

## Elon Musk Leadership Action Chart

Digital Logic	Leadership Action	Source	Analysis/Support (quote and/or tweet)
<b>1. Publicity</b> (constant self-promotion and continuous effort to remain in the public eye)  <u>Toxic Leadership traits:</u> narcissism, self-aggrandizement, self-interest, arrogance	Basic motivation.	Reich (11/08/22)          Perrigo (04/27/23)	“Musk is not exactly Donald Trump. They’re different generations, possess different skills, occupy different roles in the bizarre firmament of modern America. ... But both represent the emergence of a particularly ... personality in the early decades of the 21st century: the wildly disruptive narcissist. Both wield sledgehammers to protect their fragile egos. Both are utterly lacking in empathy. ... Both are indefatigable self-promoters. Both are billionaires, but they are not motivated primarily by money. Nor are they fueled by any larger purpose, principle or ideology. Their singular goal is to imprint their giant egos on everyone else – to exercise raw power over people. To make others grovel” (Reich).  ““Throughout his career, Musk has had an almost pathological need to promise grand visions and make himself the center of attention,’ says Jesse Lehrich, co-founder of Accountable Tech, an advocacy group. ‘He’s very Trumpian in his need to capture media attention with constantly-shifting promises, which everyone in the media covers’” (Perrigo).
	Tweets obsessively.	Paul (04/26/22)          Chong et al. (09/12/22)	“Musk has been on Twitter since 2009 and tweeted as early as 2017 expressing interest in buying it. He has also been a vocal critic of Twitter, calling for changes including rolling back content moderation and prioritizing a ‘societal imperative’ of free speech. A prolific user, Musk has 84 million followers on his account – with whom he shares memes, news about his electric vehicle company, Tesla, and, like the majority of Twitter users, pithy commentary on his day-to-day life” (Paul).  “Elon Musk is a Twitter super user. He has tweeted more than 19,000 times since joining the platform 13 years ago. This year, he has tweeted an average of six times a day. At least 150 of those posts are about Twitter itself, according to a Washington Post analysis” (Chong et al.).

	Purchased Twitter.	Chamorro-Premuzic (2023)	“One of the key facets of narcissism is grandiose exhibitionism, which is characterized by self-absorption, vanity, and self-promotional impulses and is especially well-suited to a world in which human relations have been transferred almost entirely to digital environments. More than anyone else, narcissistic individuals feel the constant need to be the center of attention, even if the means to achieving this is to engage in inappropriate, awkward, or eccentric interpersonal behaviors. ... Elon Musk, who wasn’t content with monopolizing so much attention on Twitter, so he offered \$44 billion to buy the entire business (then getting even more attention by pulling [or at least trying to] out of the agreed deal” (Chamorro-Premuzic, p. 85).
	Altered algorithm to promote his tweets.	McDougall (02/14/23)  Ghaffary (03/06/23)	“The billionaire was reportedly peeved when his Super Bowl tweet performed worse than the president’s” (McDougall).  “Musk, apparently livid because his tweets about the Super Bowl were getting fewer views than President Joe Biden’s, flew to Twitter’s headquarters and ordered engineers to change the algorithm underlying Twitter’s main product to boost his own tweets above everyone else’s” (Ghaffary).
<b>2. Intransigence</b> (simple-minded, short-sighted, dichotomous, and dogmatic thinking)  <u>Toxic Leadership traits:</u> lack of self-reflection, arrogance, scapegoating	Promoted free speech absolutism.	Alter (04/29/22)	“Jason Goldman ... says the tech rhetoric around free speech has become an obsession of the mostly white, male members of the tech elite, who made their billions in the decades before a rapidly diversifying workforce changed the culture at many of the biggest companies in Silicon Valley. ... Goldman says it’s ‘naïve’ to believe that Musk can throw out Twitter’s guardrails without degrading the platform. ‘To say you’re just going to allow for any type of abuse or harassment,’ he says, “is an inherently anti-speech position, because you’re going to drive out a set of users who would use your product but no longer feel safe.’ Tech titans often have a different understanding of speech than the rest of the world because most trained as engineers, not as writers or readers, and a lack of a humanities education might make them less attuned to the social and political nuances of speech. “Tech culture is grounded in engineering culture, which imagines itself as apolitical,” says Turner” (Alter).

