professionalism of tax consultants, and what role do these factors play in maintaining trust in the profession?**

**Zeeshan Ijaz:** Challenges exist in every sector, whether public or private. While academic qualifications and technical expertise are

essential and provide a solid foundation, they are not sufficient on their own to ensure professionalism or integrity. The real differentiator is the ethical framework a professional adheres to. It is one's values; honesty, transparency, and commitment to doing the right thing, that truly guide behavior and decision-making in practice.

If a tax consultant chooses to uphold integrity as a core principle, no amount of external pressure or complexity can compromise their professional conduct. On the other hand, without a clear moral compass, even the most prestigious degrees or years of experience cannot guarantee ethical behavior. It is this alignment of knowledge with strong ethics that fosters trust and credibility in the profession.

#### **Boardroom: How do you differentiate between local companies and MNCs in terms of organizational behavior?**

**Zeeshan Ijaz:** Over the years, we have seen a notable shift in the organizational behavior of local companies, bringing them closer in alignment with global standards. This evolution has been driven by several key factors: the rapid advancement in technology, the emergence of a second generation of business leaders who are often foreign-educated, and growing market competition.

These dynamics have encouraged local businesses to adopt more structured, ethical, and professional management practices. The increasing awareness and enforcement of compliance and regulatory frameworks have also played a crucial role. Additionally, Pakistan's rising entrepreneurial culture has infused a fresh energy and openness into the corporate ecosystem. I believe we are on a positive trajectory, local companies are becoming more transparent, better governed, and increasingly competitive on both local and international fronts.

#### **Boardroom: What role ICAP as an institution has played in transformation of Pakistan's modern business ecosystem?**

**Zeeshan Ijaz:** Before discussing the ICAP role, I

would like to share with pride that ICAP has been recognized and benchmarked by a UK-based leading global accounting body for its syllabus, teaching methodologies, and modules, and has been declared equivalent to international standards. It is also a matter of national pride that the integrity and confidentiality of our systems and processes are not only recognized globally but also ranked among the best in Pakistan.

As far as our role is concerned that is very candid and defined; to strengthen Pakistan's accounting ecosystem by developing equivalent models with leading global accountancy qualifications, such as those from Canada, Wales, and the UK, enabling our professionals to earn these certifications by passing just 2-3 additional papers.

Over the past 20 to 25 years, ICAP itself has undergone a significant transformation. From its inception in 1961 until 2010, the Institute had around 5,000 members. However, between 2010 and 2025, the membership has grown by an additional 7,500, an impressive increase within just 15 years. This growth reflects the global demand for our professionals. Today, Pakistani chartered accountants are securing high-profile roles both locally and internationally. ICAP has aligned its training with the evolving needs of the business world, emphasizing technology, quality assurance, ethics, and international best practices. These competencies are now essential for success, particularly in the context of the sophisticated and structured environments of MNCs compared to many local organizations.

#### **Boardroom: Pakistan's tax system continues to face criticism for complexity and inefficiency. What structural reforms do you think are most urgent?**

**Zeeshan Ijaz:** To me there are four (04) key areas of focus:

1. Deleting a separate category for non-filers as this category grants a form of amnesty to tax evaders. It also undermines the integrity of the tax system and should be abolished.
2. Inclusion of currently under-taxed or

untaxed sectors such as retail, agriculture, and real estate. Expanding the tax net is critical to ensuring fairness and equity in revenue collection.

3. There must be a targeted approach that will distinguish between compliant taxpayers and habitual evaders, proposing stricter enforcement and differentiated mechanisms to address each group appropriately.
4. The importance of bringing the undocumented economy into the formal sector is inevitable. The current lack of documentation places an undue burden on compliant taxpayers and limits the government's revenue potential.

**Boardroom: How ICAP & KPMG support FBR in policy implementation, digital transformation, and broadening the tax base?**

**Zeeshan Ijaz:** At KPMG, we actively engage with the FBR in tax policy formulation and represent clients across various sectors, helping to navigate the multifaceted tax landscape of Pakistan. Our role involves offering strategic input to ensure that policies are both practical and aligned with the evolving needs of the economy.

From ICAP's perspective, I take great pride in the growing recognition of chartered accountants within the public sector. For the first time in Pakistan's history, chartered accountants have been appointed as members of the tax appellate tribunals, a significant step that reflects FBR's confidence in our profession's technical expertise and integrity.

