

Leadership in Cinema



Wildland Fire Leadership Development Program

(Partnership with Drexel University's LeBow College of Business students)

<http://www.lebow.drexel.edu/index.php>

MONEYBALL

(Based on a true story)

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Phone: 215-895-2954

Studio: Columbia Pictures Released: 2011

Genre: Biography/ Drama/ Sport Audience Rating: PG-13

Runtime: 133 minutes

Materials

Moneyball DVD or online movie access, appropriate projection system, participant note-taking tools, and online readings access to the following concepts and theories (and related online links):

- Kouzes and Posner's Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership (<http://www.leadershipchallenge.com/About-section-Our-Approach.aspx>)
- John Maxwell's Five Levels of Leadership (<http://www.johnmaxwell.com/blog/5-levels-of-leadership>)
- Wildland Fire Leadership Values and Principles (<https://www.fireleadership.gov/>)
- Kirkpatrick and Locke's Leadership Traits (http://sbuweb.tcu.edu/jmathis/org_mgmt_materials/leadership%20-%20do%20traits%20matgter.pdf)
- Goleman's Leadership Styles (<https://hbr.org/2000/03/leadership-that-gets-results>)
- Adaptive Leadership

Objective

Students will review various leadership theory illustrated within the film and discuss leadership lessons learned with group members or mentors as well as complete activities and assignments.

Basic Plot

With little fiscal leeway, general manager for the comparatively broke Oakland A's, Billy Beane, sets out to rethink the drafting and trading process, to meet both financial and competitive requirements using ivy league statistician, Peter Brand. Rebelling against the traditional system, which had proved ineffective on himself as a player years before, he assembles an unlikely team to try to achieve a winning season, despite their individual weaknesses, bargain players scouts considered flawed, but all of whom have an ability to get on base, score runs, and win games. The film is based on the 2003 book *Moneyball: The Art of Winning an Unfair Game* by Michael Lewis.

Cast of Main Characters

Brad Pitt.....	Billy Beane
Jonah Hill.....	Peter Brand
Philip Seymour Hoffman	Art Howe
Robin Wright.....	Sharon
Chris Pratt.....	Scott Hatteberg
Stephen Bishop	David Justice
Reed Diamond.....	Mark Shapiro
Kerris Dorsey	Casey Beane
Casey Bond	Chad Bradford
Brent Jennings.....	Ron Washington
Ken Medlock.....	Grady Fuson

Facilitation Options

Moneyball is a great illustration of successful leadership in action. It has a large amount of characters who exhibit leadership theory. Students should be able to connect much of what they see in the film to the Five Behaviors of Leadership, the Five Levels of Leadership, the Wildland Fire Leadership Values and Principles and to Leadership Traits. The film also exemplifies the importance of adaptability to the success of a team/organization. Students can see how adaptive leadership is employed in the film, why it is used (in each situation), and how effective it was. Students should leave with an overall understanding of adaptive leadership and the situations that call for it which should aid in their development as leaders. Due to the nature of films and class structures, there is not always adequate time to watch the film in full. There is included in addition to the full-film facilitation structure a clip facilitation structure, however, a facilitator might find it helpful to identify some meaningful and relevant clips of their own to help to tailor the instruction to the specific audience.

(Disclaimer: YouTube clips may become unavailable without notice.)

General Full-Film Facilitation Guidelines

1. Assign applicable readings prior to class meeting time.
2. Review highlights of theory to be used.
3. Advise students to document and take note of any instances within the film that illustrate or challenge the ideas. A note-taking guide can be used.
4. Show film: *Moneyball*. If conducive to the learning environment, pausing for pertinent discussion is encouraged. Break at least once during the film.
5. Once the film is finished break into small groups.
6. Complete the discussion questions or the activity in the small breakout groups
7. Initiate discussion on the individual groups' findings with the class as a whole or mix groups and discuss the questions (the later could encourage familiarity if people in the class do not know each other).
8. Ask class to identify examples of theory from the film, and mediate subsequent discussion.
9. Lead class discussion on what they agree or disagree and encourage the use of specific examples from the film and personal experiences.
10. Close the class by encouraging students to identify additional real world examples as well as relate it to other films possibly studied.

