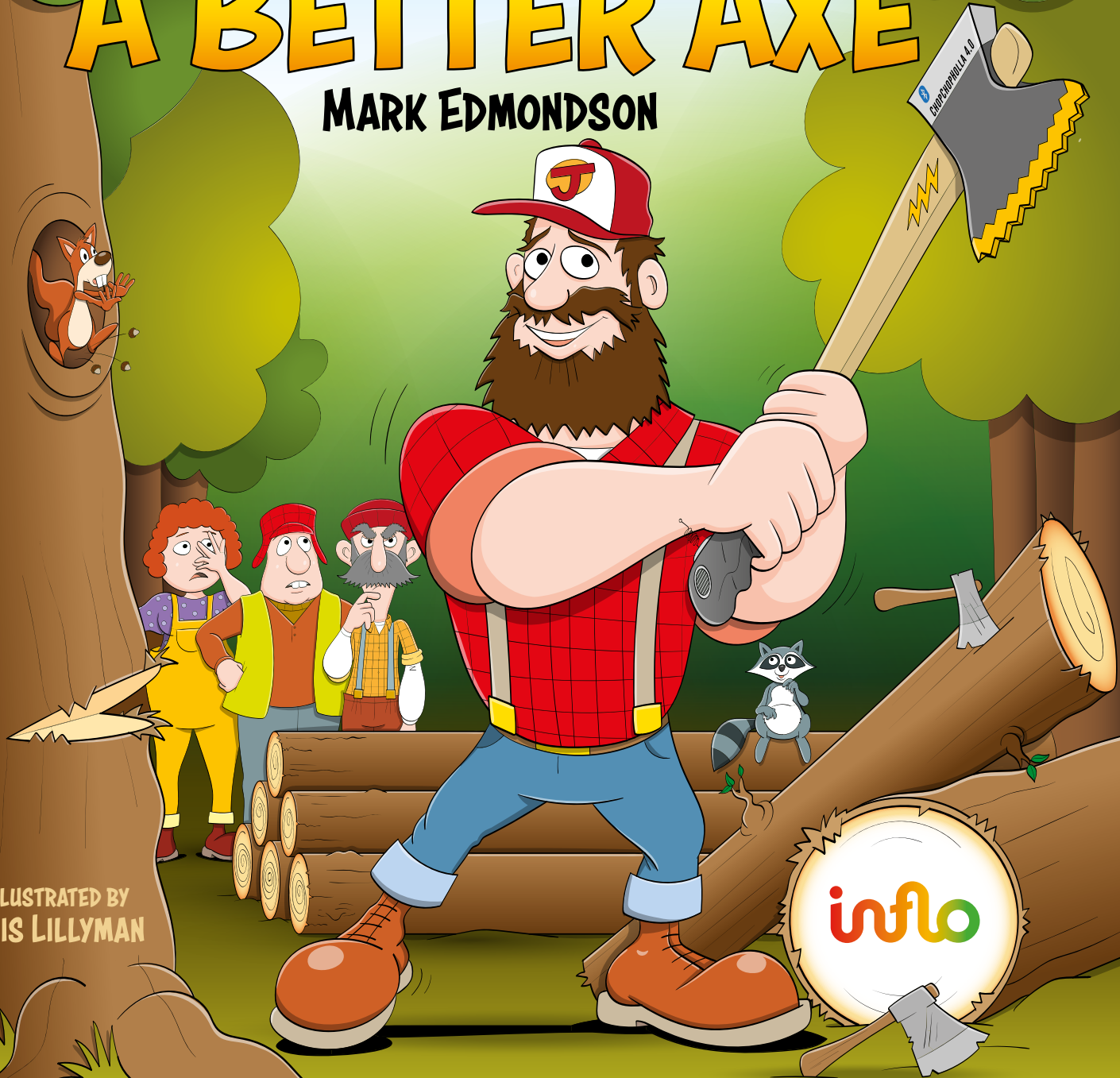


# A BETTER AXE

MARK EDMONDSON



ILLUSTRATED BY  
KRIS LILLYMAN

info

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Inside Front Cover  
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Published May 2023 by Info Software Limited

E.Volve Business Centre  
Cygnet Way  
Houghton le Spring  
DH4 5QY  
United Kingdom

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Printed in the United Kingdom



## About the Author

Mark's enthusiasm for technology was sparked at an early age, when he created a database management solution to help his father and other farmers manage onerous livestock administration.

Later he would start his career in professional services, working for a small local accounting firm before joining Big 4 firm, PwC. In his time at PwC, Mark played a key role leading several global innovation projects. These projects transformed the technology and process used by over 15,000 PwC auditors around the world.

In 2016 Mark founded Inflo, to transform the audit and accounting profession by making innovative technologies available to all accounting firms. The Inflo platform is now used in over 104 countries, supporting effective delivery of audit and accounting services to benefit both accounting firms and their clients.

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To learn more about Inflo, use the QR code or visit  
[www.inflosoftware.com](http://www.inflosoftware.com)





Once upon a time, there lived a man named Jack. Jack ran a logging company. He was known and respected as an experienced logger.