Furthermore, ICAP is set to co-host a National Tax Dialogue in collaboration with FBR, bringing together key stakeholders from both domestic and international platforms. This initiative underscores the credibility ICAP has built over the years and its commitment to contributing meaningfully to Pakistan's tax reforms and digital transformation.

**Boardroom: How do you balance energy, maintain motivation, and manage stress while fulfilling the demands of a challenging role at ICAP and in your other professional endeavors?**

**Zeeshan Ijaz:** To stay motivated, it's essential to genuinely enjoy what you do because all motivation begins with your mindset. In any professional environment, especially one as dynamic and complex as taxation, perfection is rare. The real differentiator lies in how you perceive and respond to challenges.

If you view obstacles as misery, you risk falling into self-pity, which hinders progress. However, when you approach the same challenges as opportunities, you cultivate a solution-oriented mindset that drives growth and innovation.

It's also important to recognize that we operate in a highly competitive world; no one is indispensable. This awareness helps me stay focused, and continuously evolving, both in my role at ICAP and in my broader professional journey.

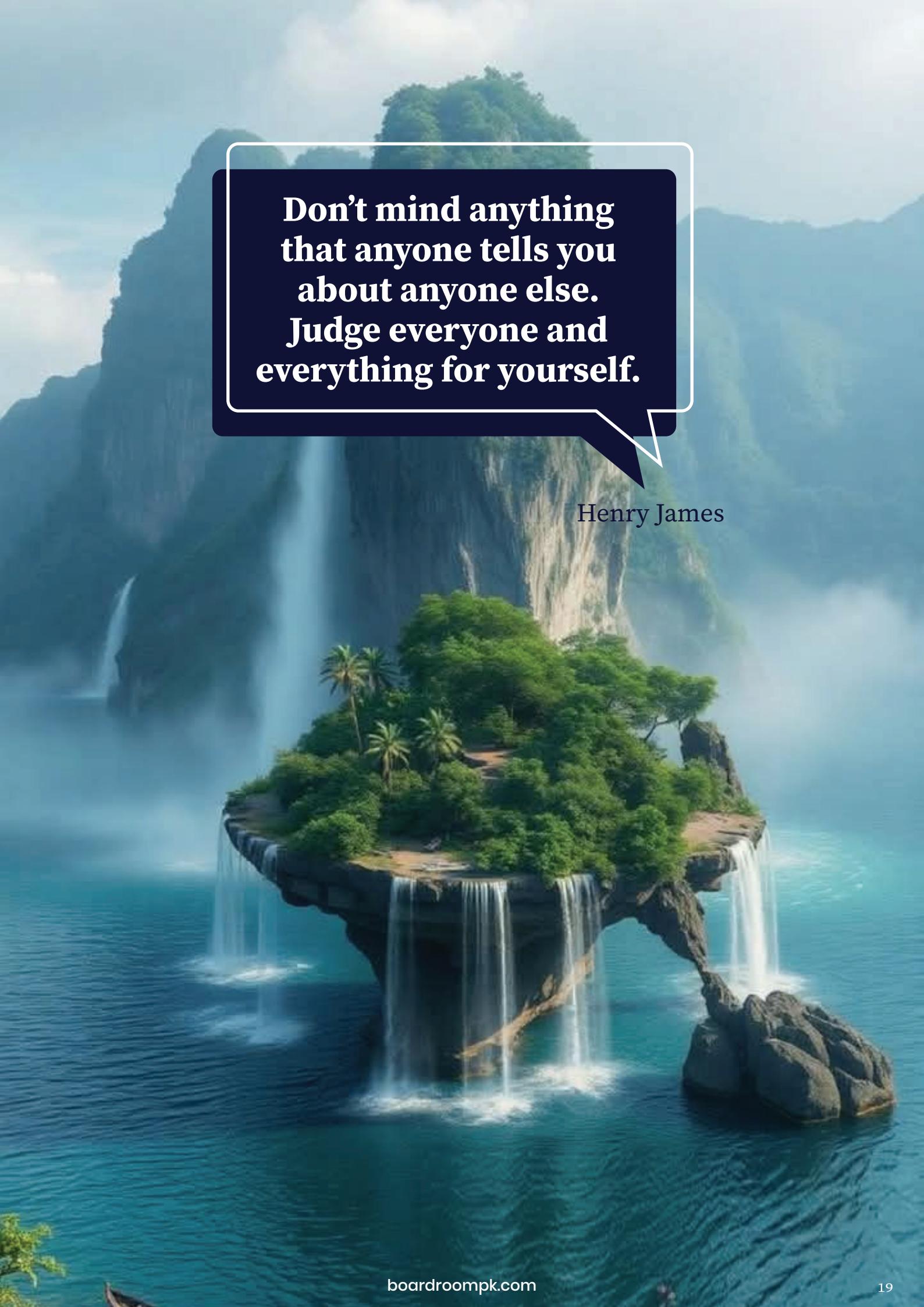
**Boardroom: What's your advice to young professionals entering the accounting and tax advisory profession today?**