General clip facilitation guidelines

1. Assign applicable readings prior to class meeting time.
2. Review highlights of theory to be used in the various clips selected.
3. Break into small groups.
4. Show clips, each one followed by a short discussion in these groups of the theory highlighted.
5. Close the class by encouraging students to identify additional real world examples as well as relate it to other films possibly studied.

Part One: Kouzes and Posner Leadership Behaviors in *Moneyball*

Objective

Students will examine Kouzes' and Posner's Leadership Behaviors as displayed in *Moneyball*. Using critical thinking, evaluate the characters and their actions that display these behaviors.

Clip Usage

Model the Way

- These clips (<http://youtu.be/njAGr-kD91I> and http://youtu.be/wRPy_n_xzJo) show how one player, older and more experienced can model the way for another player, causing strong leadership without a given title or rank.

Inspire a Shared Vision

- This clip (<http://youtu.be/HiB9L3dG-Aw>) shows Beane struggling to inspire his contemporaries. In the end he makes the nature of their challenge explicitly clear (note that there is some explicit language in this clip).

Challenge the Process

- This clip (<http://youtu.be/qd1aZb4ORmw>) shows Peter Brand going above and beyond his own expectations, challenging the process, which makes him an extremely valuable asset for the team's leadership. Also this idea is challenging the baseball status quo, setting the film in motion, showing exemplary leadership.
 - Put on the scene: What is the Problem?
 - Differentiate between the institutionalized answer and the answer of someone thinking outside the box.
 - Ask why Beane's thought process is different than the scouts.
 - Put on the scene: When would you have drafted me?
 - Discuss the implications of Beane's question to the young Yale-grad with no baseball experience.
 - Why did Beane value his opinion?
 - Was it because of the scene with the Indians organization or because of the way he viewed baseball? It was really because Brand did not lie to him. More importantly, Brand did not overvalue Beane like the Mets organization. He did not pretend to know who was gonna make it and who wasn't. For Brand, it was about the wins created by the team, not the team created by the players.
 - Put on the scene: Believe in the Strategy.
 - Discuss Beane's reasoning for trading Pena and what it means about Beane's loyalty towards the strategy Brand and him created.

Enable Others to Act

- This clip (<http://youtu.be/GdC0WspWfWY>) shows Beane and Brand allowing an entire team that had otherwise been dismissed to work together to accomplish something larger than they would have alone. They enable the success of the group.

Encourage the Heart

- In this clip (<http://youtu.be/xn7C6jgl0RI>), Peter Brand encourages Beane to leave the A's so he can be validated by a job at the Red Sox. By encouraging the heart he helps guide his superior through a tough decision.

Part Two: Maxwell's Leadership Levels in *Moneyball*

Objective

In *The 5 Levels of Leadership*, John C. Maxwell unfolds leadership as a step-by-step process with clear and definable stages. Students will examine John Maxwell's Leadership levels as displayed by Billy Beane in *Moneyball*. Using critical thinking, trace the path of Beane through the levels. Examples and discussion will vary. Have students conclude considering where they are in the process and what they can do to advance.

- Level 1 – Position: It's a Great Place to Visit, But You Wouldn't Want to Live There
- Level 2 – Permission: You Can't Lead People Until You Like People
- Level 3 – Production: Making Things Happen Separates Real Leaders from Wannabes
- Level 4 – People Development: Helping Individual Leaders Grow Extends Your Influence and Impact
- Level 5 – Pinnacle: The Highest Leadership Accomplishment Is Developing Other Leaders to Level 4

Part Three: Wildland Fire Values and Principles in *Moneyball*

Objective

Students will identify and synthesize the Wildland Fire Leadership Values and Principles in the film and using critical thinking, evaluate the validity and plausibility to applications in a given real-world situation, especially with respect to the characters Billy Beane and Peter Brand.

Duty Examples and Clip Usage

Be proficient in your job, both technically and as a leader.

- What's the Problem? – In this scene, Billy Beane, is seated around the table with his coaches, scouts and new assistant Peter, to strategize for the upcoming draft. He is confrontational, and insists that they are asking the wrong question. Billy Beane is clearly in charge, and he takes charge. At first glance, he may not be adhering to professional standard operating procedures. Challenge the students to explain how he is adhering to these standards (He has little money, and needs to field a competent team. He looked for a new way to judge players and found it in computer statistics and modeling). By adapting and finding an unconventional method, he developed a plan to accomplish his objective.