There was great demand for Jack's services, but his team were struggling.



Jack decided to speak with his team leader Susan to understand the problem.

"Why is it taking so long for us to complete these tree-clearing contracts, Susan?" asked Jack.

## EFFICIENCY CHART

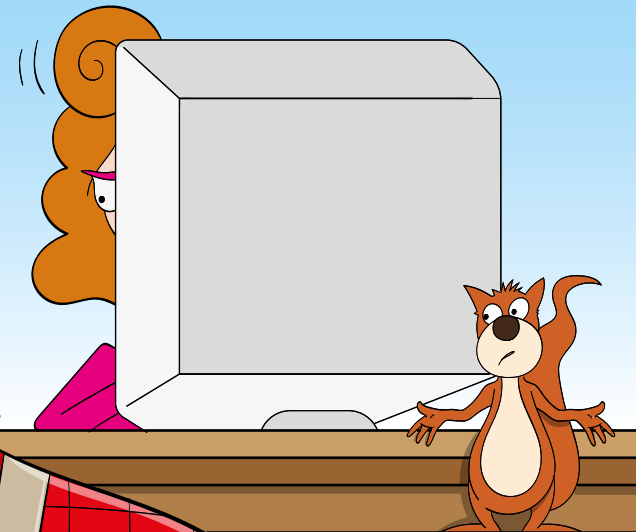
"Our team doesn't seem as efficient as I was in my day. Do they need me to give them more training on how I used to do it? Or one of my inspirational 'work harder' speeches?"

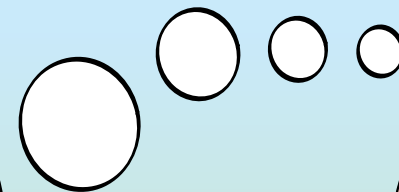


"That's not the issue, Jack," sighed Susan. "The team are working incredibly hard, but the work is more difficult because of the axes they are using."