**Zeeshan Ijaz:** First and foremost, I would advise young professionals to take genuine interest in their work and approach it with a sense of purpose. Remember, while you may have expectations from your organization, the organization equally expects integrity, professionalism, and commitment from you.

Secondly, always maintain a positive mindset. Skills and capabilities can be developed over time, but negativity not only hampers personal growth, it also disrupts the professional environment around you.

Thirdly, understand that workplace dynamics, including internal politics, are a reality in every organization. Rather than being discouraged by it, treat it as part of a healthy competitive environment that encourages learning, resilience, and growth.

Lastly, be patient with your career progression. Growth is a gradual process. I began as a student, moved up to become a manager, and today I serve as a partner at the same firm. It took time, dedication, and persistence to reach where I am today.



**Don't mind anything  
that anyone tells you  
about anyone else.  
Judge everyone and  
everything for yourself.**

Henry James

# World Bank

## The Real Change Maker



The World Bank is a pivotal institution in the realm of global economics, functioning as both a barometer and an influencer of economic health across nations. Its role extends beyond mere financial assistance, encompassing a broad spectrum of activities that include data analysis, policy advice, and the sharing of best practices, all aimed at fostering sustainable economic development.

### The World Bank's Role in Global Economics

The World Bank plays a crucial role in supporting sustainable development globally. By providing economic assistance, the institution seeks to mitigate poverty and strengthen economic growth. Its efforts to understand and shape economic prospects are critical in navigating the complexities of the modern world. The Bank's insights into global

economic innovation and technology adoption are particularly valuable, as it leverages advancements to drive productivity and competitiveness.

## Key Initiatives and Reforms

Under the leadership of President Ajay Banga, the World Bank has embarked on an "evolution agenda" to expand its traditional development and anti-poverty mission to include fighting climate change and other global crises. Some notable initiatives and reforms include

**Private Sector Investment Lab:** Launched in June 2023, this lab aims to mobilize private capital and has already made several recommendations that have been implemented, including consolidating all guarantee programs under one platform.

**Balance Sheet Optimization:** The World Bank has optimized its balance sheet by lowering its equity-to-loan ratio, allowing it to take on more risk and boost lending capacity.

**Guarantee Platform:** A new guarantee platform is being rolled out to deliver simplicity, improved access, and faster payment execution, with the goal of tripling annual guarantee issuances to \$20 billion by 2030.

**Crisis Preparedness and Response:** The World Bank is expanding its Crisis Preparedness and Response Toolkit to help developing countries better respond to crises and build resilience against future shocks.

## Challenges and Opportunities

Despite these efforts, the World Bank faces significant challenges, including

**Climate Change:** The Bank's mission has expanded to include tackling climate change, but its progress has been slow, and it remains to be seen how effectively it can address this global challenge.

**Shareholder Tensions:** The World Bank's largest shareholder, the United States, has significant influence over the institution's direction, and changes in US leadership can impact the Bank's priorities and operations.

**Private Capital Mobilization:** The World Bank's track record on private capital mobilization remains weak, and it needs to learn from past experiences to improve its effectiveness.

## Impact and Future Directions

The World Bank's impact on global economics is multifaceted. Its financial assistance has helped many countries invest in essential areas such as education, health, and infrastructure, which are critical for long-term growth. However, the Bank's influence is not without controversy, and critics argue that the conditions attached to its funding can sometimes lead to austerity measures that may harm the most vulnerable populations.

As the World Bank continues to evolve and adapt to changing global circumstances, it is essential that it prioritizes transformational change on climate, poverty, and inequality. With a growing recognition of the need for a better Bank, the institution has the opportunity to make a lasting impact on the world.

**Global Cooperation:** The World Bank plays a critical role in promoting global cooperation and addressing issues like climate change and pandemics that transcend borders.

