



The Hard Thing About Hard Things: Building a Business When There Are No Easy Answers

By Ben Horowitz

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Ben Horowitz, cofounder of Andreessen Horowitz and one of Silicon Valley's most respected and experienced entrepreneurs, offers essential advice on building and running a startup—practical wisdom for managing the toughest problems business school doesn't cover, based on his popular ben's blog.

While many people talk about how great it is to start a business, very few are honest about how difficult it is to run one. Ben Horowitz analyzes the problems that confront leaders every day, sharing the insights he's gained developing, managing, selling, buying, investing in, and supervising technology companies. A lifelong rap fanatic, he amplifies business lessons with lyrics from his favorite songs, telling it straight about everything from firing friends to poaching competitors, cultivating and sustaining a CEO mentality to knowing the right time to cash in.

Filled with his trademark humor and straight talk, *The Hard Thing About Hard Things* is invaluable for veteran entrepreneurs as well as those aspiring to their own new ventures, drawing from Horowitz's personal and often humbling experiences.

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Editorial Review

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Starred Review It's fairly evident that this is a collection of blogs, loosely strung together, united in their varied perspectives on start-ups, CEO-dom, and business in general. Though Horowitz is a cofounder of Andreessen Horowitz and his credentials reside mainly in Silicon Valley, he's imparted some valuable insight on hard lessons learned that apply to any manager, whether in the executive suite or not. As with most experiential books, it is all about him—but it's written in such an engaging and universally acceptable manner that no one could object. Leave aside his background, for the moment. Who would realize, for instance, that executives worry about things like initiating layoffs, hiring the right people, training, and minimizing politics, among others? It's a refreshingly honest take, and his colorful (and, yes, profanity-laced) language breaks down any other misperceptions about the role and the person. Plus, his imagination is compelling, such as the comparisons between peacetime and wartime CEOs: Peacetime CEO always has a contingency plan. Wartime CEO knows that sometimes you gotta roll a hard six. After all, the success equation is easy: the hard thing is getting it done. --Barbara Jacobs

Review

"More than any other business book released this year, *'Hard Things'* gives an insider's perspective on what it's like to lead and scale a startup." (--Business Insider's Best Business Books of 2014)

"This is easily one of the essential books every business leader should read if they're looking for proven and honest management advice." (--Entrepreneur's 25 Amazing Business Books from 2014)

"The most valuable book on startup management hands down" (PandoDaily)

"There is more than enough substance in Mr. Horowitz's impressive tome to turn it into a leadership classic." (The Economist)

From the Back Cover

A lot of people talk about how great it is to start a business, but only Ben Horowitz is brutally honest about how hard it is to run one.

In *The Hard Thing About Hard Things*, Ben Horowitz, cofounder of Andreessen Horowitz and one of Silicon Valley's most respected and experienced entrepreneurs, draws on his own story of founding, running, selling, buying, managing, and investing in technology companies to offer essential advice and practical wisdom for navigating the toughest problems business schools don't cover. His blog has garnered a devoted following of millions of readers who have come to rely on him to help them run their businesses. A lifelong rap fan, Horowitz amplifies business lessons with lyrics from his favorite songs and tells it straight about everything from firing friends to poaching competitors, from cultivating and sustaining a CEO mentality to knowing the right time to cash in.

His advice is grounded in anecdotes from his own hard-earned rise—from cofounding the early cloud service provider Loudcloud to building the phenomenally successful Andreessen Horowitz venture capital firm, both with fellow tech superstar Marc Andreessen (inventor of Mosaic, the Internet's first popular Web browser). This is no polished victory lap; he analyzes issues with no easy answers through his trials, including

- demoting (or firing) a loyal friend;
- whether you should incorporate titles and promotions, and how to handle them;
- if it's OK to hire people from your friend's company;
- how to manage your own psychology, while the whole company is relying on you;
- what to do when smart people are bad employees;
- why Andreessen Horowitz prefers founder CEOs, and how to become one;
- whether you should sell your company, and how to do it.

Filled with Horowitz's trademark humor and straight talk, and drawing from his personal and often humbling experiences, *The Hard Thing About Hard Things* is invaluable for veteran entrepreneurs as well as those aspiring to their own new ventures.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Trisha Sherman:

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