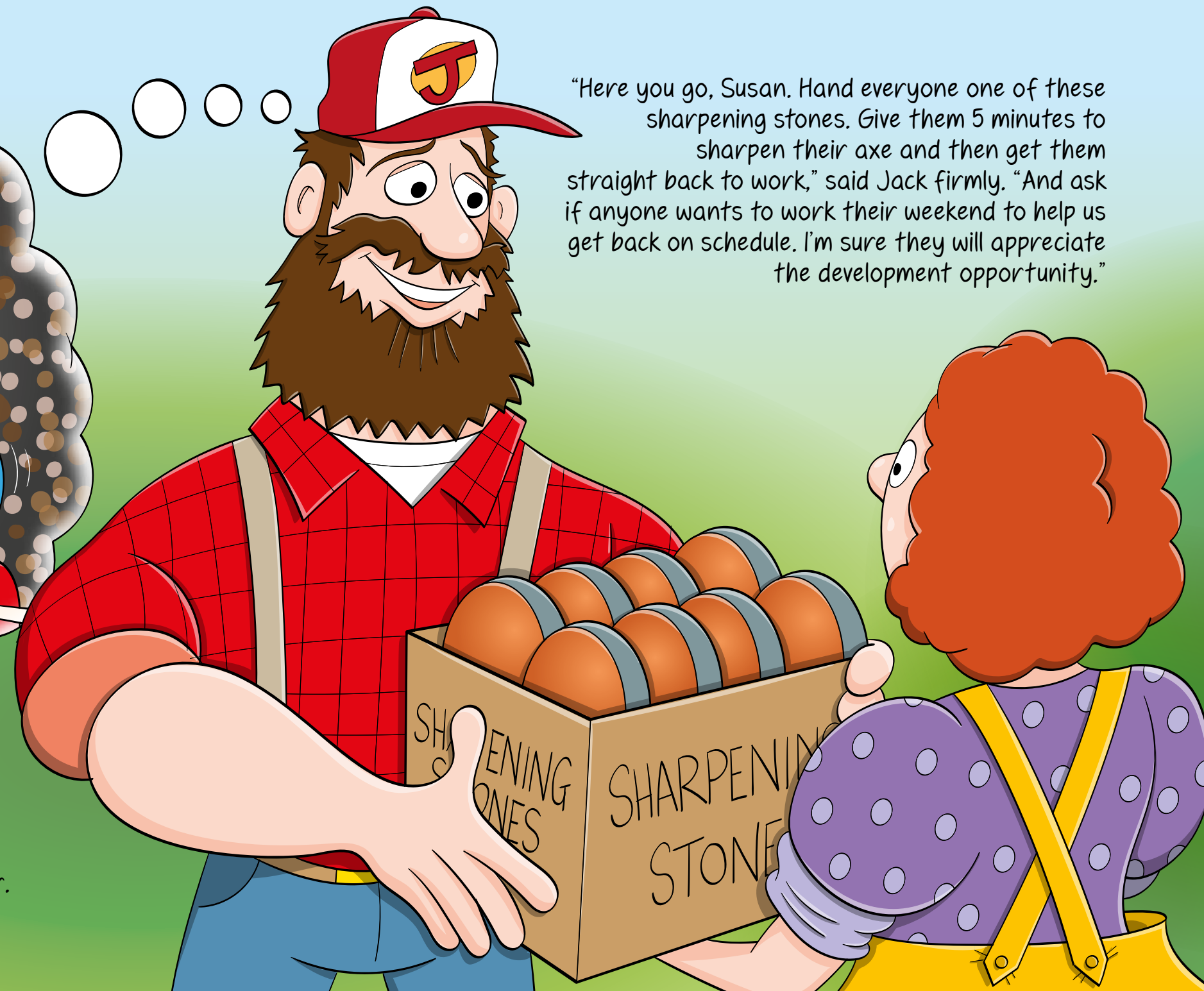


"Understood. Axe issues. Leave it with me," Jack shouted in no particular direction, walking away before Susan could finish.





"Here you go, Susan. Hand everyone one of these sharpening stones. Give them 5 minutes to sharpen their axe and then get them straight back to work," said Jack firmly. "And ask if anyone wants to work their weekend to help us get back on schedule. I'm sure they will appreciate the development opportunity."



The next day Jack returned swaggering like Floyd Mayweather walking to the ring for another fake fight with a YouTube influencer.



A few weeks later, Jack was growing more concerned reviewing his TreeTracker printout, which plotted his number one key performance indicator: trees-felled-to-axe-held.

He was now having to turn down some big clients which was damaging his reputation.





"We need to finish these small annoying contracts so we can work on bigger deals. Did the team not sharpen the axes properly? Or are you just being soft on them? I hope they are working all the hours they can," barked Jack.

"They are," said Susan wearily. A hard week of work helping the team had reduced her tolerance of Jack.



"The team are working through the night and sleeping on site. Sharpening the axes has had no impact. The problem with the axes is that they are no longer up to the job."



"Many of the axe shafts are broken, the blades are too small, and we're now facing a broader range of trees. Some of them are very difficult to cut down with axes."



"OK. I will go to the store and explore new equipment," proposed Jack. "Maybe then we'll get back on track. I don't know why you didn't explain the issue more clearly when I asked you weeks ago, Susan."





## BARGAIN BLADES

It had been some time since Jack had been to the store. When he arrived, he was surprised by the huge range of logging equipment on display. In his day, you had two axes to choose from. Now there were all kinds of tools for every logging task. He didn't know where to start.

## SAWS AND SANDERS

HIGH  
GRAIN

LOW  
GRAIN

Angela, a sales assistant at Tool Temple, saw Jack's confusion and approached him. "How can I help you today?" she asked. "My logging team need to work quicker," stated Jack. "What axes do you have?"