**Innovative Financing:** The Bank is exploring innovative financing instruments, such as hybrid capital and securitization, to raise funds and mobilize private capital.

**Knowledge Sharing:** The World Bank is refocusing on its knowledge mechanism, bringing experts to the forefront of its country-driven model to craft focused development plans.

In conclusion, the World Bank is a change maker in the world of global economics, with a critical role in promoting sustainable development and addressing global challenges. While it faces significant challenges and opportunities, the Bank has the potential to make a lasting impact on the world. With its commitment to innovation, knowledge sharing, and global cooperation, the World Bank is poised to continue shaping the future of global economics.



President of  
People's Republic of China

**Xi Jinping**

A Man with a Vision of  
**Global Partnership**



## **Xi Jinping: A Global Statesman**

The world saw a leader who carried himself with calm pragmatism, when Xi Jinping assumed the presidency of the People's Republic of China in 2013. Few, however, could have foreseen the sweeping transformation that would follow. Over a decade later, Xi stands not only as the most influential Chinese leader in recent memory but also as a defining figure on the global stage, steering his nation into an era marked by ambition, innovation, and growing self-assurance.

Xi's influence stretches far beyond China's borders. Central to his vision is the idea of "win-win cooperation," a philosophy rooted in respect, equality, and shared growth. At a time when international politics is often clouded by division, Xi projects an alternative vision, one of global partnership where prosperity is not monopolized by a few but extended to many.

By leveraging platforms such as BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Xi has positioned China as a leading voice for the Global South. His approach, which emphasizes development without political strings attached, has drawn the attention of nations seeking alternatives to traditional power structures. For many, Xi represents not just the leader of China but a trusted partner advocating for a more balanced and interconnected world.

### **Roots of Resilience**

Xi Jinping's early life was shaped by both privilege and hardship. During the Cultural Revolution, his family suffered political persecution, and as a teenager, Xi was sent to live in the countryside in Shaanxi province. There, he endured years of hard labor, living in caves, and working alongside farmers. His journey from rural hardship to the presidency is a story of persistence—one that resonates with millions of Chinese citizens.

### **The Chinese Dream**

At the heart of Xi Jinping's leadership is his vision of the "Chinese Dream", a powerful idea of national rejuvenation, prosperity, and unity.

For Xi, this dream means more than economic growth; it is about restoring China's place as a confident and respected global power while ensuring that every citizen shares in the country's progress.

This vision has already borne fruit. Under his leadership, China announced in 2020 that it had eliminated extreme poverty, lifting nearly 100 million people above the poverty line. For Xi, this achievement was not just a statistic—it was a promise kept to millions of families who now enjoy better living standards and greater opportunities.

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**By leveraging platforms such as BRICS and SCO, Xi has positioned China as a leading voice for the Global South**

### **A Leader of Ambition and Action**

Xi is often described as a leader who marries vision with action. Soon after assuming office, he launched sweeping reforms and campaigns to strengthen governance, discipline the Communist Party, and restore people's trust in leadership. His anti-corruption drives punished officials at every level, reinforcing the idea that no one is above accountability.



On the world stage, Xi introduced the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in 2013, an ambitious project that has built roads, railways, ports, and energy networks across continents. For partner countries, the BRI represents new opportunities for growth; for China, it demonstrates Xi's belief in shared prosperity and global cooperation.

### **Innovation and Modernization**

Xi Jinping's era has also been defined by rapid advances in technology, infrastructure, and science. From leading the world in high-speed rail to pioneering green energy and space exploration, China under Xi is pushing the boundaries of innovation.

His call for "self-reliance in science and

technology" has inspired a new generation of Chinese innovators to lead in fields like artificial intelligence, 5G, and renewable energy. For Xi, modernization is not only about catching up with the world but about setting new standards for the future.

### **The Road Ahead**

As Xi embarks on his third term, his leadership remains anchored in stability, long-term planning, and the unwavering pursuit of the Chinese Dream. He has called for "common prosperity," ensuring that growth is balanced and inclusive. His determination to build a modern socialist nation by 2049, the centenary of the People's Republic, underscores his belief in a bright future for China and its people.

# THE FUTURE OF WORK: SECURE CAREERS TO CONSIDER





### Contributed by: Boardroom Editorial Team

As we navigate the ever-changing job market, it's essential to identify careers that offer stability and growth. Experts point to certain fields that are likely to remain secure in the coming years, driven by technological advancements, demographic shifts, and evolving business needs. Here are some of the most secure careers to consider:

#### **Cybersecurity Professionals:**

With the rise of digital threats, cybersecurity experts are in high demand. Roles like Cybersecurity Analyst, Ethical Hacker, and Information Security Officer are expected to grow rapidly, with salaries ranging from \$90,000 to \$180,000 per year.

