

Tough at the Top

Resource #1



Introduction

Have you ever been in a role where you've been so excited about the future - the potential - the dream you have for success? Have you ever headed up a team where everyone is bought into that dream and future, without any extra effort from you? Yes? You are lucky! When everyone in a team is engaged with the future of their organisation, that's the hard work done.

For most of us, that hard work of getting people engaged is what we're here to do every day. Employee Engagement is the canary in the mine shaft. If our staff are singing away and happy in their work, the business is going to be a success. If the canary is not happy (or lifeless) the medium-term future is definitely not bright.

Tough at the Top explores the many kinds of people-engagement challenges faced by managers, following Adam as he leads the team through their transformation from an unhappy, disengaged workforce into a strong, coherent team who are clearly focused on their core purpose.

These brief self-reflection pieces can be used as you read each chapter of Tough at the Top. We want to help you on your way to making the most of your team's strengths. Adam had his guardian angel...perhaps these little reflection pieces can be yours.



Some tips for using them:

1. As you read Tough at the Top, look and listen for the challenges Adam is faced with and think about your own teams and business. Does anything within these challenges ring true about your own team or business? Recognise any of the people Adam encounters within your own team? What does he do to overcome each challenge, and what can you take from that? Indulge yourself with some time to think about you, your business and what you can do to ensure you enjoy the view from the top - knowing your teams and people are there, working with you, together.
2. As you work through these pieces, we will ask you some self-reflection questions. When you answer, be honest with yourself. Listen to your gut and the devil/angel on your shoulder. Look outside of your own perception. What do others think?

Think to yourself; what do I want out of my time at work? And have I got it?

What about those around you? What would your teams say if you asked them the same question? What would your customers say about what they want from dealing with your business?
3. Where relevant we'll provide some tips, a bit of theory and perhaps a gentle nudge. Take the bull by the horns (be brave if you want to be) and use the time you've invested well. Take action.

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Self reflection piece one, setting up your stall.

Chapter 1: The Dream

Successful organisations know where they are going. They have great direction, and they find that direction through dreaming, vision and a well-thought-through strategy. Adam's dream is shiny, bright and vibrant. He is passionate about his circus, and in his dream it is the best it can possibly be:

“The bright brass notes of the band lit up the air, and the tigers blazed orange and black, and the Cossack riders had thick mustachios and horses even glossier than their boots. The clowns balanced perfectly between laughter and tragedy, and the trapeze artist was golden-brown and slender like a weasel, and Adam instantly lost his heart to her.”

To explore your dream, let's use a little NLP strategy. Robert Dilts was an early pioneer of Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) and along with the other founders of NLP wanted to know how some of the most successful people thought, felt and spoke. In the case of Walt Disney, Dilts found that in creating iconic animated films such as **“Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs”**, **“Bambi”** and **“Dumbo”**, Disney used the same creative strategy every time. He used 3 kinds of thinkers. The first was the Dreamer. The second was the Realist. The third was the Critic. Let's begin by doing some dreaming.



This reflection exercise is built around some structured NLP based questions to understand your dream – by which we mean, your vision of what you want for you and your business or team.

Describe your dream.

[Dotted-line response box]

In your dream, when you imagine your business or team, what do you see?

[Dotted-line response box]

In your dream, who is in the picture and what are they doing?

[Dotted-line response box]

In your dream, what else speaks to you and what else happens?

[Dotted-line response box]

Now let's critique the dream, how realistic is it and how connected is it to your reality?

Describe the reality; what do you see in your reality?

[Dotted-line response box]

What are the similarities compared to your dream?

[Dotted-line response box]

What are the differences compared to your dream?

[Dotted-line response box]

What are your people doing and how are they feeling?

[Dotted-line response box]

What indicators are there to show your teams and people are engaged with your dream?

[Dotted-line response box]

What indicators are there to show your teams and people are *not* engaged with your dream?

[Dotted-line response box]