DEALS  
OF THE  
DAY

## SAFETY EQUIPMENT

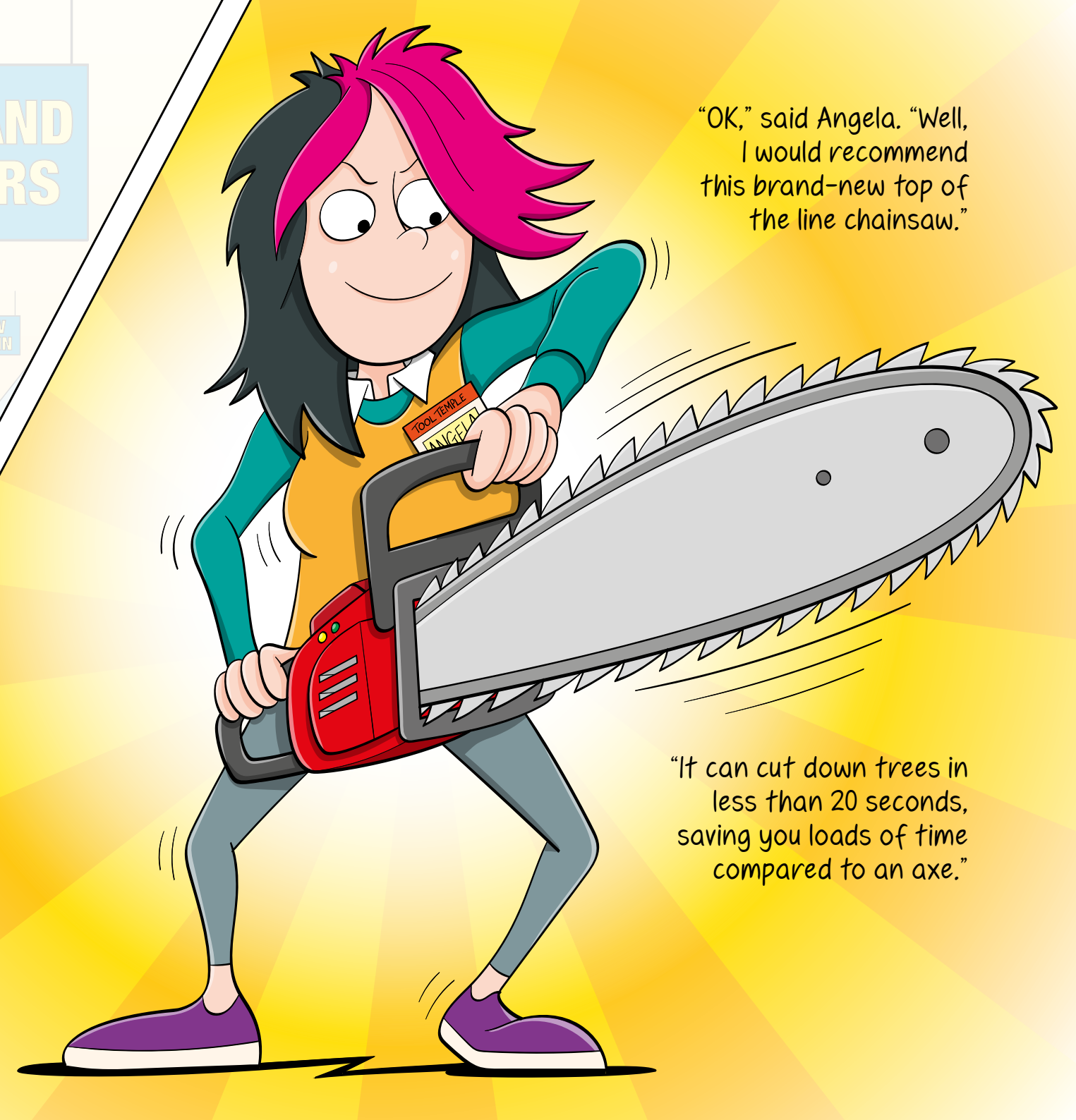






"What type of trees are you cutting down?" asked Angela.

"Big trees," said Jack abruptly, a little annoyed at such an irrelevant question from someone who clearly had no logging experience. "You know, with green leaves and brown trunks."



"OK," said Angela. "Well, I would recommend this brand-new top of the line chainsaw."

"It can cut down trees in less than 20 seconds, saving you loads of time compared to an axe."

"A chainsaw you say," pondered Jack. "I've heard about them. All the big national logging companies are supposedly using them. They are always shouting about chainsaws at the ForestFest conference."

SAWS AND  
SAND

HIGH  
GRAIN



"But I think it's just marketing, and they are really just using axes. Tommy TreeTrunks, an industry thought leader I follow, reckons they are just overhyped by chainsaw companies. He posted just last week that they are unsafe and expensive. I doubt they will catch on."







"They aren't very expensive now. As a logging company, we can even lease them to you at a very reasonable rate to avoid upfront investment," shared Angela enthusiastically. She deliberately paused to build the suspense before revealing the low subscription price.



"That's way too expensive!" declared Jack with authority. "These chainsaw companies clearly have no idea the margins we're working with in the logging industry. And there is no mention of the use of chainsaws within the Logging Standards that we follow."



## SAWS AND SANDERS

"Those standards were written 20 years ago," countered Angela. "We've just licensed 5 chainsaws to a new start-up logging company. I believe they are going to be offering comparable services to you. I would recommend you consider a more modern approach. Chainsaws start from as little as..."



