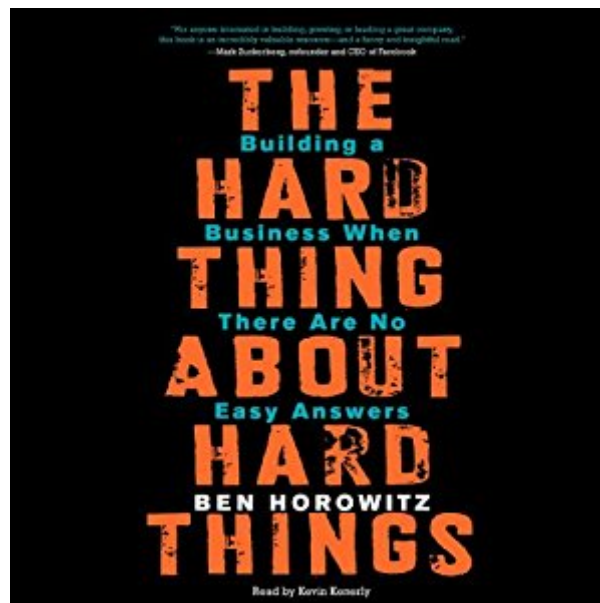


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The Hard Thing About Hard Things: Building A Business When There Are No Easy Answers



Synopsis

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 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.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I did read this book for the second time and I keep finding it fantastic. Very well written and deeply honest, it can be read either front-to-back or be used as a manual of independence, discarding anything that the reader do not want to apply or disagree with. A must have in the reading list of every serious manager in a technology company

This book is a really interesting and quick read. It is really broken down into two sections. The first is an overview of Ben's history with Netscape, Loudcloud, and Opsware. There are lots of great anecdotes and tales of narrow escapes and hard decisions. If you worked in the industry at this time its a very interesting story. The second part is some advice for aspiring entrepreneurs and CEOs. While most of this advice seems to target VC backed tech startup CEOs and businesses, I found that I could still translate most of the sentiment to apply to a smaller boot strapped business as well. All in all, I'd highly recommend this as an entertaining and insightful read.

This book has been on my reading to do list for awhile, and it did not disappoint. I thought his descriptions of the mindset, fears, and struggle were relatable for anyone striving to grow in any field or position, not just CEO. Definitely a must read.

Ben tells it like it is. The authenticity shines through as he gives the low down about being a CEO -- the loneliness, the angst, the paradoxes and most of all the struggle. Laced with pithy anecdotes and advice that truly resonates with anyone who has been a CEO, this book represents the pragmatic musings of someone who has thought through and analysed major decisions points and after affects and made the effort to transcribe them. Where Theil quotes Shakespeare in Zero to One, Horowitz quotes rap stars. Where Theil is strategic and sublime, Horowitz is tactical and enumerative. But in both books, the adventure, the adrenaline, and the calling of the entrepreneurial struggle shines through.

Excellent, pithy, straightforward from gut to gut. A strong dose of reality re the ideas of entrepreneurship and leadership (which are separate, and sometimes not complementary, human drivers). It underscores the old saw, "Nothing ventured, nothing gained." There are no answers, only clarity of the struggle to stick to the path of "aloneness," and yet to have a network of "others" who believe in you, challenge you, push you, and cover your rear. Reflecting about the lessons I took/take from this exposure to hard reality is harder than I would have imagined - to go from reflection to action.

If you ever have a chance to have a deep, one-on-one conversation with a singular force like Ben Horowitz, drop everything to make it happen. But the remarkable thing about this remarkable book (see what I did there?) is that for each reader, Ben makes makes you feel like you're having a one-on-one conversation, with insights into the personal struggle required for greatness. Most of us

won't ever have the chance to have that one-on-one conversation, much less a mentorship with someone like Ben. This book is the next best thing.

After reading *Good Manager / Bad Manager* from Horowitz, I realized his teaching style fit right with my learning style. His empathy and humility shine through this book on how he struggled and applied his thinking to his specific scenarios. This was different than others as it was not a biography or history of his companies, but personal anecdotes and lessons learned applied to business management. Great read and will be referencing periodically in my career.

Horowitz covers all the bases from starting up to scaling up; from strategy to execution; from recruiting to firing... it's all in there and more. He steers away from being prescriptive without being fluff. It's a great outline of his experience in taking his company from start up to eventual sale. Worth its weight in gold.

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