

## Jim's Profit Accelerator 111 Using What You Know to Leap the Leadership Chasm

I know no one who puts all she knows into action. Have you met anyone who uses all he knows? Spare me the whining about how much we use, or do, or apply. It misses the point.

**SPEED BUMP:** We're convinced that learning more will deliver improved outcomes.

Yes, learning pays off in satisfaction and improvements. That's not the issue. The issue is to ask this critical question: How do we use more of what we already know? More important, how do we avoid using the excuse that "I already know that" as a reason to avoid applying powerful, immediately useable ideas?

Why is it that I repeatedly help talented leaders find dramatic profit improvements in the organization that they know so well? "Outside eyes" is one reason, but it's not the primary reason. Instead, it's reluctance to see what's right in front of them, because it would demand action that taps one of the three reasons that we look away from big opportunity:

1. **It's risky.**
2. **It's hard.**
3. **It's uncomfortable.**

**SPEED BUMP:** Your chasm is what keeps you from the next big thing.

In a company where I worked, the profit was acceptable, but not growing much. After repeated applications of "Lean" and other improvement techniques, we found a way to quadruple profit—in one year! We did it by moving one person into a position to use his unique gifts. He was a fabricator (master welder) and a powerful natural leader. He invited workers on the production floor to change how they did their jobs, and he coached them in simple ways that delivered immediate results.

Here's just one example: Welders (highest paid craft in the company) were hauling pallets of parts across the production floor to position them for the next production step, or to get them out of the way of current production flow. He got them to stop the hauling, pointing out that they didn't have to do it (and they hated it—hard work that was wasteful). Yes, it really was that simple. He applied his complex experience to simple answers with big payoffs. He used what he knew.

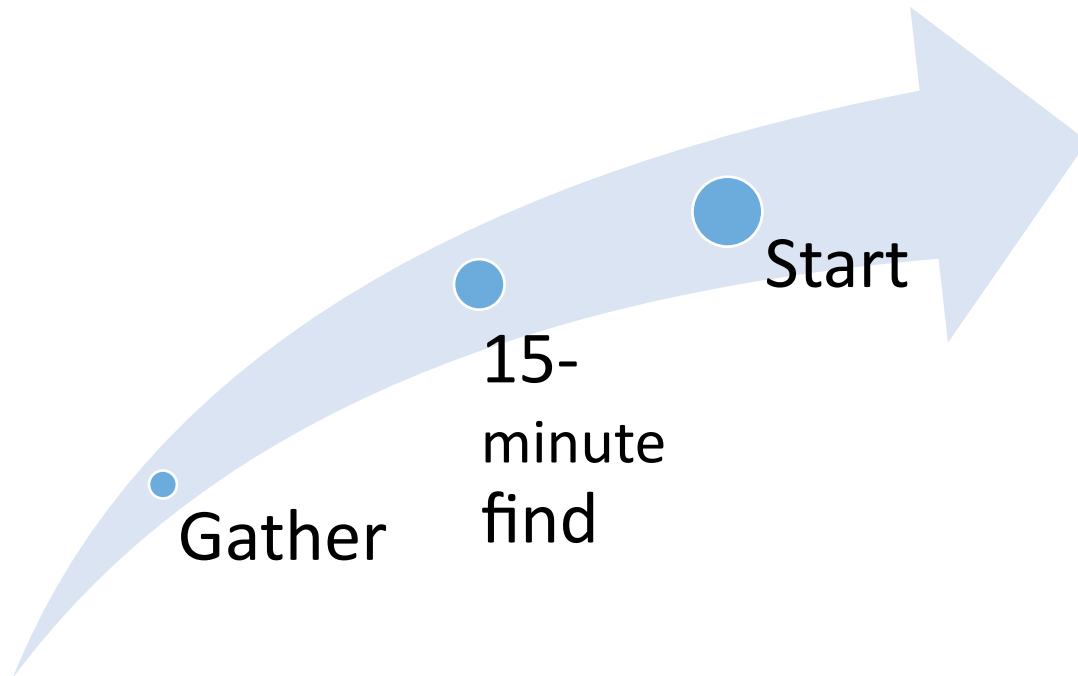
**SPEED BUMP:** The secret to improvement is to try something that feels uncomfortable.

In her celebrated book *Grit\**, psychologist Angela Duckworth, suggests one answer. There is a bias in many cultures toward talent. Translated, we assume that really successful people have special talent, but the data shows that persistent practice driven by a commitment to success is far more important.

So we assume that if something is especially hard, we lack the talent to achieve it. This subtle fog keeps us from trying one of those high-payoff actions, because the path to success is foggy.

Try it for yourself:

1. Gather your top team.
2. Give them 15 minutes to find an action with a big payoff in sales, profit, or customer satisfaction.
3. Challenge them to do it, and take the first steps yourself.



**ACCELERANT:** What action will pull you across the chasm today?

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

*\*Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance, Angela Duckworth, Scribners, 2016*

For more information, visit [www.grewco.com](http://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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