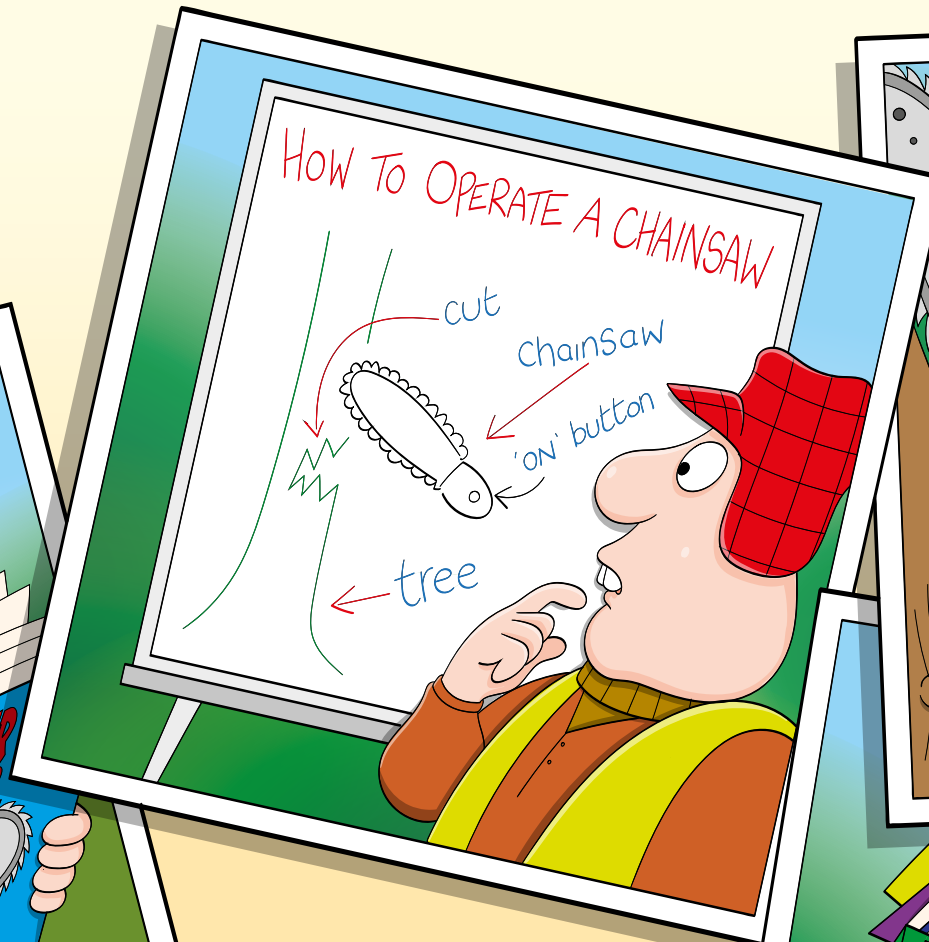
## DEALS OF THE WEEK

TOOL TEMPLE  
ANGELA





"But they work differently to axes don't they?" interjected Jack. "Do you really expect my team to stop cutting down trees for a whole day and learn how to use a chainsaw?"



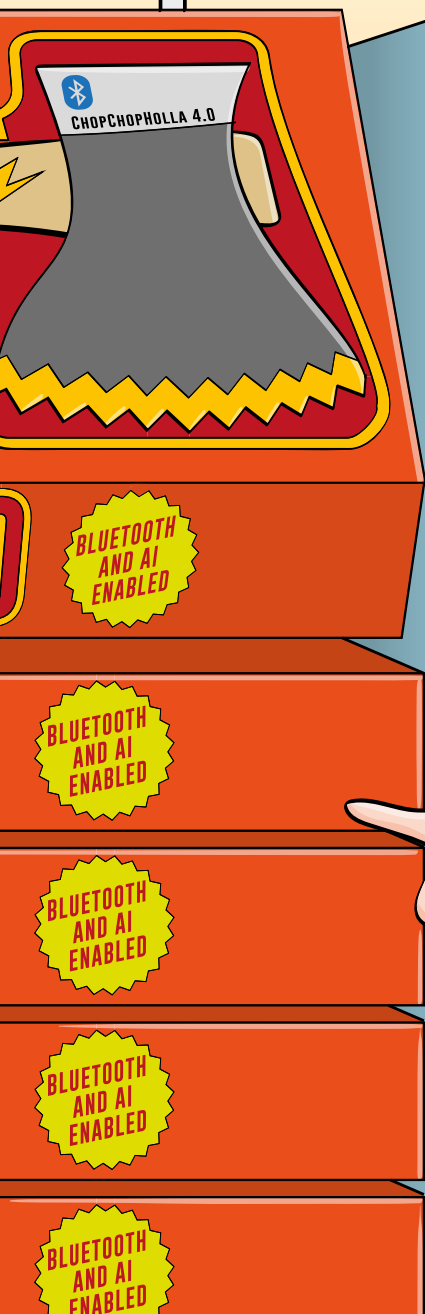
"We're behind schedule so I can't have my team sitting around doing nothing while they learn something new. Where are your axes?"



ER

"Just down here," said Angela, discretely rolling her eyes to her colleague. "This is our axe range. I really think you should try out a chainsaw in our yard though before you rule them out. I can show you how they reduce wastage through a cleaner cut and..."

AXE





# SPECIAL OFFER

## CHOPCHOPHOLLA

### 4.0

- ERGONOMIC HANDLE GRIP
- FINEST HICKORY WOOD SHAFT
- ALLOY STEEL HEAD

BLUETOOTH  
AND AI  
ENABLED

CHOPCHOPHOLLA 4.0

## CHOPCHOPHOLLA 4.0

BLUETOOTH  
AND AI  
ENABLED

## CHOPCHOPHOLLA 4.0

BLUETOOTH  
AND AI  
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## CHOPCHOPHOLLA 4.0

