

# CASE STUDY EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Case Title:** *Bayer Leverkusen: Redefining Success in Modern Football*

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## **SUBJECT ORGANIZATION:**

Bayer 04 Leverkusen – A German professional football club known for its history of near-successes, which has now emerged as a leading example of strategic transformation in European football.

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## **SUMMARY:**

In the 2023-2024 season, Bayer Leverkusen defied expectations by completing an undefeated Bundesliga campaign under the leadership of manager Xabi Alonso. Known historically as a team that "always comes second," Leverkusen broke that narrative by winning their first-ever league title, along with reaching the finals of the DFB-Pokal and UEFA Europa League. The case explores the organizational, tactical, and cultural transformation that enabled this unprecedented success.

At the heart of the case is Fernando Carro, CEO of Bayer 04 Leverkusen, who must now decide how to consolidate the club's achievements. With increased global attention, top players drawing interest from elite clubs, and growing commercial potential, Leverkusen must balance sporting continuity with financial prudence. Moreover, the club faces uncertainty over Alonso's future amid interest from top-tier teams like Real Madrid and Liverpool

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## **EVENT TIMING:**

May 2024, following the conclusion of the Bundesliga season.

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## **CASE PROTAGONIST:**

Fernando Carro, CEO of Bayer 04 Leverkusen, leading the club's strategic, financial, and brand direction.

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**POTENTIAL DECISION POINT(S):**

1. How should Leverkusen retain key talent (including Xabi Alonso and top players) while managing wage discipline and transfer offers?
  2. Should the club invest in expanding international brand recognition or continue focusing on sustainable, performance-driven growth?
  3. What strategic options exist to capitalize on this historic season without disrupting the team's cohesion and culture?
  4. How can Leverkusen turn a moment of triumph into a foundation for long-term success?
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**LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

1. Analyze the drivers behind strategic and cultural transformation in professional sports organizations.
  2. Understand the trade-offs between sporting performance, talent retention, and financial sustainability.
  3. Explore how mid-sized clubs can compete with football giants through innovation and culture.
  4. Examine leadership challenges in periods of unexpected success.
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**RECOMMENDED READING:**

- Legacy by James Kerr (2013)
  - The Barcelona Way by Damian Hughes (2018)
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**INTENDED AUDIENCE:**

MBA/Postgraduate  Undergraduate  Introductory

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**DISCIPLINES:**

Strategy  Leadership & Organizational Behavior