

# LEDGEROCK

## CONSULTING

### Sir Ernest Shackleton and The Endurance

In 1914 the following ad ran in the London newspapers:

“Men wanted for Hazardous Journey. Small wages, bitter cold, long months of complete darkness, constant danger, safe return doubtful. Honor and recognition in case of success.”

Imagine the type of person Ernest Shackleton was in search of? And we think we have recruiting problems. Who would want to do this type of work? But many did, in fact, thousands applied for one of the most treacherous expeditions ever attempted. On December 5, 1914 The Endurance set sail from South Georgia for a 634 day expedition of Antarctica.

The journey of the Endurance is the well known story of Earnest Shackleton and his 27 man crew. It goes a bit like this:

12/5(Day 1) Georgia	The excited team of experienced seamen left the whaling station in rugged South Georgia
1/19 (Day 45) vise.	The first disaster struck. The Weddell Sea froze and closed around them like a vise. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Two attempts to free The Endurance failed moving only 150 yards in two days.</li></ul>
2/24(Day 84)	The crew resigned themselves to spending the winter on board; there they stayed until mid-July.
July 20(Day 232)	Ice pressure tightened, pumps failed, water poured into the ship, timbers began to crack. They were undeterred.
10/27(Day 332)	Masts tumbled and the ice ripped through the timbers. It was time to leave the safety of the ship and camp on the frozen ice. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>* They attempted to march across hundreds of miles of frozen ice.</li><li>* They endured the grueling task of pulling hundred pound sleds and life boats.</li><li>* After two days they had gone less than two miles.</li></ul>
10/30(Day 335)	They made camp on the ice floe for 49 days.
12/18 (Day 384)	They made one more attempt to drag the boats to open water. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>* Another unsuccessful attempt</li><li>* Food was low, eating local seals to survive and there they remained until spring.</li></ul>
4/ 9 (Day 491)	Finally, the ice cracked beneath them and opened the sea to travel. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>* They spent the next five days in freezing water as it tumbled over them it and froze to their clothes.</li><li>* They were weak, sick and craving fresh water and food.</li></ul> Imagine the coldest moment of your life, if you can and the day you were the most hungry and so sick with diarrhea you could barely move and imagine that you now must build shelter.

- 4/15(Day 497) They camped on Elephant Island on the first solid ground in 497 days.
- Snow was a mixture of frozen penguin guano which melted producing a foul smelling yellow mud
  - There was little food and outlook was bleak. What would they we do now?
- 4/23(Day 506) Shackleton sent a rescue team to find help leaving them hopelessly abandoned on the island.
- 5/10(Day 523) 16 days later over treacherous waters, the small band of exhausted sailors landed on the wrong side of South Georgia.
- 8/30 (Day 634) It took three attempts to rescue the crew.  
Final Journal entry reads:  
Rescued! August 30, 1916  
All well! At last! All ahead Full.

In the same time period another crew, The Karluk launched a similar expedition to the North and all perished. What made the difference? Many have speculated about both tales and the conclusion is usually the same...leadership and team work.

As we approach our challenging goals, one can only conclude that our task is miniscule compared to Shackleton and his crew, but none the less important.

Each member of his crew took ownership of every task assigned them, no matter how unimportant it seemed against the gargantuan hope of making it home. Each team member saw their role as critical.

One of the greatest lessons from the expedition of The Endurance is to never lose sight of the ultimate goal but focus your energy on the short term objectives.