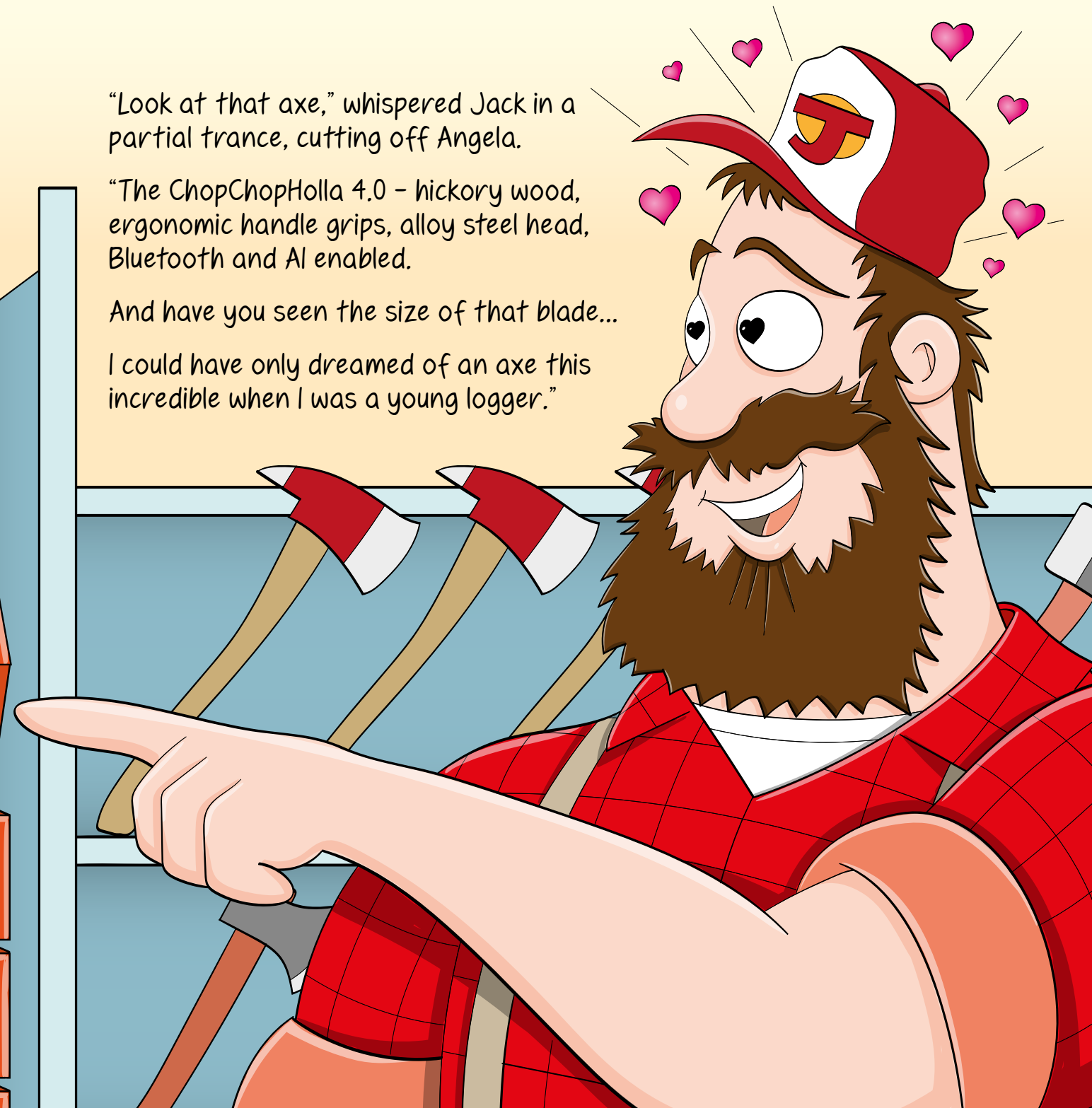
BLUETOOTH  
AND AI  
ENABLED

"Look at that axe," whispered Jack in a partial trance, cutting off Angela.

"The ChopChopHolla 4.0 - hickory wood, ergonomic handle grips, alloy steel head, Bluetooth and AI enabled.

And have you seen the size of that blade...

I could have only dreamed of an axe this incredible when I was a young logger."



SPECIAL OFFER

"I learnt the trade using an axe, so an axe will work fine for my team. And it's the same brand as the axes I bought 10 years ago. If it's on special offer it must be good - I bet, it's probably quicker than that chainsaw too. I'll take 50."

AXE

CHOPCHOPHOLLA

CHOPCHOPHOLLA 4.0

4.0

BLUETOOTH  
AND AI  
ENABLED

- ERGONOMIC HANDLE GRIP
- FINEST HICKORY WOOD SHAFT
- ALLOY STEEL HEAD

CHOPCHOPHOLLA 4.0

BLUETOOTH  
AND AI  
ENABLED

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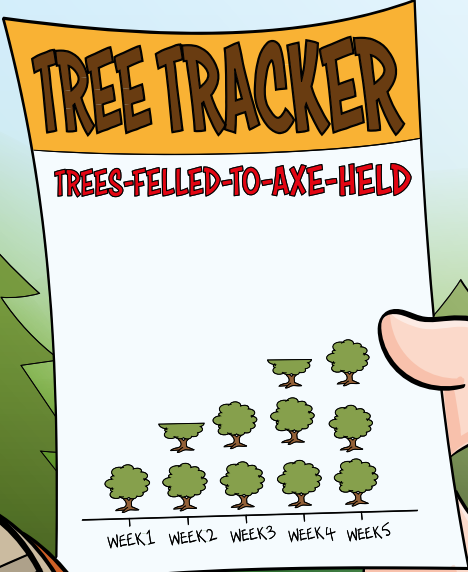
BLUETOOTH  
AND AI  
ENABLED

CHOPCHOPHOLLA

BLUETOOTH  
AND AI  
ENABLED



A month later Jack was very pleased with his purchase. His trees-felled-to-axe-held ratio was improving and as a result he was now taking on more work.



