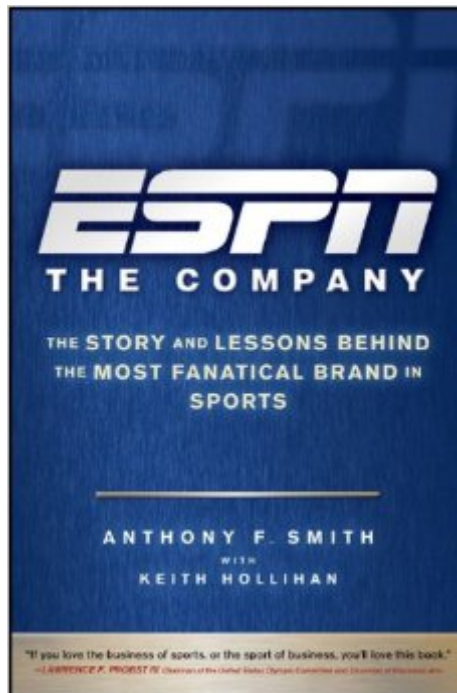


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ESPN The Company: The Story And Lessons Behind The Most Fanatical Brand In Sports



Synopsis

A fascinating look at ESPN and its success as a brand ESPN The Company reveals the inside scoop on the biggest business story in sports, detailing the creative and innovative spirit and practices that drove the programming, products, and services of the most powerful and prominent name in sports media. The authors provide a behind-the-scenes perspective on how ESPN dealt with their many partners and how they handled mistakes and missteps along the way—from the humble beginnings of ESPN as an underrated startup to the pinnacle of their success as a major industry player. ESPN and other great organizations invest in their people. They train them. They believe that if you spend the time and resources turning talented performers into leaders, you're going to get better organizational performance and engender higher levels of commitment and sweat. ESPN The Company Explores the dedication to excellence that makes ESPN the "Worldwide Leader in Sports" Reveals how the steps ESPN has taken to excel can be applied to whatever type of business you're in Shares the lessons learned at ESPN about launching and growing a wildly successful enterprise Engaging and informative, this entertaining guide reveals how any company can benefit by embracing the best practices of ESPN.

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Customer Reviews

It's hard for your average author to effectively chronicle a company's growth. You have to draw out lessons and patterns from decades of details. You have to put your own biases aside to tell the story as it was. At the same time, you need to make readers understand the importance of how the

company handled the challenges inherent to its evolution. It takes the right combination of mind and skills to pull this kind of thing off. And that's exactly what authors Anthony F. Smith and Keith Hollihan manage to do in "ESPN: The Company." "ESPN: The Company" pulls you into life at ESPN through vivid character and company descriptions. You learn by vicariously participating. That's what consultant Anthony F. Smith did during his 20+-year tenure with ESPN, though he experienced the company firsthand. He joined with McKinsey just as ESPN was gaining traction as a startup. He stayed all the way through to its current incarnation as a \$30 billion sports media giant. In those years, he grew intimate with the people, culture, and strategy of ESPN. He and cowriter Keith Hollihan chronicle the highlights of those years: The prominent personalities within the company, the victories and losses, and the lessons learned. Each of the book's eight chapters covers a guiding principle to ESPN's success. Those guiding principles helped ESPN evolve from idea to empire, but could be applied to any company wanting to stay competitive and creative while ascending competitive ladder. Individually, each principle can be applied to any company. Taken together, though, they are the unique formula that led to ESPN's success.

I am not a sports person (there is a difference between being active which I am and loving to watch sports). I did, however, find the book interesting. ESPN certainly created an awesome, well known brand. They deliberately set out to cater to sports fanatics (their words - not mine). They are passionate about it. They also set out to create sports fanatics. One thing that makes ESPN unique is there is not a single person behind it. There have been a succession of owners and leadership. There is no icon behind the brand. Culture can continue to drive an organization regardless of the leader. From the book: "It is easy to get mystical about leadership. To generate alchemical formulas to explain its wondrous power. The reason is simple. Leadership is confusing and messy as hell. It comes in many different circumstances and personalities. So we want to distill it." All the leader does is start minor course corrections which have impact over time if they are continuously reinforced. One thing I learned from running larger companies is culture takes time and vigilance to change. It is likely the most important aspect of a company and at the same time, the toughest. I try hard to let people make decisions but coach on culture. The book talks about Smith's Stages of Organizational development. Startup - Survival - Ramp Up Growth - Institutional. Smith implies that different stages of companies need different leaders. I like the "Key Points" at the end of each chapter. If you really wanted just to get the business message and not the story. Some of the chapter summary points (and the book has a lot more detail than this): Let insecurity drive achievement.

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