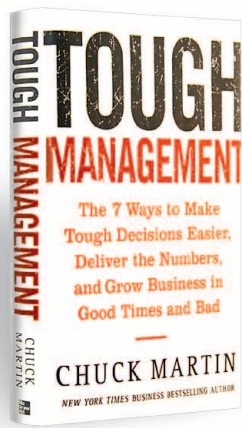




Executive Book Summaries®



By Chuck Martin

The Seven Ways to Make Tough Decisions Easier and Grow Business in Good Times and Bad

TOUGH MANAGEMENT

THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Faced with shrinking budgets, smaller staffs, shorter deadlines, more demanding customers and an unrelenting call for innovation and growth, many executives and managers are feeling “highly stressed.” The old management paradigms aren’t working, which means we need a fresh, bottom-line approach designed for what really works in today’s business environment. This new approach is what business strategist and CEO of NFI Research Chuck Martin offers in this summary.

Based on more than two years of surveys of more than 2,000 senior executives and managers, this summary provides managers with a new way to tackle tough decisions in today’s high-pressure business world and deliver the results their companies need for sustained growth.

In it, Martin also explains how successful business leaders have met the demand to do more, deliver more and grow more by using practical, powerful and proven techniques — without raising stress levels. By focusing on actual results and forcing the hard decisions, you can learn to communicate and collaborate while remaining flexible. This summary offers real solutions to real problems in the real world.

CONTENTS

Tough Management

Page 2

The Seven Rules of Tough Management

Pages 2, 3

Communicate Clearly

Pages 3, 4

Force the Hard Decisions

Pages 4, 5

Focus on Results

Pages 5, 6

Remain Flexible

Pages 6, 7

Prove Your Value to the Company

Page 7

Force Collaboration

Page 8

Tough Management Without Being a Tough Guy

Page 8

What You’ll Learn In This Summary

The seven skills every manager should know. These are:

- ✓ How to focus on results.
- ✓ Ways to force the hard decisions.
- ✓ Better ways to communicate more clearly.
- ✓ How to remain flexible.
- ✓ Ways to prove your value to the company.
- ✓ Better ways to force collaboration.
- ✓ How to be a tough manager without being a tough guy.

TOUGH MANAGEMENT

by Chuck Martin

— THE COMPLETE SUMMARY

Tough Management

Work today is more demanding than ever before. The bottom-line orientation required for budget-constrained organizations is the new reality. The need for improved output has increased without there being a proportionate increase in personnel. This situation drives shareholders, executives and managers to demand more from their employees and themselves.

Everyone is in the same situation with the work mantra of today: *Do more with less*. Everyone is affected by the burden and the burden will fall on you, the people you manage, your customers, their customers, and the managers and employees at all of those places.

Tough management is a way to approach work. It is a reasonable, practical and organized way to reach decisions more easily, make your numbers more consistently, have those around you understand where you stand, and increase your business.

Here are some of the reasons why the business world of today is tougher than it has ever been:

- **The workload has increased for 80 percent of executives and managers over the past few years and significantly increased for more than half of them.**

- **Compensation has not increased significantly for 90 percent of executives and managers.**

- **Today's workplace is highly stressful, with 80 percent of executives and managers saying they are stressed, with a third feeling highly stressed.**

- **The social contract between employer and the employee has changed thanks to actions by both parties.** The amount of time an executive or manager will stay with a company has changed from decades to years.

Businesspeople state that keeping an overall perspective is one of the most important skills for success. ■

The Seven Rules of Tough Management

There are seven rules that comprise tough management. These guidelines can help overworked managers make tough decisions more easily and grow the business:

1. Communicate clearly. Tough management requires

an abundance of communication that is clear, concise, timely and truthful. Clear communication that is clearly received aligns those creating strategy with those executing it throughout the ranks.

2. Force the Hard Decisions. It is tough to make the hard decisions when they need to be made. Managers need to collect all the necessary information available at the time, make the decision, communicate it and then move on. People are at the heart of the toughest decisions, but they still have to be made.

3. Focus on Results. Tough management demands that every person identify the results that matter most at any given time and determine actions that produce those results. It also means being realistic about what results are being demanded, and ensuring all parties agree on the necessary tools and time frame needed to deliver those results.