		Robertson (11/23/2022)	“That makes Musk’s ownership of Twitter more than just a billionaire’s vanity project ... It’s a window into a distinct mindset, common to Silicon Valley but not exclusively of it, that glorifies individual dynamism over group-consensus building; frontier-like, suck-it-up-buttercup speech norms over crowd-pleasing moderation” (Robertson).
	Devalued content moderation.	<p>“Elon Musk declares Twitter ‘moderation council’” (10/29/22)</p> <p>Perrigo (04/27/23)</p>	<p>“Among the most urgent questions facing Twitter in its new era as a private company under Elon Musk, a self-declared ‘free speech absolutist’, is how the platform will handle moderation. ... many began testing the limits of the site just hours after the billionaire took the helm. ... dozens of extremist profiles – some newly created – circulated racial slurs and Nazi imagery while expressing gratitude to Musk. And researchers found a surge in new followers flocking to the accounts of high-profile rightwing figures in the 24 hours after Musk took over” (“Elon Musk declares Twitter”).</p> <p>Musk “fired many members of Twitter’s platform safety team just days before the U.S. midterm elections. Under Musk, Twitter has also removed bans on dozens of accounts including Neo-Nazis, and disbanded the platform’s already-existing Trust and Safety Council, which was populated by civil society groups” (Perrigo).</p>
	Reinstated Trump’s Twitter account based on an online poll.	<p><b>Musk Tweet</b> (11/20/22)</p> <p>Perrigo (04/27/23)</p>	<p>“The people have spoken. Trump will be reinstated. Vox Populi, Vox Dei.”</p> <p>“Shortly after completing his acquisition of Twitter in October 2022, Musk said he would establish a “content moderation council” to advise him on controversial decisions, such as whether to uphold former President Donald Trump’s suspension from the platform. (Musk said he would not reinstate the former president without consulting this council.) But the council was never established and in November Musk unilaterally revoked Trump’s suspension from the platform” (Perrigo).</p>
	Scared away advertisers.	Duffy (02/13/23)	“More than half of Twitter’s top 1,000 advertisers in September were no longer spending on the platform in the first weeks of January ... After Musk completed his takeover of the company in late October, advertisers began to worry about the safety and

		Duffy (04/27/23)	stability of the platform given his plans to cut staff and relax content moderation policies” (Duffy).
		Milmo (07/24/23)	<p>“All of the chaos has made it difficult to convince advertisers, which previously made up 90% of Twitter’s revenue, to rejoin the platform, after many halted spending in the wake of Musk’s takeover over concerns about increased hate speech, as well as confusion about layoffs and the platform’s future direction” (Duffy).</p> <p>“Advertising income, Twitter’s main course of income historically, has been badly damaged by an advertiser boycott driven by concerns over moderation standards on the platform – Musk has admitted it is down by 50%” (Milmo).</p>
	Removed legacy blue verified checkmarks.	Duffy (04/20/23)	“Elon Musk’s Twitter on Thursday began a purge of blue verification check marks from users who have not signed up for its subscription service, with the checks disappearing from the accounts of journalists, academics and celebrities. ... The initial rollout of the change appeared to be fairly glitchy, as blue checks disappeared and reappeared on some accounts. Some other high-profile legacy verified accounts also didn’t seem to lose their checks, at least at first” (Duffy).
	Made platform less research friendly.	Fung (04/05/23)	“After Twitter announced in February it would begin charging third parties to access its platform data, academic researchers warned that the vaguely worded plan could threaten important studies about how misinformation, harassment and other malicious activity spreads online. Now, as Twitter has released more pricing information, many of those same academics are saying their fears were well-founded, complaining that Twitter’s new tiered paywall not only charges “outrageously expensive” prices but that it also restricts the amount of accessible data so heavily that what little researchers can see, even on the most expensive tiers, is not useful for studies at any rigorous level” (Fung).
<b>3. Impertinence</b> (insensitive, callous, and unresponsive behavior;	Removed transgender protections from hateful conduct policy.	Duffy (04/19/23)	“Twitter appears to have quietly rolled back a portion of its hateful conduct policy that included specific protections for transgender people. ... Twitter also removed a line from the policy detailing certain groups of people often subject to

