

## Jim's Profit Accelerator 90: Are You a Car Leader or a Laptop Leader?

It is a myth that leaders have little effect on large organizations. Doubt it? Look back at the stunning decline of Home Depot, a category-leading retailer whose sales and profit tanked with a top-down autocratic leader fresh from success at GE. When that leader was replaced, morale and results rebounded sharply: 2015 same-store sales were up 5.2 percent, earnings at an all-time high. (So much for the theory of momentum. In fact, entropy ensnares all.)

Here's a fresh take on leadership: A car is delivered complete at purchase, and little of substance is added to it during ownership and use by the buyer. "Car leadership" is the sort of leadership that strives to maintain a successful culture, values, and consistent results. Modest growth is justified by market power and historic brand reputation. Inside such a firm, "how we do it" is hard to change, with good reason: it's worked for many years. What to do: Mimic 3M©. They frame innovation with culture. It's culture that enables the time and effort that delivers the innovation that defines the company.

**SPEED BUMP:** Car leadership: "We are who we are."

Conversely, a laptop is not complete at time of purchase. It's a vessel whose contents will be continually changed. Its form factor doesn't change, but just about everything else does, and is expected to. The apotheosis of laptop leadership could be any successful technology company, from Google to Intel.

**SPEED BUMP:** Laptop leadership: "We are who we will become."

By now you've figured out that neither is better. Instead, power comes from clearly embracing one or the other. It's not about innovation. It's about the platform that not only enables it but delivers it with the quality and service that brings customers back.

The danger spot is trying to be both a car and a laptop (not a pretty picture).

Ask twenty employees these two questions:

1. Which of these best describes us?
  - a. We are who we are.
  - b. We are who we will become.
2. Why do you think so?

You will earn your money as leader by interpreting what you've heard.

**ACCELERANT:** When will you ask whether your company is a car or a laptop?

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

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

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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