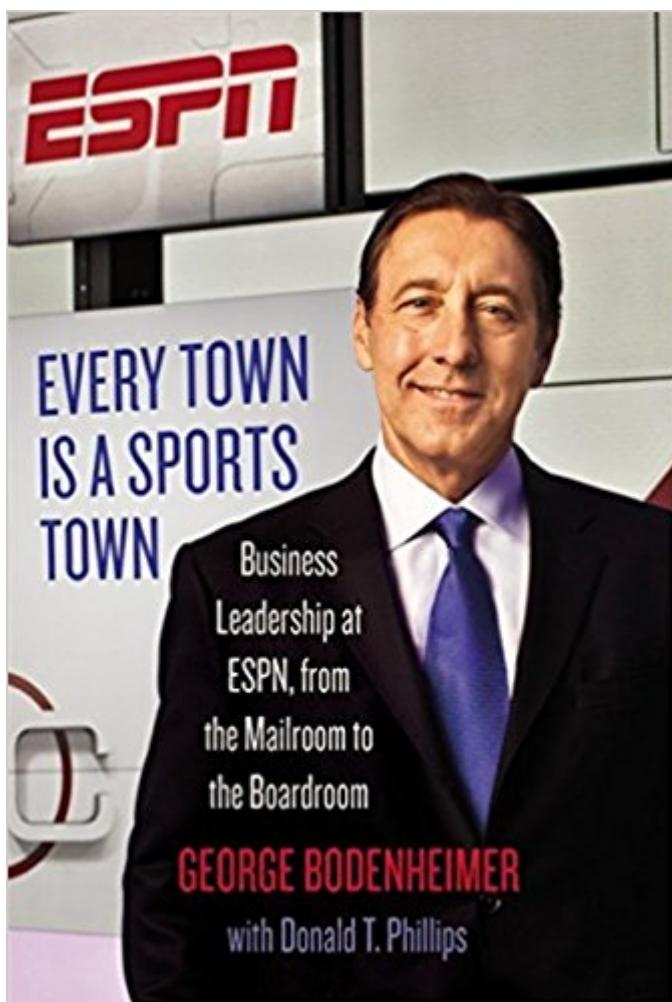


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# Every Town Is A Sports Town: Business Leadership At ESPN, From The Mailroom To The Boardroom



## 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

"The book is more than worth the read even if you are not a sports fan, but perhaps want to understand what makes one of the most well-known brands in the world so successful." •*The Wall Street Journal*

George Bodenheimer is an ESPN and cable industry pioneer and was the company's longest-tenured president, a position he held from 1998-2011, overseeing all multimedia sports assets of The Walt Disney Company from 2003-2011 and serving as co-chairman, Disney Media

Networks from 2004-2011. He served as Executive Chairman of ESPN, Inc., from 2012-2014. Bodenheimer graduated from Denison University with a degree in economics. He is married with three children.

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.

I quite enjoyed this book as George Bodenheimer recounts both ESPN's amazing story as well as the equally remarkable story of George's career (from mailroom to CEO). His management style as a CEO is refreshing to read about as his attention to consideration and humility, is not common traits with most CEOs. He never forgot his roots. I never heard nor read anything negative regarding Mr. Bodenheimer, and I can assure you having met him in person he is unassuming as the book describes him. For a man who held the title of "The Most Powerful man in Sports", George is a very likable person that proves that nice guys CAN finish first.

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.

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.

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.

The first 30 percent of the book is a nice portrayal of the rapid growth of ESPN through the eyes of George. The last 70 percent, when he becomes president of espn, turns the book into an awesome story of leadership, management principles with some incredible anecdotes sprinkled in between.

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!

Terrifically written and well-organized....I thought the book was a humble assessment of his career at ESPN, and he did a nice job of interspersing business concepts with sports anecdotes.

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