He had lost a few deals he was certain he would win. But life was good sitting in the glass corner office he had recently installed in his log cabin HQ.



One evening, Jack was in his local bar, Ash You Like It, when he bumped into one of his former employees - who he thought might be called Jason. Jason, if that was his name, had left Jack's team recently, but Jack wasn't sure why.



*Ash you like it*



"Good to see you again mate," said Jack, hedging his bets. "How are you doing?"

"I'm fantastic," said Jason, a little drunkenly after the tequila slammer his team leader had just ordered. "We are out celebrating another contract win!" he shouted, louder than was necessary. The juke box had just stopped playing Jack's Stereophonics song selection. "My back is so much better now. It was great working for you, but I'm glad I joined Charlie's team. Have a great night, Jack!"







Jack returned to his pint, pondering 2 things. Firstly, whether his team was as tight-knit as Charlie's seemed to be. And secondly, whether to relive his youth and order a tequila slammer.



The next day, Jack video called Susan from his corner office.  
"Hi, can you see me ok? I can only see you and not me. Damn technology. Anyway, the tall guy that left our team recently. Was it Jason? Why did you let him go?" quizzed Jack.

MANAGING DIRECTOR

CANCELLED

CANCELLED



"It was Jason. I really liked him. He was always asking questions. I thought he was very talented and had a bright logging future ahead of him. Jason felt our practices were dated and inefficient. He grew frustrated and fatigued. When he heard about Charlie's business, he jumped at the chance to join them," shared Susan, in a robotic tone caused by an unreliable internet connection.





“Does Charlie’s team have better axes?” challenged Jack. “Jason clearly doesn’t know about the investment I’ve made in new axes. Gen Z are so entitled. They expect everything handed to them on a plate.”

“Charlie’s team are using chainsaws,” explained Susan patiently. “Their approach is far superior to ours. They clear trees far quicker and have less waste as the chainsaws make a cleaner cut.”



“Some of our customers are starting to ask me why we aren’t using chainsaws. Jason isn’t the only one to leave because of this, by the way. There have been 3 others this month and I can’t find replacements for any of them.”

PERSONNEL FILE

JOB APPLICATIONS

CUSTOMER ENQUIRIES

As Jack ended the call by holding down the power button on his laptop, he sat back to reflect.

People had left his team before, but they went on to do other things. Not to join rival logging companies. He reassured himself by checking this week's trees-felled-to-axe-held printout.







"Still increasing baby. You'll need more than a few chainsaws to knock the Tree Tycoon from his perch, Charlie," he muttered to himself, accidentally drinking from the dirty coffee cup he'd left on his desk from the previous day.

## NEW CONTRACTS WON

LARGE  
CONTRACTS

SMALL  
CONTRACTS

A year later, Jack's logging team was down to 15 staff. Jack had decided to focus on smaller logging contracts. Partly because they were unattractive for chainsaw crews. And because it meant he could avoid the new safety rules now applicable to larger projects.

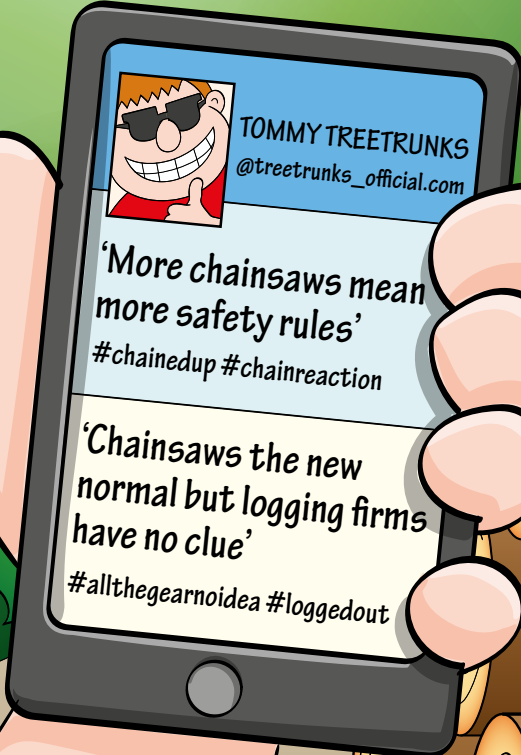
STORE  
ROOM







Tommy Treeunks was regularly posting about the new safety rules. He said they were because of chainsaws and the national logging firms not using them correctly.



