

87. All In

In the tumultuous period of November 10–18, 2022, Twitter faced significant challenges as Elon Musk aimed to transform the company into a competitive and highly efficient organization. Following the suspension of Twitter Blue's rollout and the persistent decline in ad sales, Musk planned further staff reductions, emphasizing the need for a small, exceptionally skilled, and motivated team to surpass a larger, moderately motivated workforce.

Reflecting Musk's belief in leading by example, he decided to demonstrate his commitment by spending nights at Twitter's headquarters, a practice he had adopted during critical times at his other companies. This move was part of his broader strategy to instill a 'hardcore' work ethic among the remaining staff. Musk, along with a core group of trusted individuals including his cousins James and Andrew, Ross Nordeen, Steve Davis, and others, began a rigorous evaluation of Twitter's engineering team to identify the most capable and loyal employees. This evaluation involved scrutinizing public Slack messages and social media posts of staff, aiming to weed out those perceived as untrustworthy or not fully aligned with Musk's vision for the company.

Their efforts identified individuals perceived as threats or not fitting the ideal of excellence, trustworthiness, and drive Musk sought. This led to a substantial reduction in the workforce, focusing on retaining only those who met these criteria. Musk's method emphasized a stark choice for employees: fully commit to the demanding expectations of the 'new Twitter' or leave the company with severance. This approach culminated in an opt-in form for employees to declare their willingness to embrace Musk's hardcore work ethic, a move that further solidified the transformation Musk envisioned for Twitter, aiming for a leaner, more dedicated team ready to tackle the challenges of a highly competitive digital landscape.