<p>fundamental lack of regard for the humanity of others)</p> <p><u>Toxic Leadership traits:</u> stifling, silencing, bullying, intimidating, demeaning, coercing, marginalizing, disenfranchising, lack of empathy</p>			disproportionate abuse online, including “women, people of color, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual individuals, and marginalized and historically underrepresented communities” (Duffy).
	Stifled discussion of gender.	<p><b>Musk Tweet</b> (06/21/23)</p> <p>Huppke (06/22/23)</p>	<p>“The words ‘cis’ or ‘cisgender’ are considered slurs on this platform.”</p> <p>“In the latest episode of ‘Wealthy White Dudes Get Their Tender Feelings Hurt By An Adjective’ self-proclaimed free-speech absolutist Elon Musk has decided the word ‘cisgender’ is a slur” (Huppke).</p>
	Mocked Twitter worker with a disability (and others).	<p><b>Musk Tweet</b> (03/07/23)</p> <p>Pao (04/08/22)</p>	<p>“The reality is that this guy (who is independently wealthy) did no actual work, claimed as his excuse that he had a disability that prevented him from typing, yet was simultaneously tweeting up a storm. Can’t say I have a lot of respect for that.”</p> <p>“On nonfinancial subjects, Musk, who has nearly 81 million followers, often punches down in his tweets, displaying very little empathy. He called a British caver who helped to rescue trapped young Thai divers ‘a pedo guy’ (beating a defamation suit over the slur but adding to his reputation as a bully). In February, he tweeted, then deleted, a meme comparing Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to Adolf Hitler” (Pao).</p>
	Fired employees critical of him.	<p>Bhuiyan (11/19/22)</p> <p>Duffy (03/08/23)</p>	<p>“At Twitter ... employees—or now former employees – are also seeing their voices stifled. Several employees who publicly tweeted corrections or pushed back on assertions Musk made were fired. In one case, Musk publicly announced the termination of an engineer named Eric Frohnhofer, tweeting ‘he’s fired’ in response to Frohnhofer’s tweet correcting an assessment Musk made about why the site was so slow. ... Musk is also reportedly firing employees who’ve criticized him on Slack, the third-party messaging service employees use internally” (Bhuiyan).</p> <p>“It’s not the first time Musk ... has publicly mocked employees at Twitter ... He has feuded on the platform with former Twitter executives, fired employees who criticized him and in one case</p>

			<p>publicly called out a former employee's tweets about him saying that they were the result of 'a tragic case of adult onset Tourette's'" (Duffy).</p> <p>"If the Tesla CEO's employees and critics are to be believed his 'free speech' claims are nothing but a farce. Leave aside defending their right to speak up, Musk has in the past stifled it, slapping people with lawsuits and finding a way to punish them for their condemnation. He has fired employees who have disagreed with him"</p> <p>(<a href="http://www.firstpost.com/tech/world/elon-musk-free-speech-absolutist-twitter-takeover-10601931.html">www.firstpost.com/tech/world/elon-musk-free-speech-absolutist-twitter-takeover-10601931.html</a>)</p>
	Banned some prominent journalists (and generally intolerant of criticism).	<p>Darcy (12/16/22)</p> <p>Koren (04/05/22)</p>	<p>"Twitter on Thursday evening banned the accounts of several high-profile journalists from the nation's top news organizations, marking a significant attempt by new owner and self-described free speech absolutist Elon Musk to wield his unilateral authority over the platform to censor the press" (Darcy).</p> <p>"Dip into Musk's history, though, and you'll find that his commitment to free speech has been less than absolute. He might like to be able to say anything he wants, but he bristles when what others want to say goes against his own preferences. He will grace his fans with engagement, but he has little interest in critics. And he has not always shown himself to be someone who welcomes people speaking their mind, especially not at his own companies. Musk's version of free speech, in practice, seems to be one in which only powerful people can say what they please and escape any negative consequences" (Koren).</p>
	Laid off "80% of Twitter's staff" (Duffy, 04/27/23)	Robinson (11/21/22)	<p>"Experts on workplace leadership assert that so far Musk's leadership style is headed in the wrong direction. ... Musk is treating people like collateral damage instead of human beings, forgetting basic human decency in the way he's handling the layoffs. Lim's appraisal raises the question of what impact his inhumane actions will have on the already bruised mental health of employees" (Robinson).</p>

