

Jim's Profit Accelerator 40: Garlic Leadership

The magic of garlic is that it enhances the flavor of countless foods. Whether it's chopped, diced, or pressed, garlic produces a remarkable jump in the two vital elements of food: taste and nutrition. Garlic leadership can deliver the same performance boost to your company. Think about the segments of a garlic clove; each must be unwrapped and properly prepped for maximum effect.

Garlic leadership is a precise tool with these three segments:

- Recognition
- Reinforcement
- Reliability

Applied properly, they'll boost accountability.

The chef doesn't ask, "Why doesn't the food taste right?" Instead, he considers what he can do to make the food taste right. It makes about as much sense for a leader to ask, "Why don't they —?" about her people. Instead, winning leaders ask, "What can I do?" If you're the leader, it is about you.

SPEED BUMP: It's not, "Why don't they —?"; it's "What can I do?"

Here's how to apply the three segments.

Recognition

The simplest of the three, it's about the other person, not the leader. Effective recognition usually is not about money. It has these core elements:

- Specific: Note exactly what the person did or produced.
- Immediate: Deliver the recognition as soon after the result as possible.
- Simple: Say something like, "Nice job on those tough packages. They went on time, and our customers will be pleased."

Reinforcement

Strangely, reinforcement can be positive or negative. Its valence is often more powerful than its precision.

Positive reinforcement makes the other want more of it and redouble efforts with enthusiasm. Think: The feeling when I reach a goal. Application: Treat each advance with positive reinforcement.

Negative reinforcement creates fear and a desire to avoid. In emergencies—like fire and military combat—negative reinforcement works. Otherwise it's seldom more than a leader dumping frustration on another, instead of owning and dealing with it. Think: Instead of saying what to avoid, say what to do. Application: Threaten only in the context of a written warning, with specific remedies and dates and vague consequences.

Reliability

Most leaders love some risk and uncertainty, which looks a lot like opportunity. Many of your employees want minimum uncertainty coupled with a bit of opportunity along with guardrails to help them excel. Think: Is this new initiative more important than what our folks are working on right now? Lacking overwhelming evidence, put it off. Application: Recognize and reinforce current progress, and work off your impatience and anxiety with exercise or your favorite recreation.

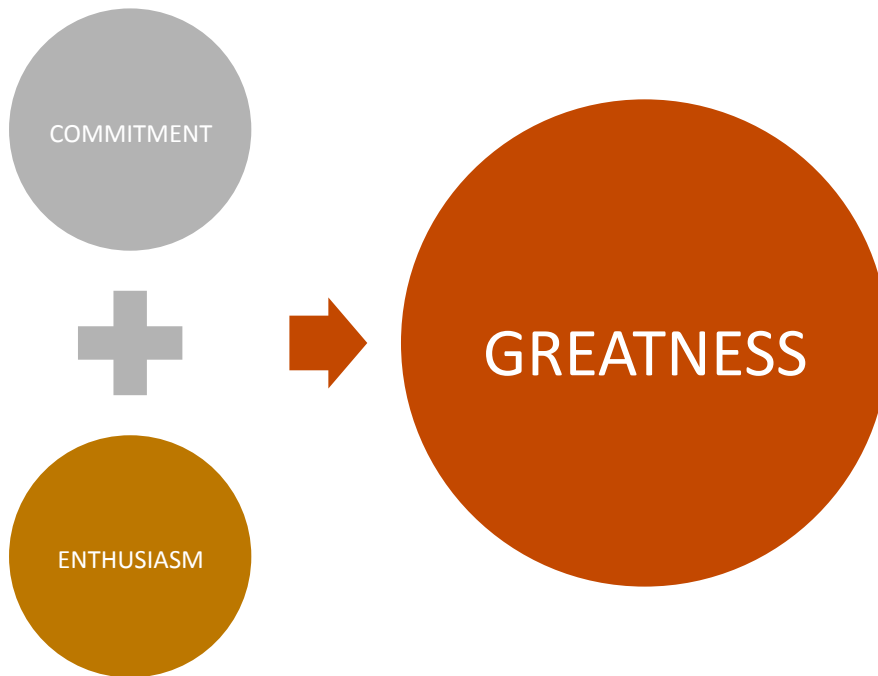
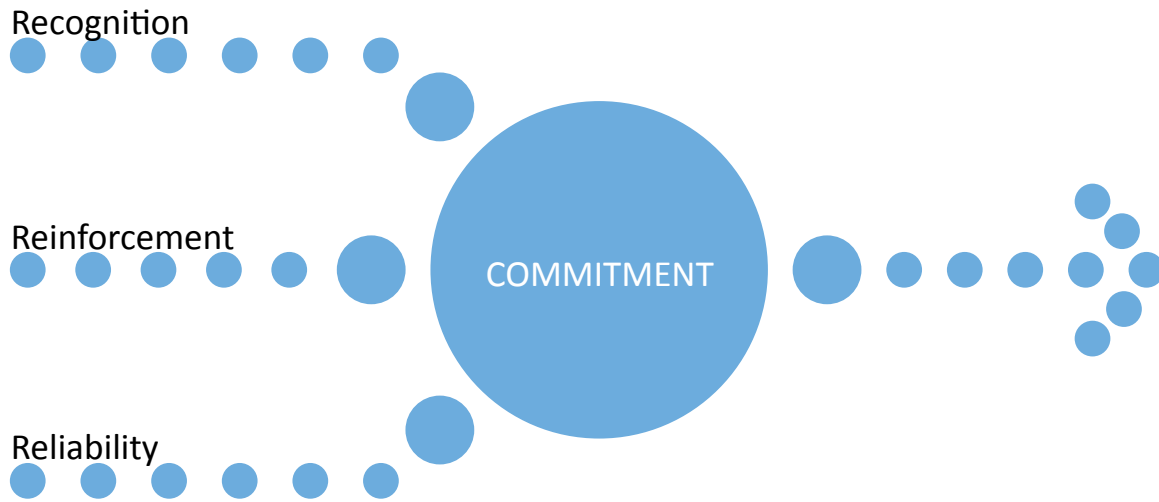
SPEED BUMP: Reliable Leadership = Predictable Work Environment.

Challenged organizations produce employees who are conflicted, frightened, and confused about their roles and how they can contribute.

Winning organizations are full of folks who generally are committed to finding their piece of company goals, as they understand it. That commitment is built on predictable rules: "How we do things here," sometimes called *culture*. That commitment is the engine that drives daily success in serving customers in a quality way. It may also help drive improvements in efficiency, if approached the right way. Without it, it can become a culture of compliance, of minimizing pain and risk—not the path to greatness.

At a manufacturing company where I worked, we used a daily review of three metrics to recognize and reinforce success publicly. The metrics, meeting time, and membership were reliably the same. All production leads, department supervisors, and leaders met daily to applaud wins together. Then we identified the day's obstacles and figured out how to get past them as well as possible. This wasn't just simple, it was powerful: Earnings jumped to multiples of the budget, to our delight.

Here's how it looks:



ACCELERANT: What's the garlic for your company's success?

Call me.

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Jim Grew is an expert in CEO-level strategy and executive leadership whose clients refer to him as the Business Defogger and Accelerator. Jim helps leaders swiftly discover the hidden opportunities within their businesses and exploit them for dramatic results. Nearly three decades of success as a COO and CEO coupled with his experience running nine thriving

businesses provide the foundation for his consulting work as president of the Grew Company. He presents regularly to industry groups, mentors business leaders, and shares insights on his blog, BizBursts.com: <http://bizbursts.com/>. He holds BA and MBA degrees from Stanford University.

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