



By Richard D. Czerniawski

## **WINNING MAKES A DIFFERENCE ON EVERYTHING**

At the time of your reading my musing, the winner of Super Bowl LIV has been decided. The outcome has been determined. There's first place, and there's, well, I'll let you fill in the blank. I refuse to use the word "loser," because each team is a champion of its conference—one for the National and the other for the American Conference. In other words, both teams are winners!

The impact of winning on a city is incredible and quite infectious. Residents of each city (and its suburbs), Kansas City and San Francisco, exhibit great pride and identify with their team's success. Regardless of whether they are fans of the game or not, residents feel and act like "winners." I vividly remember when the Chicago Bulls were perennial NBA champions. Whenever I'd introduce myself to people living outside of Chicago, they'd reflexively bring-up Michael Jordan and the Chicago Bulls. I was proud to be from Chicagoland.

My sister-in-law, who lives in Kansas City, informed my wife that a large part of the population is out and about wearing the Chiefs' colors—red and gold. She said that Talbots, where she works, sold out of red garments. Additionally, the supermarkets scheduled to close at 3:00 pm so its employees and the populace can gather around their television sets—to take front row in an anticipated viewership 99-million people—to watch the game. People identify with their home teams when they are winners.

It's no different in business. We identify with our companies and brands when they are winners. As the saying goes, "Success has many fathers (and mothers). Failure is an orphan." When a brand is successful, everyone climbs on the bandwagon to take credit for contributing to its success. However, when brands and companies falter, people retreat and are quick to assign blame to others.

When teams make it to the championship game, prices of tickets to games rise, they sell more team merchandise, and opposing players vie to play for winning teams. When it comes to brands and companies, winning attracts more investment—fuel for continued strong growth. Companies will increase support for winning brands, and the stock market will reward winning companies with higher P/E ratios and increased market capitalization. There's ample support, and supporters, for success! Additionally, winning attracts the best and brightest talent. Everyone wants to be part of a winning team.

On the other hand, losing has the opposite effect. In sports, it means losing season ticket holders, lower ticket pricing, and a decline in sales of team merchandise. Failing brands and companies repel

investment (internal and external) and result in a loss of talent. Managers leave for other brands and, even, companies. No one wants to be identified as a loser nor wants to play on a team that is no longer committed to winning (as evidenced not merely by the absence of additional funding but significant cutbacks).

It's not enough to play the game but to strive to be winners! Winning makes a difference on everything.

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