4. Remain Flexible. Managers need to be organized so they can change directions quickly to keep pace with the changing needs of their organization and customers. It also requires stopping actions — such as institutionalized tasks, projects or meetings — that waste time. You should view yourself more as a “virtual enterprise.”

5. Prove Your Value to the Company. You must align yourself with your company's values so that you can prove your value. This translates into accepting new challenges and becoming the person to whom everyone turns for solutions. Keep in mind that there is a fine line between proving your value and the organization taking advantage of you.

(continued on page 3)

The author: Chuck Martin is a bestselling author and an internationally known business strategist. As chairman and CEO of NFI Research, he operates a global idea exchange and research engine with a network base of more than 2,000 executives and managers from more than 1,000 companies in more than 50 countries, including half the Fortune 100.

Adapted by arrangement with The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc., from TOUGH MANAGEMENT by Chuck Martin. Copyright © 2005 Chuck Martin. 200 pages. \$24.95. ISBN 0-07-145234-6.

Summary Copyright © 2005 by Soundview Executive Book Summaries, www.summary.com, 1-800-SUMMARY, 1-610-558-9495.

For additional information on the author, go to: <http://my.summary.com>

Published by Soundview Executive Book Summaries (ISSN 0747-2196), P.O. Box 1053, Concordville, PA 19331 USA, a division of Concentrated Knowledge Corp. Published monthly. Subscriptions: \$195 per year in the United States, Canada and Mexico, and \$275 to all other countries. Periodicals postage paid at Concordville, Pa., and additional offices.

Postmaster: Send address changes to Soundview, P.O. Box 1053, Concordville, PA 19331. Copyright © 2005 by Soundview Executive Book Summaries.

Available formats: Summaries are available in print, audio and electronic formats. To subscribe, call us at 1-800-SUMMARY (610-558-9495 outside the United States and Canada), or order on the Internet at www.summary.com. Multiple-subscription discounts and corporate site licenses are also available.

**Soundview
Executive Book Summaries®**

PHILIP SHROPSHIRE — *Contributing Editor*
DEBRA A. DEPRINZIO — *Senior Graphic Designer*
CHRIS LAUER — *Senior Editor*
CHRISTOPHER G. MURRAY — *Editor in Chief*
GEORGE Y. CLEMENT — *Publisher*

The Seven Rules of Tough Management

(continued from page 2)

6. Force Collaboration. Tough management requires teamwork at every level. This requires new levels of information sharing and a willingness to learn.

7. Practice Tough Management Without Being a Tough Guy. You can deliver valuable results without being brutal to subordinates in the process. You have to improve morale, protect the talent, recognize superior work and provide what is necessary for people to do their jobs better. ■

Communicate Clearly

Communication is king in business. Tough management requires an obsessive attention to the effectiveness of all communication, including the what, when, how, and most importantly, the why, of what you are communicating. Businesspeople, in this noisy and fast-paced world, must share ideas, discuss tasks, and clearly communicate vision and direction.

One senior executive at a small company explains, “Effective, consistent communication is the key, because by so doing a leader can attract and retain the only sustainable competitive advantage there is: a focused, motivated and committed work force.”

It can be difficult to convince without the ability to communicate well. If members of a department or business team communicate well, much can be accomplished. Specific tasks become clear and each member understands his or her role.

Clarity of Communication

Though communication is the most important skill for executives and managers, the majority of them are not clearly hearing directives from those above them. “Communicating up, down and sideways is a daily task that takes energy and time. The time and effort invested keeps us all focused on our goals and is well worth it,” according to one senior executive at a small company.

Tough management requires more listening as part of the overall communication process, to determine what was heard compared to what was said.

Tough management also requires easy access to management and almost an overabundance of communication. The secret of effective communication is to ensure that everyone who needs to hear the message does, in fact, receive it in a timely fashion.