#### **Cloud Solutions Architects:**

As companies adopt cloud technology, professionals with expertise in cloud architecture are in demand. Average salaries range from \$120,000 to \$200,000 per year, with growth opportunities in cloud migration and management.

#### **Product Managers:**

Companies need leaders to manage high-tech products, with average salaries ranging from \$100,000 to \$180,000 per year.

#### **Healthcare Professionals:**

The aging population and growing health awareness drive demand for healthcare professionals. Roles like Nurses, Home Health Aides, Medical Technicians, and Mental Health Counselors are essential, with salaries varying by specialty and location.

#### **Data Science and Analytics:**

With businesses relying on data-driven decisions, Data Scientists and Analysts are crucial. Average salaries range from \$100,000 to \$150,000 per year, with growth prospects in various industries.

#### **Software Developers:**

With the ongoing tech expansion, Software Developers are in high demand, particularly in AI, Web3, and Blockchain. Salaries range from \$80,000 to \$180,000 per year.

#### **AI and Machine Learning Specialists:**

As AI transforms industries, professionals with expertise in AI and ML are sought after. Careers like AI Engineer, ML Developer, and Prompt Engineer are projected to grow, with average salaries between \$120,000 to \$200,000 per year.

#### **Sustainability and Renewable Energy Experts:**

As companies focus on sustainability, roles like Solar Engineers, Environmental Scientists, and Carbon Auditors are gaining importance, with salaries ranging from \$80,000 to \$150,000 per year.

#### **Robotics and Automation Engineers:**

Industry 4.0 drives demand for Robotics and Automation Engineers, with average salaries between \$90,000 to \$160,000 per year.

# SHARP, SMART, STYLED

Mr. Noman Zakir  
CEO, Rici Melion



**Boardroom:** Tell us about the inception of Rici Melion. What inspired you to enter the luxury fashion industry, and how did the journey begin?

**Noman Zakir:** The journey of Rici Melion began with a strong passion for redefining luxury fashion in Pakistan. I noticed a gap in the market where true bespoke tailoring and premium fashion experiences were missing. Inspired by timeless elegance and European craftsmanship, I aimed to create a brand that blends classic tailoring with modern design. What started as a vision turned into a mission to bring world-class quality and personalized service to clients who value sophistication. The journey was full of challenges, but the commitment to excellence and creativity laid the foundation for what Rici Melion is today.

**Boardroom:** As a luxury menswear and womenswear brand, how do you define “luxury” in the context of Pakistani fashion?

**Noman Zakir:** In the context of Pakistani fashion, we define luxury through design, fit, and quality our three unwavering promises. At Rici Melion, every piece is crafted with meticulous attention to detail, combining elegance with individuality. Luxury, to us, is not about a price tag; it's about how a garment looks, feels, and fits and how it reflects the wearer's personality. True luxury lies in the experience of wearing something that's thoughtfully designed, precisely tailored, and made to last.

**Boardroom:** What challenges did you face in positioning Rici Melion as a premium brand in a competitive and evolving market like Pakistan?

**Noman Zakir:** One major challenge was educating people about true luxury and bespoke fashion, as many were used to ready-made clothing. Building trust and setting ourselves apart in a competitive market wasn't easy. We also had to maintain high quality while introducing something new. But with consistency, strong branding, and a clear vision, we slowly built Rici Melion as a trusted premium brand.

**Boardroom:** How involved are you in the design and creative process, and what ensures that every Rici Melion piece aligns with your brand ethos?

**Noman Zakir:** I stay closely involved in the design and creative process because it's important that every piece reflects Rici Melion's identity. From concept to final detailing, I review and guide the team to ensure our work stays true to our brand values—elegance, precision, and individuality. Regular discussions, mood boards, and quality checks help maintain this standard across all collections.

**True luxury lies in the experience of wearing something that's thoughtfully designed, precisely tailored, and made to last**

**Boardroom:** Your clientele includes discerning individuals with a taste for exclusivity. How do you maintain a consistent customer experience across all touchpoints?