		Sopow (12/12/22)	"Musk's cold, impersonal approach to management and leadership is antithetical to ... kinder, more humanistic approaches to work. Management approaches like Musk's threaten current business management practices that advocate for healthy, happy and engaged workplaces. Musk adheres to a mechanistic style of management that treats employees like cogs in a machine, rather than human beings" (Sopow).
	Replaced Twitter's press email auto-reply with a poop emoji.	Iovine (07/22/23)	"Back in March, owner Elon Musk announced that Twitter's press email would now auto-reply to every message with a poop emoji" (Iovine).
	Implemented policy changes that make Twitter less safe and reliable (Duffy, 04/27/23).	Sardarizadeh (11/12/22)  Fung (04/21/23)	"A wave of new paid blue tick accounts impersonating influential individuals and brands has led to chaos and confusion on Twitter. Fake 'verified' accounts in the names of politicians, celebrities, major organisations and businesses started appearing on the platform on Thursday. Twitter suspended many of them, but the company's rapidly changing attempts to address the issue added to the confusion" (Sardarizadeh).  "Twitter users awoke Friday morning to even more chaos on the platform than they had become accustomed to in recent months under CEO Elon Musk after a wide-ranging rollback of blue check marks from celebrities, journalists and government agencies. The end of traditional verification marked the beginning of a radically different information regime on Twitter, one highlighted by almost immediate impersonations of government accounts; the removal of labels previously used to identify Chinese and Russian propaganda; and a scramble by the company to individually re-verify certain high-profile figures such as Pope Francis" (Fung).
<b>4. Impulsivity</b> (erratic, unpredictable, and affective decision-making)  <u>Toxic Leadership traits:</u> arrogance, misleading, a lack of integrity, honesty, & trustworthiness	Chaotic leadership following takeover.	Robinson (11/21/22)	"Chaos continued to erupt as hoards of employees exited from Twitter on November 17th after Elon Musk's iron-fisted demands. He gave workers until 5:00 p.m. to decide whether to quit or stay and work 'long hours at high intensity.' Meanwhile, large corporations such as CBS suspended their Twitter accounts because of the tumultuous takeover and the uncertainty of its future. Musk has used the kind of oppressive leadership tactics that caused disruption in the post-pandemic workplace—the opposite of what experts call for to remedy workplace havoc

		Sopow (12/12/22)	and heal the mental health challenges that the pandemic caused” (Robinson).
		Lebowitz (12/19/22)	“Elon Musk’s acquisition of Twitter has been rocky, to say the least. Since taking over the company on Oct. 28, Musk has made a number of changes to the platform, resulting in widespread chaos and turmoil within the company” (Sopow).
		Perrigo (04/27/23)	“Musk’s reign at Twitter, which began when he took ownership of the platform in late October, has been chaotic. He has slashed the workforce by half (and has asked some to come back), temporarily suspended some journalists from the platform, converted parts of the company’s San Francisco headquarters to bedrooms, and is said to have told staff members to put in 84-hour weeks” (Lebowitz).
		Warzel (07/03/23)	“This Tuesday marked one full year since Twitter accepted Elon Musk’s \$44 billion offer to buy the social network. The 12 months that followed were marked by many memorable events—but one pattern, among all, stands out: the sheer regularity with which Musk says one thing and proceeds to do the complete opposite” (Perrigo).
			“I’ve reported on Musk for the past five years, speaking with dozens of employees in the process of trying to understand his rationales. The takeaway is clear: His motivations are frequently not what they seem, and chaos is a given. His money and power command attention and his actions have far-reaching consequences, but his behavior is rarely befitting his station” (Warzel).
	Decided to purchase Twitter (and then tried to back out of the deal).  For timeline of events, see Zahn (11/22/22)	Mac et al. (2022)	“To a degree unseen in any other mogul, the world’s richest man acts on impulse and the belief that he is absolutely right. ... As Twitter negotiated a sale to Elon Musk last month, the social media company pulled out a corporate takeover playbook. Mr. Musk, the world’s richest man, did the opposite. He had no plan for how to finance or manage Twitter, Mr. Musk told a close associate. ... And when Twitter resisted his overtures, Mr. Musk



