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# Every Town Is A Sports Town: Business Leadership At ESPN, From The Mailroom To The Boardroom



## Synopsis

A Best Business Book of 2015, Strategy Business ESPN's rise is one of the most remarkable stories about business and sports in our time, and nobody can tell it better than George Bodenheimer. It may be hard to believe, but not long ago, getting sports updates was difficult and frustrating. ESPN changed everything. George Bodenheimer knows. Initially hired to work in the mailroom, one of Bodenheimer's first jobs was to pick up sportscaster Dick Vitale at the Hartford airport and drive him to ESPN's main campus--a couple of trailers in a dirt parking lot. But as ESPN grew, so did George's status in the company. In fact, Bodenheimer played a major part in making ESPN a daily presence not just here, but all over the world. In this business leadership memoir--written with bestselling author Donald T. Phillips--Bodenheimer lays out ESPN's meteoric rise. This is a book for business readers and sports fans alike.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This book is a lot of fun to read. There aren't a lot of books which discuss the business of sports and media and Bodenheimer has done a great job capturing both. His story is an amazing one and the fact that all the proceeds from the book are going to the V Foundation make it even more compelling. Great graduation present for my son this spring! Highly recommended for anyone who

has watched ESPN over the years.

Definitely worth reading if you are interested in ESPN, and how a good business was built up. Bodenheimer walks through the very beginnings of ESPN, through some interesting times (such as flipping the revenue model so that cable operators would pay ESPN instead of the other way around), and to today. There are some very good business lessons in the book that are worth reading by anyone interested in business, and in applying them. And the early history of ESPN and how it got off the ground is very interesting. I'm removing one star because the writing was meandering in a few cases, I felt some areas such as their negotiations with sports leagues could have been tackled with more depth, and in a few places the book read like a commercial for ESPN. But these are small flaws in an otherwise excellent book. Sports fans and ESPN devotees will find it a worthwhile read.

A good read that combines two of my favorite things...sports and business. Just enough of both to keep you interested. Of course it is about one of my favorite stations...ESPN. Here's to the next 36 years!

George Bodenheimer gives a fascinating insider view of the makings of ESPN. I lived the history, but learned new insights. The second half of the book is devoted to his management style of a major corporation and cultural influencer. It's worth a read, especially since the proceeds go to the Jimmy V Fund.

Basically a memoir of Bodenheimer's history with ESPN, with pats on the back all around, nothing negative, good fellows and ladies all working together for the good of sports. A sort of infomercial. The tone of the book is so highly positive that one wishes for more candor; surely there's much more to be told. When the positive dominates in this manner, there's a ring of untruth lurking beneath the surface.

I am shocked people gave this book 4 to 5 stars. This was one of the most boring books I have ever read. I gave it two stars instead of one because it was about ESPN. But this book was a hard slog to get through. First, if you are a passionate ESPN fan like I was, this was an interesting, white-washed history. It brought up topics from some of the good old days of cable. That was interesting but not in-depth. But that is when the fun stops. The book reads like some college student wrote it. The

writing is very basic. And I hope Bodenheimer doesn't expect us to think that there isn't garbage going on behind the scenes at ESPN. According to him, everything is decentralized, people work together in harmony and everyone lives happily-ever-after. Every chapter is like a reality show on TV: Things are going bad, people pull together, and everything works out in the end. Great story but I hardly think that is the channel's history. Bodenheimer couldn't say ONE bad word about anyone? Olbermann "was tough to work with". Wow. Understatement of the year. Fascinating read. And what leadership lessons did I learn? The same ones you could find if you grabbed any leadership book at your local Barnes and Noble. Nothing innovative here.

I worked with George at ESPN and had an early release copy (I started in 1979 before ESPN launched). He refers to me in the book so I can attest to the fact that George got the story spot on. There have been numerous attempts from others (both business and entertainment approaches) but via my historical tenure (35+ years) there is no other attempt that delineates our ESPN story and journey as George does. Great Book!!

Not bad. It considers the meteoric rise of GB to the head of the entire company. It also provides back stories around how innovative the company was in its early days in preparing for the future and far outpacing the competition. Would not recommend if one is interested in the behind the scenes gossip regarding the many on-air personalities. There are other books out there that focus on those controversies. In short, I would recommend for anyone who is a sports fan and fan of ESPN.

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