Be proficient in your job, both technically and as a leader.

- The character of Peter Brand exemplifies technical proficiency which causes success for the As. The knowledge he has combined with Beane's leadership proficiency are what cause the team to be able to overcome the financial hurdles in the way of success (<http://youtu.be/qd1aZb4ORmw>).

Make sound and timely decisions.

- Billy Beane trades Pena. – Billy had been getting frustrated that Art Howe was benching Hatteberg, who didn't hit as well as Pena, but got on base more. Billy wanted to trade Pena so that Art Howe would have to play Hatteberg at first base. Peter thought that Billy was making an emotional decision that would have consequences, and even get him fired. Billy was aware of the situation and negotiated a trade to force the result that he wanted. He needed this trade to be made at that time, to allow enough more games to show that Hatteberg being at first base was a good call. He was aware of the consequences. Knowing that the players resented paying \$1 for soda, he had the team that was taking Pena agree to stock their soda machine for 3 years.

Making sound and timely decisions.

- The character of Peter Brand is extraordinarily punctual and thorough, and this allows him to make decisions later on in the film. This clip shows his attitude towards his work, which subsequently is his attitude towards decision making.

Ensure that tasks are understood, supervised and accomplished.

- Beane in the batting cage, talking to David Justice – David Justice began this scene by being arrogant, and actually telling Billy Beane that he was special, and that Billy was paying him \$7 million. Billy responded by reminding him that the Yankees were paying half of that. Billy then told him that he was smart, knew what was going on, and that Billy needed him to set an example for the younger guys and take on a leadership role. He motivated Justice by telling him that they were playing the Yankees that night, and how he, Beane, would try to show them up, because he's a competitor (<http://youtu.be/njAGr-kD91l>).

Develop your subordinates for the future.

- Billy Beane had Peter tell Pena that he had been traded. – Earlier, Bill had role played with Peter how to cut someone from the team. Peter had been struggling, and it felt awkward. Beane had encouraged him to be more direct; that this method was actually easier for everyone. Billy had Peter tell Pena, because Pena was a strong player, and being traded to the Tigers was not bad for him. He took the news well, as Billy had known he would, and this made Peter more confident in a necessary part of management; delivering tough news.
- In this clip, Beane interacts with the players, conveying the seriousness of the losing game they have just played. He is tough, but they begin to understand the importance of winning. He develops them into a winning team (<http://youtu.be/RyyGgcRqrhs>). Here he is also seen using a different method, but still developing subordinate (http://youtu.be/nAnh_ZLGrcE).

Ensure that tasks are understood, supervised and accomplished.

- Beane makes the problem known even if there is resistance to the truth. Note there is explicit language in this clip (<http://youtu.be/HiB9L3dG-Aw>).

Develop a plan to accomplish given objectives.

- When Beane hires Brand and they develop a plan to replace Giambi, Damon, and Isringhausen.

“Take charge when in charge.”

- When Beane trades Pena, the A’s best player, to stop the manager from undermining Beane by starting Pena instead of Hatterburg.

“Issue clear instructions.”

- Beane telling the players to take more pitches. In this scenario, Beane was acting more like the manager of the team instead of the general manager. It was important to Beane that each player knew what they were there for.
- When Billy walks in on the players singing and dancing after they have lost a game he asks a few pointed questions (<https://youtu.be/o9Q0kp8CMFQ>). Duty is seen when Billy takes charge in this situation because he sees that his players are acting out of line. He puts them back in place and ensures that they know what tasks they are supposed to be performing. He is developing them and helping them grow as players.

Integrity Examples and Clip Usage

- When Peter Brand and Billy Beane are having a conversation about whether or not to get rid of Pena, Brand questions Billy’s decision to get rid of him (https://youtu.be/nAnh_ZLGrcE). He first accepts responsibility for this action by saying that he might be fired but that his life. And then he starts asking questions of Brand and asking if he is sure. This gives Brand the confidence he needs to go along with the decision.