Joe Puglisi is the chief information officer (CIO) of EMCOR Group, one of the world’s largest specialty construction firms with about \$4.6 billion dollars in annual sales. Puglisi answers his own phone, and the people who work for him do the same. “People can get to me

Monthly CEO Lunches at Westminster Savings

Tough management requires not only clarity in communication, but also increased frequency and checks for effectiveness. Barry Forbes, CEO of Westminster Savings in New Westminster, British Columbia, invites 25 of his employees to lunch every other month. No managers attend, and the employees are invited to ask any questions they wish. Forbes uses the meetings to explain the “why” of why the company does things. The workers have his telephone number and e-mail address and he encourages them to contact him. The credit union is the leader in its market and has less than 10 percent annual employee turnover, which is low for the industry.

easily and I make sure I can get to my people whenever I need to,” says Puglisi. His group uses e-mail, meetings, instant meetings and telephones all the time. He opposes instant messaging because he thinks it’s too intrusive.

Tough management requires that communication be constant and in a continual loop. Peter Baker reports directly to Puglisi as the director of applications at EMCOR. He is constantly in communication with his boss as well as his peers, customers and vendors. He sees his role as maintaining the communication bi-directionally. “We’re all straight up and down the line,” Baker says.

It’s a cultural decision to allow the free, bi-directional flow of information in an organization. This means that hoarding of information is not tolerated.

A side benefit of this free flow of information is that people can make correct decisions relatively quickly. That’s because all stakeholders are already following the details and discussions leading up to a decision. “In our group, everyone has the information, so consensus is pretty quick,” Baker says.

Corporate Truth Versus Street Truth

The result of bad communication is a disconnection between strategy and execution. One of the toughest challenges businesses face today is how to bridge the gap between the top executive’s vision and the reality of the managers and workers who must make that vision happen.

Managers and employees generally are closer on a day-to-day basis to customers and their short-term demands and needs, which may not be the same as the demands and needs of the corporate strategy. This gap can be the ultimate undoing of a leader’s strategy, as well as total frustration in the ranks, as managers see a distance between what their leaders say and what their customers want. It is the difference between “corporate truth” and “street truth.”

The *corporate truth* is what the chief executive or cor-

(continued on page 4)

Communicate Clearly

(continued from page 3)

porate leadership announces to the world, to Wall Street or even to the company's own employees about what the company is going to do.

The *street truth* is the reality of the company's managers and employees, who hear the message and determine how much of that pronouncement actually will be realized. The street truth is more closely aligned with the day-to-day realities of the managers and employees who do the work.

The Communication Gap

Poor communication is one of the primary reasons behind this gap between corporate and street truth. The gap results when executives do not effectively communicate their messages to their subordinates, leaving managers to draw their own conclusions about the company's direction. Managers then behave according to their own understanding of how to act, based on other things, such as customer expectations, self-interest and individual relationships.

Puglisi identified this gap five years ago. "The higher up you go, the closer you are to strategic thinking. In the trenches, it's how to get through the day. Skills are lacking in linking those things together. Senior management should appreciate that and keep the lines of communication open through the ranks."

The Last Third

The EMCOR CIO has one advantage that other people in his position might not have: He was the company's first corporate CIO and he had the option of starting his group with a policy of open and total communication.

Yet there are downsides to even the best communication efforts. It can be called "the law of the last third." What this means is that a third of the people will buy in immediately, and the second third will have some questions but will still follow along. The last third of the people causes problems because they never buy in. Many top executives have to keep communicating the message until everyone buys in.

One of the reasons communication isn't clear within organizations is that senior executives and managers look at and live in somewhat different worlds. For example, senior executives find hiring and firing their toughest decisions, but managers find changing jobs their toughest hurdles. Senior executives have different perspectives than managers about customer expectations, challenges and compensation. Tough management requires understanding the context in which others live.

The 50 Percent Rule

With so much on the plate of every executive and manager, it is challenging to take the appropriate amount of time to communicate effectively. When resolving an

issue or a problem, executives and managers should adhere to the *50 percent rule*. This means that more than half of the communication from the superior should involve listening and not talking.

John Nadeau is the president of Chest Physical Therapy Services, a New England-based health care agency that deploys therapists to children with cystic fibrosis. He says this: "You can get more from people by pulling it from them than you can from pushing demands onto them. Most people derive happiness from a job well done. That can be a powerful driving force in their daily work lives."

Effective, Truthful Communication

Gord Huston, president and CEO of Envision Credit Union in British Columbia says, "Yesterday, the validity of the information was based on who was delivering it. It was command and control. Today and tomorrow it is the message itself that will be judged, not who is sending it. People have to be honest."

