



DO BUSINESS FASTER™

Jim's Profit Accelerator 194 Do You Have the Courage to Be Coached?

Maria Sharapova is one of the best tennis players in the world, ranking only behind the Williams sisters in number of singles wins (36) and Grand Slam titles (5). She travels more than 260 days a year with her four support folks: her mom, her coach, her trainer, and her fitness coach. Yes, four.

She and her dad invested in the Bollettieri Tennis Academy at age seven, because it was the best in the world. Her dad paid for it with his modest income as a construction worker.

It isn't that she has a coach because she's now rich; she's rich because she applied what her coaches taught her.

SPEED BUMP: It's a destructive myth that only losers and the rich have coaches.

Most of the coaching that's done, especially among business leaders, isn't remedial; it's to help successful folks take it up a notch. It's also to help good performers become good enough to earn the next promotion, with a better chance of doing that job well.

Think about it: A coach is an investment for the business, just like a machine or a software upgrade. No business will make an investment unless there's a good chance of a solid return.

Resistance to coaching often comes from fears like these:

1. The coach will "find out" my weaknesses and my career will be damaged.
2. My boss wants me to be coached because I'm falling short in my career.
3. The coach will exploit my weaknesses to make him look good to my boss.

SPEED BUMP: If your company offers you a coach, take it. STAT.

Alan Mullally, former CEO of both Boeing and Ford, turned around each of those companies. He had a personal coach for much of his time as CEO at each company. He was also named the 2011 CEO of the Year by [Chief Executive](#) magazine.

The fact is that most effective top leaders, and many in lesser roles, have coaches; they just don't talk about it.

SPEED BUMP: Fear of having a coach is an indicator of fear of success.

If you're doing "well enough," consider the world you are working in: accelerating change, dramatic differences in what success demands, generational change among your people. There's a reason it's called disruptive change.

SPEED BUMP: Doing well enough guarantees that you'll fall behind.

Moving up to a new position frequently means receiving diminishing feedback, because your higher perceived rank dilutes communication. Fear is the enemy of feedback, and junior people may be increasingly reluctant to provide the crystal-clear feedback that winning leaders need.

Imagine trying to learn to hit a tennis ball without someone pointing out your errors in positioning, footwork, swing timing, and so forth. These critical skills are nearly invisible to you as the player.

Foundational Capital, a Palo Alto venture capital firm with multiple start-ups (some successful), looks for entrepreneurs with "...more intellectual honesty. If they are screwing up, they are the first ones to say 'We need help.' A lot of first-time entrepreneurs think our expectation is that they are infallible...and that leads to bad decisions."*

SPEED BUMP: Do you refuse help because you need to be infallible?

The trap here is asking for help on non-vital items but hiding problems that you truly don't know how to solve, or even define. Don't fall for it.

ACCELERANT: Where will you get accurate feedback about your leadership?

For more information on how you can accelerate revenues and profits in your business, please call or email me.

A note on **SPEED BUMPS:** Use them to click quickly with an idea that can immediately be implemented in your life as a business leader. Think: "How can I use this today?" or "Who can use this?"

* *Wall Street Journal*, June 13, 2018, p. R1.

For more information, visit www.grewco.com.

Jim Grew, the Business Defogger and Accelerator, helps leaders discover hidden opportunities within their businesses and exploit them for dramatic results. Jim has led 9 businesses, worked in 31 companies at C-level, and is an expert in strategy and executive leadership. He presents regularly to industry groups, mentors business leaders, and shares insights in his Executive Letter (above). Jim holds BA and MBA degrees from Stanford University. In his new book, *The Other Side of Succession*, he shares how to plan for the future by growing your business now.

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