

MEMORANDUM

To: Gregg Rich
From: [REDACTED]
Date: September 11, 2016
Re: Veeck as in Wreck: Extra Credit

Summarization of *Veeck as in Wreck*

Veeck as in Wreck is an autobiography about Bill Veeck that includes stories about his life and career in baseball. The book is written in a way that imitates a casual conversation with Veeck over drinks. Not only is this book an entertaining read, it is full of stories about his unique and successful ways of managing a ball club which is insightful for a future employee in the sports business. From cover to cover, the reader sees the behind the scenes processes of buying and selling a ball club, boosting gate receipts, buying and selling players and managers, and politics involving the American and National Leagues. Veeck's unique mindset and personality is a perfect picture of how students should aspire to be if they desire to be influential with a sports team/league.

Veeck's influence upon event promotions

Veeck's first influence on event promotions began by sending a midget up to bat for the Browns in Cleveland when he first became the team owner (p. 18). This out of the ordinary promotion sparked his career-long battle with other managers and the MLB Commissioner. Veeck learned the baseball business from the ground up because of his father's ownership of the Chicago Cubs starting when Bill was 3 years old. Chicago was also the place he started his first job in baseball. He tried out most of his promotions for the first time when he owned the Brewers, which included events such as outrageous door prizes, morning games for night shift workers, and presenting a giant up to reward players and employees (pp. 51-52,54). Almost every day for three and a half years Veeck provided in-game entertainment in Cleveland. He based these frequent promotions on the simple fact that he "always loved fireworks and circus acts" (p.105). Veeck aimed to make baseball games entertaining for the committed fans as well as the casual fans because it "softens the blow of losing" (p. 119). Regardless of a win or loss, fans will associate the game with fun memories because of the entertainment he provided. Veeck also catered games to women in order to create a life-long fan and he states that "once a woman becomes a fan, she is the best fan in the world" (p. 126). He made efforts to connect with the fans on a more personal basis. An example of this is the contracts/poems that he and his second wife, Mary Frances, sent out to new parents along with two (2) tickets to a game (p. 212). He also spent a majority of the game walking throughout the stands and chatting with fans. Veeck also held "Grandstand Manager's Day" which allowed the fans to call the play strategy for that day's game (p. 219). Not only was Veeck successful at drawing crowds to his stadium, he could also tell where other teams, such as the Yankees, lacked in promotional efforts (pp. 264-265). Another reason Veeck made such an influence on event promotions was that he was willing to take monetary risks. Teams are not provided with lots of money to execute promotions but Veeck stood by his belief that "you have to spend money to make money" and that if

you spend that money right, fans will flock to the stadium (p. 345). One of his most famous promotions was that exploding scoreboard at Comiskey Park, which many teams put to use today (p. 342). The last line of *Veeck as in Wreck* perfectly sums up Bill's career, "he wasn't only the first, and he wasn't only the best. He was the only" (p. 398).

Building from Veeck's innovations utilizing current technologies

Veeck as in Wreck gives examples of his promotions that current promotional managers can recreate using current technology advances. One promotion that would be successful at drawing a crowd today would be the recreation of a Grandstand Managers Day. A minor league club could use any of the current polling apps to get feedback rather than using paper signs. Fans would latch on to this promotion and enjoy feeling like they are a part of the team. Another promotion that could go with a polling app and build off a Veeck idea would be awarding outrageous door prizes. Fans in attendance could vote on 1 of 4 door prizes to be awarded to a fan during an inning. Promotional departments could also play off of the live animal aspect of the door prizes by partnering with a local humane society. Although Veeck's father created "Ladies Day", Bill carried on the tradition while he was in management. Some major league teams implement this promotional day but it could be done in a bigger and better way in the minor league system. Tickets should not be given away because it devalues them according to Veeck, but they would be sold at a cheaper price or sold with an amenities package. The package would include things such as early admittance for dinner and drinks, a t-shirt or tank top, special ladies day section, and the option to participate in between-inning entertainment. The whole night/day should be dedicated to the ladies that purchase these tickets.