Tough management requires frequent and consistent communication. Once communications are fine-tuned so that messages are easily conveyed and well understood, decisions at the top can be understood all the way through the ranks. This also makes it easier to convey in a clear way when and why a tough decision has been made. ■

For additional information on statics about communication, go to: <http://my.summary.com>

Force the Hard Decisions

Not all decisions in business are created equal. It is only natural to follow the easiest path and wait longer to tackle decisions that are more difficult and complex. Tough management requires the exact opposite: Executives and managers must make the tough calls as soon as possible and encourage those around them to do the same and then move on. When you make the tough calls you may not make many new friends, but it will create a new sense of respect for the decision-making process.

Tough Calls and Time Frames

It's tougher to make the hard decision at work than it looks, and it gets harder the higher up the ladder you go. Bad calls cannot only hurt your company but can also hurt your personal career.

Timing and the amount of information play significant parts in making the difficult decisions. "Making a tough decision when I don't have enough knowledge or information is the hardest thing I have to do," says the manager of one large company.

Decisions often become more difficult higher in the ranks because at that level, more people and potentially more of the business can be affected. However, there are some tough

(continued on page 5)

Force the Hard Decisions

(continued from page 4)

decisions that can have dramatic professional and personal consequences, either positively or negatively.

The Emerging Business Organization

When IBM identifies a potential sea change in a market, it creates what it calls an EBO — an emerging business organization — to analyze that market and determine what role, if any, IBM should play in it. For example, when the Internet and the World Wide Web were up and coming, IBM established an EBO and ultimately determined that the company should make serious investments in e-business, which it ultimately did. The company also set up EBOs for life sciences and grid computing.

IBM recently made the tough decision to enter the Linux market, and Doug Dreyer, now the worldwide program director of Linux strategy and business, had to make the tough choice to join the Linux group at IBM. IBM made the tough call to change the traditional legacy approach of using custom engineered products, and introduced off-the-shelf products based on standards. Dreyer said, “We saw Linux and open standards as game-changing technologies ... it was a gamble on timing.”

Ducks and Eagles

The big problem in making the hard decisions has to do with the personal and professional well-being of the person making the call. No one wants to be perceived as the bad guy when there are families to support.

When it comes to making the tough decisions, there are generally two types of managers, either ducks or eagles. The ducks tend to follow the lead duck, don't really make any waves and certainly never take a chance to make a bold decision. They are followers. The eagles are significantly more independent and look at the organization in a broader context. They are doers.

Three steps are included in the hard decisions: collecting information, making the decision and communicating it, and moving on. Different approaches are appropriate for different circumstances. You are either a duck or an eagle.

The decisions that are toughest to make are those that affect someone else's life. One manager notes, “The entire layoff process is gut wrenching, from identifying individuals, who are friends, to performing the task.” Yet the tough decision has to be made and executed. The key is to actually make that decision rather than procrastinating and letting the situation linger too long. Success also involves identifying the most important tough calls that need to be made and knowing when to make them.

Segment Tough Decisions by Time and Level

Decisions that are strategic generally fall into the longer time frames, while tactical decisions should be

made within a shorter time frame. Antonio Monteiro, the chief information officer of Internet Securities, says his tough decisions fall into four time frames: “I put decisions into four buckets: today, 30 days, a quarter and a year.” He adds that buying a new piece of infrastructure might be a one-year decision while a downed computer system would need more immediate attention.

Tough decisions have to be made at all levels of an organization for several reasons: The decision maker gains ownership of the hard decision, the immediate ramifications are more quickly known, not all tough decisions can be centralized because there are too many of them, and no one has enough information to make every tough call. Tough decisions have to be made in the context of “seeing around corners” because the long-range implications of what looks like a smart decision today can turn out to be negative tomorrow. ■

Focus on Results

The bottom line is the bottom line. Whether a specific company focuses on profits, sales, customer satisfaction or any other measurement, everyone in every organization faces some fundamental measurement he or she has to make, either individually or as a department.