**Noman Zakir:** We focus on delivering a personalized and seamless experience at every stage—from the first interaction to the final product delivery. Our team is trained to understand each client's preferences and provide tailored service. Attention to detail, consistent communication, and high-quality standards help us maintain the same level of excellence across all touchpoints, whether it's in-store or online.

**Boardroom:** Rici Melion has grown significantly in recent years. What key business strategies have helped you scale while preserving brand integrity?

**Noman Zakir:** Our growth has been driven by a clear focus on quality, consistency, and brand identity. We scaled by expanding gradually—opening flagship stores in prime locations and investing in a strong digital presence. At the same time, we maintained

strict control over design, production, and customer service. This helped us grow without compromising the exclusivity and standards Rici Melion is known for.

**Pakistan's fashion industry has huge untapped potential globally, especially in craftsmanship and textile quality**

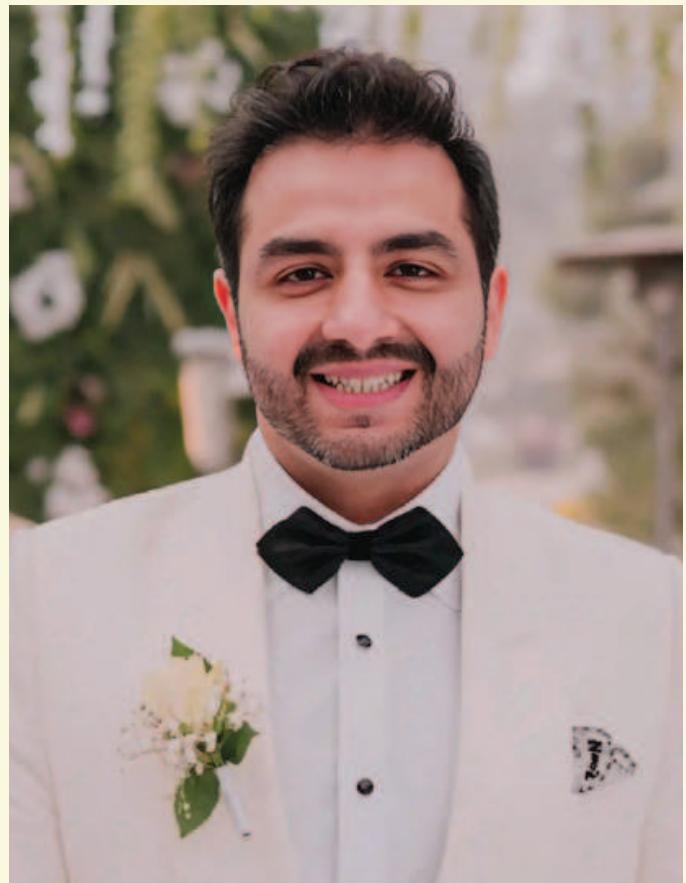
**Boardroom:** Do you believe Pakistan's fashion industry has untapped potential on the global stage? How is Rici Melion contributing to that vision?

**Noman Zakir:** Yes, Pakistan's fashion industry has huge untapped potential globally, especially in craftsmanship and textile quality. At Rici Melion, we're showcasing this talent through world-class tailoring, modern design, and premium service. By maintaining international standards and introducing Pakistani luxury fashion to global audiences, we aim to put Pakistan on the map for bespoke excellence and creative fashion.

**Boardroom:** What role does innovation—whether in technology, fabric, or customer engagement—play in your business model?

**Noman Zakir:** Innovation is a key part of our business model. We constantly explore new fabrics, modern tailoring techniques, and digital tools to improve both product quality and customer experience. From using advanced measurements to enhancing online services, we aim to stay ahead of trends while staying true to our brand identity. Innovation helps us serve clients better and keep Rici Melion evolving.

**Understand your market, invest in strong branding, and never compromise on craftsmanship**



**Boardroom:** As a founder and CEO, what leadership principles guide your team building and decision-making approach??

**Noman Zakir:** My leadership is based on trust, clarity, and leading by example. I believe in building a team that shares the brand's vision and values. I encourage open communication, creativity, and accountability. In decision-making, I stay focused on long-term goals while staying flexible with new ideas. Every choice is made with the brand's integrity and growth in mind.

**Boardroom:** What advice would you offer to aspiring entrepreneurs who wish to build a high-end fashion brand in Pakistan or internationally?

**Noman Zakir:** My advice is to stay true to your vision and focus on quality from day one. Building a high-end brand takes time, patience, and consistency. Understand your market, invest in strong branding, and never compromise on craftsmanship. Most importantly, believe in your product and be ready to face challenges with a clear mindset and long-term commitment.

