



DO BUSINESS FASTER™

Jim's Profit Accelerator 193 How Skilled Are You and Your Top Leaders?

When I suggested to the CEO of a \$300 million publicly traded company that his top leaders were undertrained, he was insulted. Understandably. Until we talked more about it, confirming what you and I know: in most mid-sized firms the farther up the ladder you go, the thinner your training.

SPEED BUMP: How well trained are your top leaders?

Here's a quick assessment that will start the conversation. It's critical, by the way, because of rampant YDKWYDK: *You don't know what you don't know*. It's sometimes known as the 40-year-old disease (sorry, 40-year-olds). If you think you are excluded, check it out with an advisor you trust, preferably one who is over 50 years old.

SPEED BUMP: Where do I not know what I don't know?

The answers and your responses will be revealing. How can this be? How can successful leaders miss the next things that they need to know, but don't? Study after study reveal that whether it's due to confirmation bias or fear of loss, people have difficulty admitting ignorance and then asking for help. Instead, the response is either "I'll work hard to learn it," or "it can't be that important because [insert reason related to old style, out of date, we've outgrown that, etc]."

It isn't that leaders are now avoiding learning; it's that much of the curriculum is optional, not necessary. For example, the core skills of successful senior leadership combine analytical clarity and personal emotional connection. Few leaders are well balanced with both, even though we know that crucial persuasion is emotional, not rational. Instead we lean upon the one we're comfortable with and avoid high-powered advisors who will point to the gap and coach up to fill it.

Since everyone's gap is personal, let's focus on a back-door way to check on learning. This quick questionnaire will highlight the essential gaps in leadership. Once the gaps are obvious, progress might follow soon after.

Start here: Identify your top 8–10 leaders. Then answer the assessment below, and ask your identified leaders to do the same, in 10 minutes or less:

When you were promoted up to your current level, what changed in each domain for you? What did you find you needed to change? (List the most vital one or two):

1. Skills (I need to develop): _____

2. Values (What's important to you): _____

3. Time allocation: _____

Where there is no answer (or a non-answer, such as a window-dressing answer), there's a gap. Always. Because promotion always requires changes in **all three** skill elements. It's tough to see the need until you're in the new position.

SPEED BUMP: The leader's job is to see that his/her leaders build the skills that success demands.

ACCELERANT: What will you do to discover what you don't know?

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?"

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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