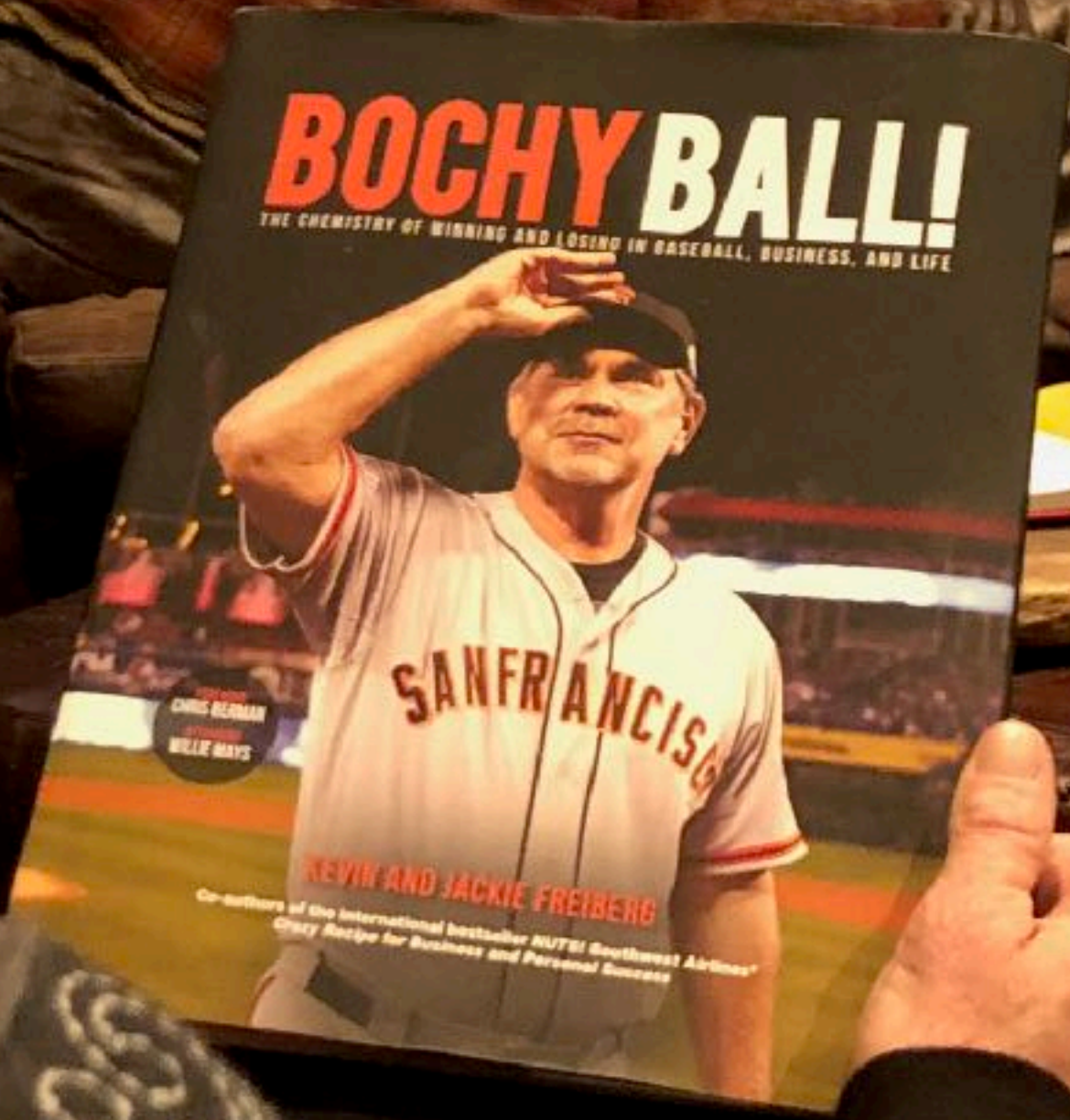


# WHAT BASEBALL AND BUSINESS HAVE IN COMMON

by Jim Pawlak

A Biz Books Review



[www.bochyball.com](http://www.bochyball.com)

**“Bochy Ball! The Chemistry of Winning and Losing in Baseball, Business, and Life” by Kevin Freiberg and Jackie Freiberg (EPIC Work EPIC Life, \$29.95).** Baseball teams and businesses have much in common. Both employ ‘players’ with specialties. Both have All-Stars (aging, prime, budding,) “A” and “B (bench)” players. Both deal roster turnover and compete for free-agent talent. Both face competition and make in-game adjustments because of changing situations. Both deal with budget constraints. To win, their players must be a team. The responsibility for creating the team resides with who manages the team and prepares and coaches the players.

Bruce Bochy manages the San Francisco Giants. The Giants have won the World Series three times during his tenure; they’ve also finished with the worst record in baseball. Through the highs and lows, Bochy has remained a player’s manager – not because he’s their friend, but because as the Giant’s CEO puts it, “he’s invested in making each one of them successful.” By knowing each player’s strengths and limitations, he’s able to put them in favorable situations where their talent can be optimized. Doing so bolsters their confidence and sends a positive message to teammates. Confident players “bring their best selves to work”.

As a player’s manager, Bochy delivers tough love (always in private) when players aren’t performing up to their ability. Those who do well are praised in public.

While he’s responsible for what happens from the clubhouse to deep center field, he relies on his coaches to do what they were hired to do – develop each player’s skills. Delegation engages the coaching staff; it shows the players that the manager has confidence in the coaches, too. It also increases the productivity of the manager because he/she doesn’t have to do everything.

Freed from doing everything, the manager can focus on the hardest job: building and maintaining team culture. When Bochy joined the Giants in 2007, he saw individuals, not a team, in the clubhouse. There were the “haves”, “have-nots” and other factions. While his “choose service over self-interest” speeches during spring training and team meetings showed his vision, he knew that he couldn’t change the culture by himself. The leaders among the players had to become cultural influencers. He asked for their input on what team unity would look like and how it would translate into how they played the game. He used their input to fine-tune his messaging. He asked the leaders to step forward to help deliver their message.



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It took a few years before everyone was on the same page. A key move: bringing in Aaron Rowand a center fielder with a Golden Glove, who led by example by not taking the day off when he wasn't in the lineup and had a knack for drawing guys together socially. The social aspect can't be underestimated when developing culture. When people see themselves as colleagues and friends (as opposed to just colleagues) walls fall, and bridges are built. "We" replaces "I".

The culture-building also focused on being interesting and being interested. Telling stories to drive home points gets people thinking about what else they can do individually and for the team. Getting to know more about the players' lives matters, too. What people do and face outside of the workplace has an impact on the job. Being interested in their lives shows 'we care; you matter.'

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Coach's Corner: Take screen shots of the "Team Chemistry Quiz" at [bochyball.com/quiz/](http://bochyball.com/quiz/); print them and take the quiz. Have your team take it, too. Meet as a group to discuss results question-by-question to see where the team excels or needs improvement. Solicit ideas about maintaining excellence and improving.

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