# Pakistan's Post-Flood Scenario

## A Tale of Social and Economic Despairs



The recent floods in Pakistan have left a trail of destruction, displacing millions and causing billions of dollars in economic losses. The country's social and economic fabric is severely strained, with the most vulnerable populations bearing the brunt of the disaster.

## Social Consequences

The floods have resulted in widespread displacement, with over 2 million people forced to flee their homes. Many are living in makeshift shelters, struggling to access basic necessities like food, water, and healthcare. Children are particularly vulnerable, with thousands facing malnutrition, disease, and disrupted education. The trauma and stress caused by the disaster will likely have long-term effects on the mental health of survivors.

## Economic Impact

The economic impact of the floods is staggering, with estimated damages and losses totaling \$30 billion. The agricultural sector, a backbone of Pakistan's economy, has been severely affected, with crops like cotton, rice, and wheat destroyed. This will likely lead to food shortages and price increases, exacerbating poverty and food insecurity. The textile industry, a significant contributor to Pakistan's exports, is also expected to suffer due to cotton losses.

## Infrastructure and Governance Challenges

Pakistan's infrastructure has been overwhelmed by the disaster, with roads, bridges, and utilities severely damaged. The government's response has been hampered by inadequate disaster management systems, corruption, and bureaucratic delays. The Federal Flood Commission, the country's central flood mitigation body, has been criticized for its ineffective management of flood risks.

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has been hampered by inadequate disaster management systems, corruption, and bureaucratic delays. The Federal Flood Commission, the country's central flood mitigation body, has been criticized for its ineffective management of flood risks.

## Way Forward

To address the social and economic collapse caused by the floods, Pakistan requires a multi-faceted approach. This includes:

**Immediate Relief:** Providing food, shelter, and healthcare to affected populations.

**Infrastructure Development:** Rebuilding and upgrading infrastructure to withstand future disasters.

**Economic Support:** Supporting affected businesses and industries, particularly agriculture and textiles.

**Economic Support:** Supporting affected businesses and industries, particularly agriculture and textiles.

**Disaster Preparedness:** Developing early warning systems and community-based disaster management.

**Governance Reforms:** Strengthening institutions and addressing corruption to ensure effective disaster response and management.

**The floods have resulted in widespread displacement, with over 2 million people forced to flee their homes**

In conclusion, the post-flood scenario in Pakistan demands a concerted effort from the government, international community, and civil society. By working together, we can help alleviate the suffering of affected populations and build a more resilient Pakistan.

# Romance between IMF and Pakistan



The relationship between the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and Pakistan is often described as a complex and cyclical dance. With 23 bailouts since 1958, Pakistan has become one of the IMF's most frequent clients. The latest \$7 billion Extended Fund Facility (EFF) agreement, designed to support Pakistan's economic stabilization efforts over 39 months, is just another chapter in this ongoing saga.

## A Necessary Partnership

Pakistan's economic challenges, including a large fiscal deficit, low tax revenue, and a vulnerable external sector, have made it difficult for the country to sustain its economy without external support. The IMF has stepped in to provide financial assistance, but this support comes with conditions. The EFF program requires Pakistan to implement structural reforms, such as increasing tax revenue, reducing energy subsidies, and improving governance.

## Conditions and Challenges

The IMF's conditions are often unpopular and difficult to implement. For instance, the recent agreement requires Pakistan to increase fuel prices and electricity tariffs, which can be challenging for a government trying to balance economic stability with social and political pressures. Despite these challenges, the IMF's support has been crucial in helping Pakistan avoid default and stabilize its economy.

## Recent Developments

In a significant development, the IMF recently approved a \$1 billion disbursement to Pakistan under the EFF program. This decision comes despite India's attempts to persuade the lender to withhold the funds. The approval highlights the complex geopolitics surrounding IMF loans and Pakistan's strategic importance in the region.

## Impact on Pakistan's Economy

The IMF's financial assistance has had a mixed impact on Pakistan's economy. On the one hand, it has helped stabilize the economy and avert default. On the other hand, the conditions

attached to the loans have often led to austerity measures that can be painful for the general population. The increase in fuel prices and electricity tariffs, for example, can lead to higher inflation and reduced economic activity.

