

# G Force

Governance. Let's take a moment, it is a heavy word, a sobering word. But what exactly is Governance? Governance in the workplace refers to the systems, policies, and processes that are in place to ensure that the organisation operates effectively, efficiently, and ethically. Effective workplace governance involves the establishment of clear roles and responsibilities for management and employees, transparent decision-making processes, and accountability mechanisms to ensure that all individuals are held responsible for their actions.

If we give ESG a sporting analogy we can see the role that Governance plays. Environment is the star striker, grabbing all the headlines and the one that everyone gravitates to, adored by fans all over the world. Social is the captain, the role of looking after the team and ensuring everyone can perform at their best, the bedrock of the team. Governance is the referee. No one turns up to see the referee, the referee has no one cheering them on in the stands and yet without the referee the whole game falls apart. Without Governance there is no one to make sure that E & S play by the rules or to stop the game becoming a farce.

We need effective Governance when it comes to our businesses ESG commitments. We can all write a great Environmental policy but if there is no Governance, if there is no one to make sure we adhere to the policies then it just becomes yet another piece of greenwash. We can have a great Social plan but without Governance does this plan slowly decline or fadeaway? Probably. I bet we can all think of a few instances of this happening. Governance needs people in the stands cheering them on, singing its praises, let's start rooting for the referee!



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When it comes to ESG in the workplace, who's responsibility is the Governance? Who makes for a good referee? Should it be based on seniority? Does it fall to team leaders? Maybe whoever is the most passionate about the cause? Or, perhaps no one? No referee, no Governor of Governance, no G Enforcer but instead the organisation itself. It is something that we must try to ingrain into the DNA of the company. A commitment to Governance must be included in training material for new starters, it has to be adopted by the longest serving and by those that feel that they are too long in the tooth to change. It must drip down from the top and be allowed to soak up from the bottom.

Almost every decision that a business or an employee of that business makes has an ESG cause related to it. Whether that be something small, from deciding to print an email to something as big as developing a building. Your policies right from Paper & Waste up to Suppliers and Transportation have been written but are they adhered to, every day and every time? Are these policies even common knowledge to staff? It is so important that we have robust and thorough Environmental Policies and that we have ambitious ESG aspirations, but it is vital that we stay strong and committed enough that we enforce these on a day-to-day basis. We need to educate and inspire our teams. We need to encourage and nurture a culture of wanting to follow policy and putting our ESG commitments at the forefront of our decision-making process. Governance drives this but Governance from everyone and not just the few. We need to become masters of Governance and when that happens, and only when that happens, we will be able feel the force.



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Today's Takeaway; Now, Better, Best

Have a think about how Governance is implemented in your workplace. Are your policies widely known throughout the company or do they just sit on an unread part of your website? Are your team or department leaders keeping tabs on how the policies are being adhered to and are they asking questions when they aren't?

A lot of businesses now have an appointed sustainability monitor, whether that be as an official role or voluntary. When appointing someone to this role, the key quality, is passion for the topic and a belief in the role they are playing. Ask these people what the attitudes of the people in the company are towards ESG. Are they being fully supported by everyone or do they have to do a lot of nagging to influence change? Many people that are in these roles will point to the latter. If your business is one of these then try to inspire a culture of change.

Accountability and transparency are key. Promote your policies so that everyone that works with you knows about them. Not only internally but also externally. Invite people to comment or challenge when they see instances of your policies not being followed. This will perhaps help us learn about our procedures and lead to discoveries of better efficiency.

Take control of your Governance and Govern it.