Tough management requires every person to determine precisely what results matter most to him or her at the time and create the proper focus to achieve those results. Every action should have consequences that produce results. To focus an action on results, ask: How does it affect our customers, how does it affect our staff, is it on strategy, who else should know about the decision, how does it affect the numbers, and is there a better action that would produce better results?

The following guidelines will help you stay focused:

- **Limit your involvement.** Don't get involved in every aspect of everything going on around you. Businesspeople can truly be responsible only if given responsibility without second-guessing.
- **Remember strategy.** Don't let events distract you from the overall strategy and direction of the organization. Stay focused on what matters.
- **Keep others focused.** Some people in business have short attention spans. This means that you have to focus their attention for them.
- **Pick your time.** Select the right time to get something done. Identify employees' best time to focus, based on the situation and tasks at hand, and then it is heads-down time.

Working Smarter, Working Harder

Working more hours won't cut it anymore, primarily because many managers are getting to a point where

(continued on page 6)

Focus on Results

(continued from page 5)

there are no more hours left to work. The only solution is to work smarter.

Here are some quick tips for working smarter and harder: Manage expectations all the way along the line, determine precisely what others are expecting, clearly articulate your expectations of results, ask for clear definitions of others' expectations of results, clearly and frequently communicate the status of work toward those results, and put a number on everything so progress can be measured.

Delegation, Meetings and Realistic Results

Tough management sometimes requires letting go and empowering others in order to gain results. Delegation requires crystal clear communication so that people know precisely what is expected of them. Ways to improve delegating include: being surrounded by good people, articulating a strategy and direction, making sure people understand the message, checking to make sure they have the proper tools to do their jobs, and letting them do their jobs.

Tough management also means fewer meetings. No business manager sees increasing the number of meetings as a way to increase productivity. You should ask yourself these questions before you go off to your next meeting: Is this meeting necessary for me to attend? What is the potential ultimate benefit of this meeting? Should this meeting be canceled or eliminated for good? Why are we having this meeting?

Tough management requires business leaders to be more realistic in the results they demand from those who work for them. It's no secret that many organizations have become more results-oriented in recent years. The economy, market conditions, increased competition, price pressures, globalization and more selective customers all have forced businesses to watch the bottom line more closely. Everyone is doing more with less, while unforgiving shareholders and top management are expecting even more. Tough managers need to insist that original demands remain consistent and that those who are expected to deliver are properly equipped.

Customer Expectations

A big payoff for tough management is at the customer level. Businesses are facing higher customer expectations, and those who are not tough inside their organizations on issues such as clear communication, forcing hard decisions, and results orientation will pay at the customer level.

The overwhelming majority of senior executives and managers say their customers' expectations are higher today than in the past. The real-time world of today, with always-on access to everyone, has changed what people have come to expect. "Information technology has played a significant role in raising customer service

expectations, particularly from an immediate access to information perspective," says one manager. "Customers also expect to interact with empowered employees."

When you focus on results, it requires a new view as to what results are being delivered and to what customers. While all customers are important, not all are of the same value to a company. Segmenting customers by value potential will become more common, so the best customers will continue to get the best service. The rules of tough management will satisfy higher customer expectations, which can, in turn, provide the motivation for new ideas, approaches and performance. Those who miss this will simply lose the business.

● **Recharge the workplace.** People in business also need to continue to learn and grow. Recharging the workplace involves remotivating the individuals in that workplace. Individuals can take a few steps to help get charged for the work ahead: Change something about the job or the actual work at the job, stop and think about what you do every day, and take it upon yourself to learn something new about your organization. ■

For additional information on working smarter and sales, go to: <http://my.summary.com>

Remain Flexible

The longer someone does something, the easier it is for that person to keep doing the same thing. Tough management requires that managers identify habits, challenge and break them, and insert an added degree of flexibility into their work life. Even while communicating effectively, forcing the hard decisions and focusing on results, individuals must organize themselves to remain flexible enough to change directions quickly when necessary and adapt to changing conditions.

Flexibility is critical for the manager today because it is the relief valve in a world of work where executives and managers continually face increased stress and mounting numbers of projects. Flexibility, in both work and personal life, is a key to tough management. To remain flexible, you must try new approaches, learn from others and encourage others to be flexible as well.