## Future Prospects

The future of the IMF-Pakistan relationship will likely be shaped by Pakistan's ability to implement the required reforms and secure external financing. The IMF has indicated that it will review Pakistan's bailout once external financing is secured, which will be a critical step in determining the next phase of the EFF program.

## Key Statistics

**IMF Loans:** Pakistan has received 23 IMF bailouts since 1958, with the latest agreement worth \$7 billion.

**Debt:** Pakistan's outstanding debt to the IMF stands at \$7.4 billion, making it the fifth-largest debtor.

**Economic Challenges:** Pakistan faces significant economic challenges, including a large fiscal deficit, low tax revenue, and a vulnerable external sector.

**Recent agreement requires Pakistan to increase fuel prices and electricity tariffs, which can be challenging for a government trying to balance economic stability**

In conclusion, the romance between the IMF and Pakistan is a complex and multifaceted relationship. While the IMF's financial assistance has been crucial in helping Pakistan stabilize its economy, the conditions attached to the loans have often been challenging to implement. As Pakistan continues to navigate its economic challenges, the IMF's support will likely remain critical in shaping the country's economic future.





# Corporate Wellness: A Strategic Imperative for Modern Workplaces

In today's fast-paced and competitive business environment, employee well-being has emerged as a critical driver of organizational success. No longer seen as a "nice-to-have" benefit, corporate wellness—also referred to as workplace wellness—has evolved into a strategic priority that directly influences productivity, engagement, and long-term growth.

Forward-looking organizations increasingly recognize that healthier, happier employees are more motivated, more engaged, and more resilient. As a result, wellness initiatives are rapidly becoming embedded into progressive workplace cultures worldwide.

## What Is Corporate Wellness?

Corporate wellness refers to the structured initiatives, programs, and resources offered by organizations to enhance the physical, mental, emotional, and financial well-being of their employees.

This holistic approach moves beyond addressing health challenges. It fosters an environment where employees feel supported in achieving balance, making healthier lifestyle choices, and thriving both personally and professionally.

**Key dimensions of corporate wellness include:**

- Physical health through fitness programs, ergonomic support, and preventive screenings.
- Mental and emotional well-being via stress management tools, counseling services, and resilience training.
- Work-life balance supported by flexible policies and family-friendly benefits.
- Nutritional and financial health, equipping employees with resources to make smarter choices in their daily lives.

## What Are Corporate Wellness Programs?

Corporate wellness programs are structured strategies that empower organizations to prioritize employee health and create thriving workplaces. While many employers mistakenly

view wellness as limited to health issues, effective programs span across diverse areas, reflecting a company's mission, values, and culture. Whether implemented in multinational corporations or growing SMEs, wellness programs can be tailored to meet organizational needs and resources, making them scalable and inclusive.

# Core Components of Corporate Wellness Programs



## Physical Fitness

Fitness memberships, step challenges, exercise classes, and ergonomic assessments encourage employees to stay active and reduce sedentary behavior. Some companies partner with accredited fitness providers to ensure effective outcomes.

## Nutrition & Healthy Eating

Initiatives such as nutrition education, healthy cafeteria choices, and awareness campaigns promote healthier dietary habits.



## Mental Health Support

Counseling services, stress management workshops, resilience training, and awareness campaigns address growing concerns around mental health.

## Work-Life Balance

Flexible work arrangements and family-friendly policies help employees manage personal and professional responsibilities more effectively.



## Health Screenings & Prevention

Regular check-ups, biometric screenings, and vaccination drives promote early detection and intervention-improving long-term health outcomes.

## Health Education & Awareness

Workshops and seminars empower employees with the knowledge to make informed health decisions.



## Financial Wellness

Guidance on budgeting, saving, and stress management related to financial matters supports employees' overall stability.

## Wellness Challenges & Incentives

Step competitions, weight management programs, and reward-based challenges encourage participation and build a culture of healthy competition.





## Benefits of Corporate Wellness Programs

The business case for corporate wellness is undeniable. Organizations that invest in employee well-being enjoy measurable outcomes such as:

- Improved employee health and resilience
- Increased productivity and engagement
- Significant healthcare cost savings
- Enhanced ability to attract and retain top talent
- Stronger organizational culture and satisfaction levels
- Happier, more motivated employees

Corporate wellness is no longer an optional perk. It is a strategic imperative. By investing in comprehensive wellness programs, organizations not only safeguard the health of their workforce but also unlock higher levels of performance, loyalty, and innovation. In essence, healthier employees create healthier businesses.

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