more valued—the offensive line—and yet very few people know who they are or what they do. Almost no fans walk around wearing their jerseys, but they should.

When a football team lines up on the field, the quarterback stands behind a line of five oversized human beings crouched down on the turf. This is the offensive line. Just inches away from them await the opposing team, ready to pounce. At the sound of the whistle, massive, muscled bodies come flying forward, using every ounce of their weight and strength to rush the quarterback and smash him to the ground. The offensive line is the only thing standing between the quarterback and this charging mass of humanity.

'They don't score touchdowns, they don't kick field goals. They only have one job—protect the quarterback—but it is the most important job on the football field. After all, you can't win a football game if the quarterback is flat on his back before he even has time to throw.

When Hall of Fame quarterback Joe Montana first had the privilege of playing behind a really superb offensive line, he excelled like never before. As Michael Lewis writes in the book The Blind Side, Montana played “like a kid who dbeen given the answers to the test in advance.” After the game, Montana told reporters, “I'd never seen us execute like that.... That's why it didn't look tough for us. Our line was stopping them, and when I got that time things became easy.” Everyone credited Joe Montana, but he credited his offensive line.

Even though most of us live far removed from the football field, we each have our own version of an offensive line: our spouses, our families, and our friends. Surrounded by these people, big challenges feel more manageable and small challenges don't even register on the radar. Just as the offensive line protects a quarterback from a particularly brutal sack, our social support prevents stress from knocking us down and getting in the way of our achieving our goals. And just as the offensive line helped Montana throw a touch-
Investing in High Performance

In addition to the benefits of achieving a positive relationship with people, there is also a strong correlation between performance and social support. This is because people who have a supportive network of friends and colleagues tend to perform better. For example, social support can help reduce stress and increase productivity. In one study, participants who received social support had higher levels of performance compared to those who did not have the same support. This suggests that investing in relationships can lead to better outcomes in the workplace.

However, it is important to note that social support is not the only factor that contributes to high performance. Other factors such as individual skills, work experience, and organizational culture also play a significant role. Therefore, managers should focus on developing a supportive work environment while also encouraging individual development.

Moreover, it is essential to recognize that social support can vary across different cultures and contexts. For example, in collectivist cultures, social support is often provided by extended family members, whereas in individualistic cultures, it is more likely to be found within professional networks.

In conclusion, investing in social relationships can have a significant impact on performance. However, managers should also focus on developing individual skills and fostering a positive organizational culture to support overall performance.