Respect Examples and Clip Usage

Build the team. (<https://youtu.be/njAGr-kD91l>)

- When Billy Beane approaches David Justice while he is in the batting cage they have a conversation about what both of them are trying to do. Billy recognizes that David Justice is an experienced player and can help him lead this team.
- Billy Beane went over statistics and strategies with individual players, Recognized players’ accomplishments and gave them pointers.

Keep subordinated informed.

- Billy told Steve Justice exactly what he was there to do (Not paying him for the player he was, paying to squeeze the last drops of baseball out of him).
- Billy was up-front with Art Howe about his contract situation – he hadn’t received an offer yet because they lost the last game of the series.

Employ your subordinates in accordance with their capabilities.

- Billy and Peter only went after players who could get on base.

General Discussion Questions

- It is important as a General Manager to understand one’s duty to the team. The GM is designed to come up with a strategy that is for the best of the team as a whole not the individual players. How do you decided between duty and ethics?
- Who is in charge? Should Beane listened to his advisors or stuck to his gut feeling and his statistical advisor? How does the agreement with Dave Justice help with Beane’s plan for the team?
- Beane tends to open up to those who share the same vision as him. At the same time he tends to alienate the veteran scouts that disapprove of his methods. Is it the leader’s duty to be transparent to his/her subordinates? Does transparency build trust and morale or does is lead to doubt in leadership?
- Explain how duty, integrity and respect play a pivotal role in the plot of *Moneyball*.
- Briefly discuss a sub-character who exemplifies duty in the film. Integrity. Respect.
- Does duty always have a positive effect on group interactions? Explain, and cite examples from the film. Integrity? Respect?

Part Four: Leadership Traits in *Moneyball*

Objective

Students will key traits of leaders in the film and using critical thinking, particularly with respect to the character of Billy Beane.

KIRKPATRICK AND LOCKE LEADERSHIP TRAITS

Trait	Character	Scene or Action/Dialogue
Drive: achievement, ambition, energy, tenacity, initiative	Billy Beane	Beane developed a new way to look at baseball that involved statistics, and this would allow his small market team to compete. He would not back down. He traded Pena to force Art Howe to play the team the way that he had envisioned it. He wanted to win. He didn't get sentimental about players; he fired the pitcher Magnante minutes before the game, with his family in the stands.

Trait	Character	Scene or Action/Dialogue
Leadership Motivation (personalized vs. socialized)	Billy Beane	Billy Beane's leadership motivation was socialized and not personalized. He did not want to acquire power solely to dominate others. He wanted to use his power to achieve a common goal of being a winning team. He wanted others to share his vision. He listened to Peter Brand's idea and then explained the concept to his coaches, scouts & also to his players. He told his players to get on base, and how to do this.
Honesty and Integrity	Billy Beane	Billy Beane consistently told the truth to his players, and told it directly. He told Scott Hatteberg that his was the only deal that hew would get, and that he knew he didn't know how to play first base. He confronted David Justice and spoke with him honestly about his career & what Billy expected out of him. He turned down the Boston Red Sox offer because he felt he would have taken it only for the money.
Self-Confidence (including emotional stability)	Billy Beane	Billy had the self-confidence to adopt Peter Brand's strategy and see it through, even facing the resistance of his coaches and scouts.
Cognitive Ability	Billy Beane	Billy had the ability to realize that as a small market team, that he couldn't buy big talent and needed a different way to buy runs, which win baseball games. His judgment and analytical ability enabled him to think of baseball as a business, and not as a sport.
Knowledge of the Business	Billy Beane	As a former player, Billy had inside knowledge, particularly about potential, talent, and other intangible traits that had been historically regarded highly, but did not always materialize. His foresight, to ask to become a scout when his career wasn't matching his top round draft pick potential, shows an innate knowledge of baseball as a business.

Trait	Character	Scene or Action/Dialogue
Other Traits (weaker support); charisma, creativity/originality, flexibility	Billy Beane	Billy had charisma, even though he was direct. In cutting Jeremy Giambi, he did it himself, and told him he was a good player, which was true, and which Jeremy believed. Beane certainly showed creativity and originality in using statistics to guide and mold his team. He was flexible in adopting the new strategy, but was inflexible of anyone who did not share his vision, or follow his directives.

Part Five: Styles and Adaptive Leadership *Moneyball*

Objective

Students review the concept of Adaptive Leadership as well as Goleman's Styles in the film and using critical thinking, identify and discuss examples and how it may pertain to real world examples.