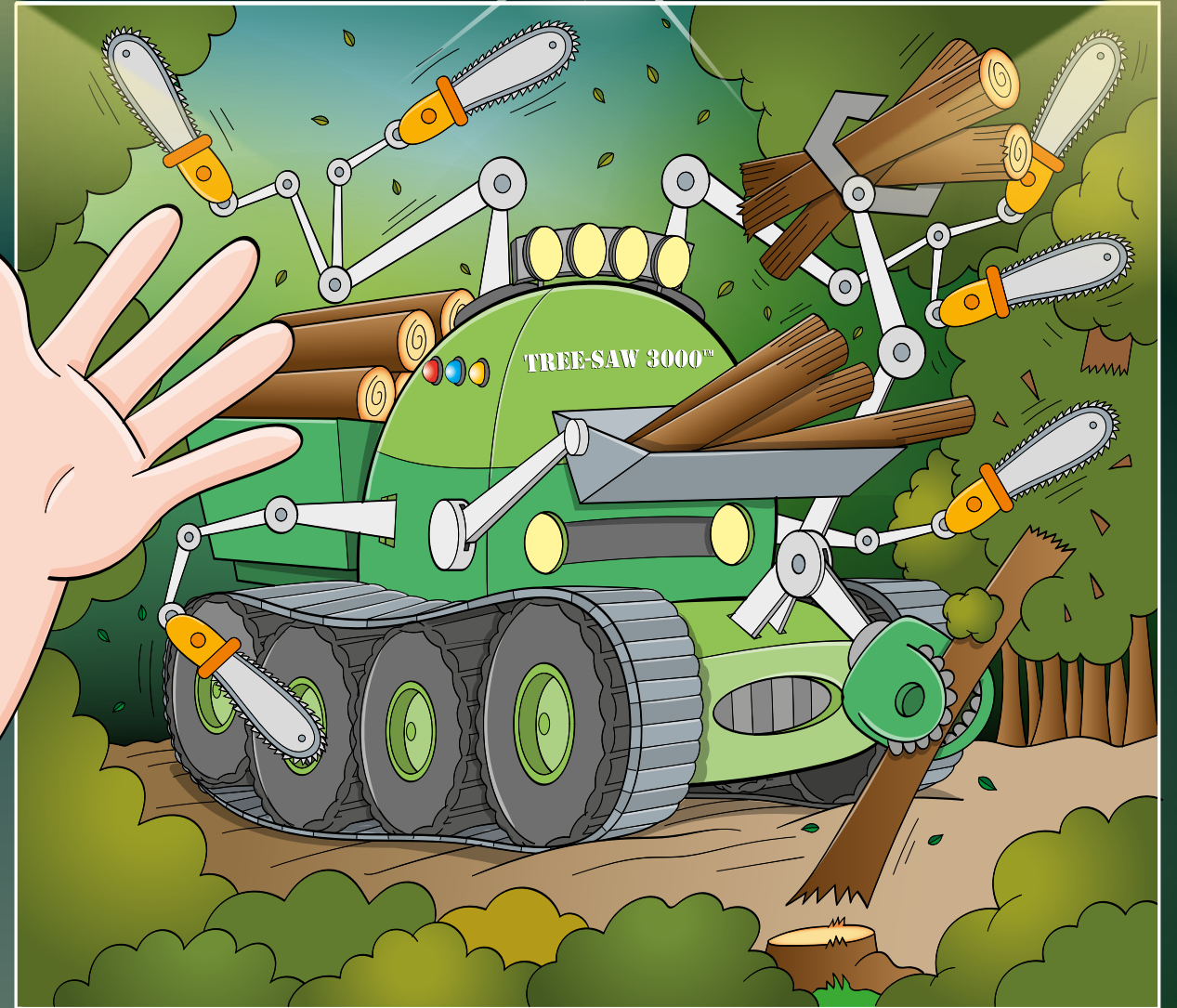




Susan had joined Charlie's team. The Tree Musketeers now had 150 staff working for team leader Jason. Their award-winning logging practices were envied by all. Charlie was keynoting at this year's ForestFest as one of the logging industry's leading innovators.



Charlie had just invested in the Tree-Saw 3000™, the first end-to-end logging machine. This colossal piece of equipment included automated chainsaws. It performed the cutting and trimming of trees as well as chopping and loading the logs for transport.



With his core business more automated, Charlie was expanding nationally and adding new, more valuable, service offerings. His most in-demand and highest margin service was advising on logging sustainability. He and his team were excited for the future, embracing new opportunities.

THE  
**TREE**  
**MUSKETEERS**  
COMPANY



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Jack's company is threatened by technology. His once-renowned services have become dated and obsolete. Facing a demotivated team and recruitment nightmares, he reluctantly attempts to modernise his working practices. But will his innovation strategy be successful?

A Better Axe is a simple story packed with insights to support navigating technology change. It is an amusing and informative tale including lessons learnt and mistakes witnessed as companies attempt to innovate traditional processes.

The axe is a metaphor for the old way of working and the chainsaw is the new technology now available on the market. This book shows you how to:

- Understand current challenges,
- Be more strategic,
- Capitalise on technology opportunities, and
- Focus on your people.

Learn how to make smarter technology decisions, manage change and embrace modern, digital ways of working.