The Spiral of Stress

The top causes of stress are deadlines, customer deadlines and conflicting responsibilities. Many managers are working from deadline to deadline, with no breathing room or time for assessment. These pressures come from the manager's superiors, peers and subordinates.

The number of hours of work is also rising and contributes to the spiral of stress. One tool managers can use in order to complete their tasks is a list. Lists — the

(continued on page 7)

Remain Flexible

(continued from page 6)

majority of business lists have six to 10 items — keep managers on track by setting priorities. These lists are not static. Executives and managers have several reasons for keeping lists: predetermining the day, keeping track and insurance (if it's on the list, it's not likely to be forgotten).

Morphing

One way to remain flexible is through morphing, which essentially means taking the shape of the environment.

For example, DuPont, the oldest industrial company in the Fortune 500, found itself in a changing world in the late 1990s as the knowledge economy took hold in the marketplace. DuPont, a 200-year-old company, reorganized itself around the concept of “One DuPont” with the focus of creating science-based solutions for customers. The refocus on customers was similar to the approach Lou Gerstner took when he stepped in at the helm of IBM.

DuPont adopted Six Sigma — a quality improvement process for achieving close to zero defects. It was created in order to apply a universal quality metric regardless of product complexity. After Six Sigma was well underway throughout DuPont, the company found itself morphing to remain flexible. DuPont's move toward using Six Sigma for revenue growth from its initial focus on cost savings happened over a period of time. It was a process, not an event.

Sometimes flexibility means knowing when to stop the organization from heading in a direction. In the case of DuPont, senior executives held a series of meetings to determine what should be stopped, and simply stopped those projects. It takes tough management to stop projects. It's easy to start projects within organizations, but when it comes to stopping a project or process in an organization, it's a different story. Almost 40 percent of top leaders say that stopping something is extremely or very difficult.

The Virtual Enterprise

Managers must also become more flexible in their personal careers. They can do this by living the “what if” life at work. This means that they should be constantly evaluating and re-evaluating work scenarios that can affect them personally. Gone are the days of getting out of college and working for one institution until retirement, with full pensions intact.

Tough management requires being realistic in how you view your relationship with your job. While this doesn't mean that there should be no loyalty to the company, you should have more loyalty to yourself and view yourself as a virtual enterprise. Kimberly Barnes, a high-powered saleswoman, says: “I think of myself as a consultant collecting a W2. You can't expect to stay anywhere a long time these days.”

Employee loyalty just isn't what it used to be. Mergers

E-Mail Overload

E-mail overload is out of control, threatening to negate the great productivity of fast, ubiquitous electronic communications. Companies lose millions of dollars in productivity because of e-mail. Spam is expected to cost U.S. businesses roughly \$10 billion a year. The real hit is being felt at the individual level, as managers and employees spend hour after hour and day after day scrolling through message after message, trying to sift through to those that matter. “E-mail is killing me,” says one vice-president, who gets more than 100 messages per day.

As a challenge, pick a week, perhaps a summer week, and don't use any e-mail at all. Use that extra time to actually talk to managers and customers. You might even use it to do some extra thinking.

and acquisitions, company closings, corporate corruption and intense pressure in the workplace contribute to the decline in employee loyalty. Tough management demands that management creates incentives to keep good people. In order to improve employee loyalty, tough managers need to do the following: Improve company culture, increase trust, create advancement opportunity, promote the stability of the company, provide autonomy and challenge, provide job stability, provide fair compensation, provide flexibility and monitor benefits. ■

Prove Your Value to the Company

Even though most senior executives and managers feel they are more valued today than a few years ago by the people for whom they work, that value can still be increased. The people and departments that deliver results receive the investments and growth opportunities; that's what tough management is all about. The top 10 ways to be more valued by your organization are: increase revenue, do more with less, increase profit, communicate more, cut costs, provide creative ideas, assume more responsibility, collaborate more, share more information and spend more time with customers.

As you attempt to align with your business' value, it is important to assess the less tangible parts of the value. For example, there is great opportunity for businesses to sell things that can't be seen. Consumers around the world in one year spent \$3.5 billion for cell-phone ring tones. More than \$1 trillion was spent on insurance. The point is there is tremendous revenue in things that you can't see.