Discussion Questions

- In what ways did Billy exhibit an authoritative style of leadership within the movie *Moneyball*? Be specific with certain scenes.
 - Example: Billy first showed authoritative style of leadership when he first brought Pete to the meeting with all of the scouts. Previously Billy had gone into a meeting with the scouts with the understanding that the A's needed some sort of change, he just didn't know what that change was at the time. When he brought Pete to the meeting, Billy had already made up his mind as to how they would be selecting new players. The scouts are there to consult with Billy and give him advice, but because he had already made up his mind about how and who he would be drafting, he went into this meeting intending to tell them who the A's were going to draft rather than consult them about it.
 - Another instance where Billy was acting as an autocratic leader was when he decided to trade Giambi and Pena. The head coach, Art Howe, was unwilling to follow Billy's original plan to play specific players at certain positions, because of this the team that Billy had assembled was essentially useless and dysfunctional. Art was being so stubborn about who he would be playing that Billy was forced to go over his head and simply trade the players that Art refused to sit. This not only forced Art to play those originally intended players, but also showed him exactly how serious Billy was about his plan.
- Do you agree with some of the more dire decisions Billy made, such as trading their star players, in an attempt to get his original plan working? Would another style of leadership have worked in this situation? If yes then what would Billy have done differently in order to get what he wanted?

- Example: Billy's decisions were not only risky but very necessary. He had a lot riding on the success of his team because of his decision to pick his team the way he did. The biggest risk Billy took was to go over the scouts' heads and chose players from a statistical point rather than conventional methods. If he were to ensure the success of his original plan, everything needed to go exactly according to plan. With so many forces working against him (Art Howe, the dysfunctional team itself, and so much skepticism from critics) the way he handled each situation was very appropriate. With so many methods of leadership, it is hard to determine whether another style would have worked. Though, it is very likely. In the end Billy had the right idea to stick with his gut instinct and follow through with his original plan. The risks he took were more than appropriate given the circumstances.
- What adaptations did Billy undergo in order to ensure the success of his team? Note any specific things he did differently at the end of the movie than from the beginning. Also, in your opinion, who was the most influential person on Billy? Why?
 - Example: Some of the changes Billy had to undergo throughout the movie forced him to come out of his comfort zone and confront issues that he previously wouldn't face. One of the major changes he went through was talking to the players. He made it very clear that he never before intended to create relationships with his players. The reason why he ended up changing his attitude about this was because the players were at a sort of disconnect trying to figure out their purpose on the team. The individuals that Billy had drafted in the beginning of the year, all held a specific purpose to the team. Billy realized the only way for them to acknowledge this purpose was to actually have one on one time with them and essentially spell it out for them. Pete was the biggest influence on Billy. Not only did he bring to light the analytical method of choosing players, which was arguably the most influential happening within the story, but he was able to help Billy tackle negative habits that he still held onto. The habits included not watching the games, and creating player manager relationships.
- Is there any case in which Billy Beane applied a leadership style that wasn't appropriate for the subordinate he was leading? For example, was he delegating to an incompetent subordinate or directing someone who was very competent?
- Did Billy Beane seem to show any preference for a leadership style from Blanchard's theory?
- How does this model distinguish leadership styles rather than management styles?
- What is your favorite way of leading (directing, coaching, supporting, or delegating)? What can you learn from Billy's actions and functions as a leader?

Contributions to this document were made by the following students in the LeBow College of Business at Drexel University enrolled in a course titled Leadership in the Movies in the spring of 2012 facilitated by the author.

Girish Balakrishnan, Robert Glasgow, Michael Knapp, Jacob Merinar, Dean Mahmoud, Lajja Patel, Michael Raven, Joseph Schwemlein, Caroline Shipsley

Valuable Articles and Resources for *Moneyball*

"Three Major League Leadership Lessons from *Moneyball*." Movie Leadership. Leadership in the Movies, 6 Dec. 2011. Web. 30 May 2012.

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Furuya, Glenn. "Leadership Lessons from *Moneyball*." Leadership Works. Leadership Works, 19 Oct. 2011. Web. 29 May 2012. (<http://www.leadershipworks.com/talktome/billy-beane/leadership-lessons-moneyball>)

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