



DO BUSINESS FASTER™

Jim's Profit Accelerator 238 **The Follow-up Mirror**

How about an unbiased, frequent source of real feedback about your skill as a leader?

Here's the first test: If you're not interested, you might ask why. It's uncomfortable to be evaluated, or to evaluate oneself, but it may be the fastest way to improve your performance and reduce stress. Yep, and this medicine is free.

SPEED BUMP: Feedback from others can be helpful.

The feedback problem: It's difficult to get from others due to power differences, lack of trust, lack of time, and disinterest, to name a few reasons. Further, most folks have their own filters to influence what they say. Their behavior, however, is usually quite clear.

"The walking mirror..." is how a 40-year-old mom in the waiting area at the airport described her seven-year-old son to me. He was delightfully seven and quite frank, and she talked about hearing her own voice coming from his mouth all too often.

But how can you get real feedback on your performance when you don't have a seven-year-old nearby?

SPEED BUMP: Watch others' actions to evaluate your leadership.

Here's the thesis: If you watch yourself delegate and then follow up, you open a door to look at your skill in leadership in these areas:

- 1. Communication:** Delegating a real task to another person requires communication. It must at least describe the "what," if not the "how." (And the best delegation usually emphasizes clear description of the task and its outcomes.) Delegation that slides into descriptions of how to do it often produces energetic action toward the wrong target.
- 2. Probing for data:** The first data question is, "How can you tell if the other person grasps the task well enough to start it, if not finish it?" One approach is to follow your delegation with these questions:
 - "What will be your first step?"
 - "And then what?"
 - "And what's your goal?"

- 3. Guiding behavior:** Now you shift to “How’s it going?” (Tip: Pause to at least a count of 15 before saying anything.) Here’s where the feedback starts, and feedback is what the other person says—not what *you* say! Then, after listening, when the pause comes, ask “And what else?” Then repeat. When this slows down, ask, “What’s in the way?” (And you know the drill: pause for 15 seconds.) Listen closely. By now you’ve started to get a picture of how the task looks to the other person, and to see how clearly you really communicated. Often you find that you could have been clearer. Give yourself a break, skip the self-criticism, and ask, “What would help?” And then do some more listening.

Privately look at how you communicated to this other person, and ask yourself what you might have said to be clearer, or what else you might have said, or what question you might have asked.

ACCELERANT: Leadership is a little direction and a lot of communication. Many reverse the two and wonder why confusion ensues.

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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