Once your superiors understand how the value you provide is aligned with the value the business is attempting to provide, your worth to the organization will rise. By taking on more challenges in areas that are the most important to the business, you increase your value even more. ■

Force Collaboration

Tough management requires teamwork. Collaborating with others at every level of the organization is a critical skill for success for executives and managers. With the economic and competitive pressures companies face today, a more integrated approach is needed for solving problems. Forced collaboration involves priority thinking, information sharing and a willingness among employees to learn.

Collaborating with others can improve a person's ability to create work relationships, better utilize those relationships and view them as critical resources. A manager describes the need this way: "Resource management, internal and external, may be the single most important skill that executives and managers must possess in the future — where and how to find the information that you need to get the job done. That requires both management and networking skills to establish and manage relationships. Managing relationships is resource management."

Organizations that encourage collaboration with highly interactive participation by all team members can provide that organization with the great advantage of focusing all energies in an agreed-to direction.

Forced collaboration frees time for executives and managers all the way down the line, as more conflicts are resolved between departments and divisions. The forced collaboration at the MasterCraft Boat Co. in Tennessee requires that each person learn more of what the other departments are doing and the critical elements for their success. This approach helps link all the small successes to the greater strategic success of the business, as each department head becomes more aware of the impact of what he or she did on the other departments. ■

Tough Management Without Being a Tough Guy

While the first six tenets of tough management deal with quantitative improvement, such as focusing on results and forcing hard decisions, the seventh deals with the qualitative aspects: improving your work life and that of the people around you. This can be done while still maintaining a tough — but fair — posture. After all, tough management does not require treating subordinates brutally.

It takes an understanding of the situation of those being managed in order to practice tough management without appearing to be coldhearted. For example, the hours worked by executives and managers have gotten out of control. The myth of the eight-hour day has all but vanished and the nine-hour day is falling by the wayside as well. The challenge is for businesspeople to disconnect. The key is to understand that everyone is in the same situation. Managers and those being managed are all working at the same feverish pace. You have to

force yourself as well as those around you to pause and take a break; otherwise, you all will lose perspective.

Compensation

It's not just the time put in at work that causes stress; it is the actual workload that you and your colleagues face during that time. Responsibilities have increased for most workers, but only 10 percent have seen their compensation rise significantly. Economic pressures of the last few years have forced companies to trim staff while maintaining and even increasing the workload. Tough management requires that leaders take the time to check if those who have taken on additional work are being fairly compensated for their work, which is not always the case.

Here are a few ways you can change focus from work's daily grind: Take a two-hour lunch, go home early one day, think, exercise and read. Taking more breaks from work may not change the work or the workload, but it can improve the attitude of those charged with doing it.

Recognize Someone

To practice tough management without appearing tough requires that you recognize those around you for a job well done. These are, in order, the top 10 ways people want to be recognized for their work: a bonus, increased compensation, personal thank-you, increased responsibility, promotion, e-mail from a superior, personal note from a superior, recognition at a company event, time off, and a phone call from a superior.

One of the best ways to practice tough management without being a tough guy is to stop what you're doing; look around your group, department or company; and identify someone who needs and deserves a pat on the back. Thank a customer for buying your product. Thank your family for appreciating how hard you work when you are not at home. Thank the chief executive who clearly articulated the company's strategy and direction. If everyone did this, there would be a more appreciative office environment. ■

If you liked *Tough Management*, you'll also like:

1. *Coffee at Luna's* by Chuck Martin. In Martin's business fable, an overworked manager learns three principles to turn his life around.
2. *A Bias for Action* by Heike Bruch and Sumantra Ghoshal. The authors reveal how great managers get results by engaging their willpower through a combination of energy and focus.
3. *Put the Moose on the Table* by Randall Tobias with Todd Tobias. Tobias, former CEO of pharmaceutical giant Eli Lilly and Co., mixes personal anecdotes with his thoughts on effective business and leadership practices.
4. *Management Challenges for the 21st Century* by Peter F. Drucker. From managing a company to managing your career, Drucker tells you what to expect from the future.
5. *A Contrarian's Guide to Leadership* by Steven B. Sample. University of Southern California President Sample offers dozens of skills gleaned from years of experience.

For additional information on recognizing someone for doing a good job, go to: <http://my.summary.com>