

87. All In

All in, Elon Musk took bold and drastic measures to reshape Twitter during a period of significant upheaval between November 10 and 18, 2022. Faced with challenges such as the suspension of Twitter Blue's rollout and a consistent decline in ad sales, Musk quickly realized that the company's traditional structure needed a fundamental transformation. His solution was a strategy that called for a reduction in the workforce, with a clear emphasis on building a lean, highly skilled team rather than maintaining a larger, less motivated group of employees. This was part of Musk's broader vision for Twitter, where excellence, efficiency, and innovation would be prioritized above all else, aiming to position the company as a leader in a highly competitive digital landscape.

Musk's approach to leadership during this critical time was intensely hands-on. To set the tone for the transformation he envisioned, Musk made a conscious decision to immerse himself fully in the day-to-day operations, often staying late into the night at Twitter's headquarters. This was a tactic Musk had already employed successfully at his other ventures, such as Tesla and SpaceX, where his presence was key in driving significant changes. By being physically present, Musk hoped to demonstrate his commitment to Twitter's turnaround and to instill a "hardcore" work ethic among the remaining employees. This wasn't just about working late—Musk wanted to create a culture where everyone was fully dedicated to the company's success, where each individual would be expected to operate at their highest capacity, pushing the boundaries of what Twitter could achieve.

Musk's leadership style extended beyond mere presence; it was deeply embedded in the evaluation process he set up to scrutinize the remaining workforce. He, along with trusted team members such as his cousins James and Andrew, and key figures like Ross Nordeen and Steve Davis, worked together to identify those within Twitter's

engineering team who demonstrated the skills, loyalty, and drive needed to succeed in Musk's vision for the company. The evaluation process was rigorous, involving a review of internal communications, such as public Slack messages and social media posts, to assess whether employees truly aligned with Musk's principles. The focus wasn't just on technical abilities; it was also about finding individuals who were willing to go above and beyond to meet the high standards Musk demanded. This evaluation ultimately identified those employees who would thrive in a more demanding and performance-driven environment, while weeding out those who were perceived as not fully committed to the mission.



Summaryer

The drastic reductions in Twitter's workforce were a direct result of Musk's evaluation process. The remaining employees faced a stark decision: embrace the "hardcore" culture Musk envisioned or leave the company with a severance package. This decision was emblematic of Musk's leadership style, where the stakes were high, and those unwilling to fully dedicate themselves to the cause were no longer part of the team. By providing this choice, Musk ensured that only the most committed individuals remained, reinforcing his vision for a more agile, high-performance Twitter. The culmination of this period was an opt-in form, where employees were asked to formally declare their willingness to embrace Musk's demanding work culture. This opt-in process was not just a symbolic gesture; it was a critical step in aligning the remaining staff with Musk's ultimate goal: building a leaner, more dedicated team capable of driving Twitter to new heights in the competitive digital space.

Musk's all-in approach to Twitter's transformation reflected his belief that a smaller, but more capable and motivated workforce would lead to better outcomes. His leadership demanded a high level of personal commitment and professional excellence, which Musk believed was essential for the company to thrive. In a rapidly changing tech landscape, where competition and innovation were key, Musk felt that a large, complacent workforce would be a hindrance rather than an asset. Instead, he pushed for a culture that was not only focused on results but was driven by a sense of purpose and a desire to push the limits of what was possible. His actions spoke to a

larger philosophy that had driven his success in other industries—creating environments that fostered innovation, dedication, and an unrelenting pursuit of excellence.

By focusing on a lean, highly skilled team, Musk's vision for Twitter wasn't just about minimizing headcount—it was about setting a new standard for what a tech company could achieve. The intense pressure and expectations Musk placed on his staff were not without their critics, but for Musk, it was about ensuring that those who remained were fully aligned with his long-term goals for Twitter. The transformation he sought wasn't only about reshaping the company's workforce but about redefining Twitter's culture to one that valued performance and loyalty above all. In the end, this all-in strategy was Musk's way of building a Twitter that could compete with the best in the business, one that would be nimble, innovative, and driven by a team that was truly committed to the company's success. As the company faced its most critical moments, Musk's radical changes served as a testament to his belief in the power of a highly dedicated and motivated team, showing how far he was willing to go to turn Twitter into a more powerful, competitive platform.