			pressured the company with a string of tweets — some mischievous, some barbed and all impulsive” (Mac et al., 2022).
	Tweeted baseless conspiracy theory.	<b>Musk Tweet</b> (deleted)  Darcy & O’Sullivan (10/31/22)  Duffy (04/27/23)	<p>“There is a tiny possibility there might be more to this story than meets the eye.”</p> <p>“Elon Musk on Sunday gave credence to a fringe conspiracy theory about the violent attack on Paul Pelosi. The new Twitter owner tweeted a link to an article full of baseless claims about Pelosi. The article was posted on a website that purports to be a news outlet. Musk, who has 112 million followers on the platform he now owns, posted the baseless story about Pelosi in response to a tweet from Hilary Clinton at 8:15 am ET. He later deleted the tweet around 2 pm, but not before racking up more than 28,000 retweets and 100,000 likes” (Darcy &amp; O’Sullivan).</p> <p>“He’s also tweeted a long list of eccentric remarks from his personal Twitter account, including sharing conspiracy theories” (Duffy).</p>
	Changed Twitter logo and crowdsourced logo design.	Milmo (07/24/23)  Adarlo (07/25/23)	<p>“the helter-skelter feel of the rebranding exercise underlined by the choice of a crowdsourced logo based on an international encoding standard” (Milmo).</p> <p>“Cops were called yesterday to the San Francisco headquarters of the social media company formerly known as Twitter ... because crews were trying to remove the Twitter sign but apparently didn’t have required permits. All told, it’s an episode that’s both amusing and painfully symbolic of the much-derided rollout of the new company name, not to mention the general tenure of CEO Elon Musk’s mercurial and at times shambolic management style” (Adarlo).</p>
	Limited how many tweets people can view (and then changed the limit multiple times in a few hours).	<b>Musk Tweet</b> (07.01.23)	<p>“To address extreme levels of data scraping &amp; system manipulation, we’ve applied the following temporary limits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Verified accounts are limited to reading 6000 posts/day</li> <li>- Unverified accounts to 600 posts/day</li> <li>- New unverified accounts to 300/day”</li> </ul>

		Walrath-Holdridge (07/25/23)	<p>“Initially, Musk said verified accounts would be limited to reading 6,000 posts daily and unverified accounts would be limited to only 600. A few hours later, he amended this statement by tweeting that rate limits would increase to 8,000 tweets a day for verified accounts, 800 for unverified and 400 for new accounts. An hour after that, he changed it to a limit of 10,000 a day for verified accounts, 1,000 for unverified and 500 for new accounts” (Walrath-Holdridge).</p>
	Banned (then unbanned) links to other social media sites.	DeGeurin (12/19/22)	<p>“Twitter has once again rushed to undo an impulsive new policy less than a day after introducing it. This week’s victim: Elon Musk’s sudden decision to ban external links to other social media sites” (DeGeurin).</p>
	Banned (then unbanned and later rebanned) @ElonJet	<p><b>Musk Tweet</b> (07/11/22)</p> <p>Perrigo (04/27/23)</p> <p>Serrano (12/14/22)</p>	<p>“My commitment to free speech extends even to not banning the account following my plane, even though that is a direct personal safety risk.”</p> <p>“On Nov. 7, 2022, Musk tweeted that he would not ban an account that monitored the movements of his Gulfstream G700 private jet in real time. The account would often post tweets revealing short flights—the 40 miles from San Jose to San Francisco, for example—that hurt the electric vehicle billionaire’s environmentally-friendly image. ... In December, Musk banned the account, claiming it had violated Twitter’s doxxing policy” (Perrigo).</p> <p>“Twitter has banned and unbanned @ElonJet, the popular bot account that tracked CEO Elon Musk’s plane, days after the account’s owner accused the social media platform of shadowbanning it. ... Over the weekend, Jack Sweeney ... claimed that an anonymous Twitter employee had told him the company had severely limited the visibility of @ElonJet beginning on Dec. 2. The reported move came roughly four weeks after Musk made a big deal about how he wouldn’t ban @ElonJet because of his ‘commitment to free speech.’ ... By Monday, Sweeney said that it looked like Twitter had reversed course and reinstated @ElonJet’s visibility. However, the company seemed to have changed its mind again and taken an even more drastic move by early morning Wednesday, when</p>

			some users noticed that @ElonJet had been suspended” (Serrano).
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