

## Jim's Profit Accelerator 73: Stop Starving Your Top Business Accelerator

Strangely, when high performers move up to a senior position, their growth and training can come to an abrupt stop. These are folks who report to you, Mr. CEO. They are the accelerators and the power in your business performance. Their daily actions move things forward, or not. They are why you look good, do well, and are successful, and rightly so, because it is your job to find them and grow them.

But here's the rub: Somehow, when they've hit the top of their functional area, a number of mystical assumptions disconnect your performers from any further formal growth. These assumptions grow from hyper-confidence nourished by both CEO and executive. Here are the assumptions:

- They now can do it themselves.
- Outside programs cost too much and take too long.
- Personal advisors cost too much and don't know our business.
- We've done fine all these years without it.
- Or, the worst: We send them to a seminar every year or two. (The worst? It's usually about sending them to *something—anything.*)

**SPEED BUMP:** Are your top leaders growing as fast as they used to?

A successful local firm was a leader in specialty items for home construction. Their customers ranged from Costco to individual contractors. With a 30-year history of success, they expanded to the next major market outside their region, 900 miles away. When I asked their CEO how they would manage a production and sales facility that far away, he assured me that their operations manager could do it (even though he was struggling to smooth out operations in a similar facility 300 miles away). The expansion failed.

In addition to the usual complexities of entering a new market, the prime reason for failure was that the operations manager was in over his head. It wasn't just that he was spread too thin (he was); he didn't have the skills to build a leadership organization that could succeed.

His development suffered the common fate of mid-market leaders: He'd grown through a series of leadership successes with limited training outside his own experience. The market expansion finally blew past his limits, damaging his confidence and the business's financial condition and reputation.

**SPEED BUMP:** How well are you building your leaders?

Famous psychologist Albert Bandura has stressed the importance of learning by observation. Your executives are watching you. What do they see? Here's Bandura on the value of learning by being

around the right role models: “Learning would be exceedingly laborious, not to mention hazardous, if people had to rely solely on the effects of their own actions to inform them what to do.”

Quick Leader Growth Evaluator:

1. There is an annual written growth plan.
2. Each key leader has her own plan.
3. The plan is built together by the CEO and executive.
4. It is framed by goals in one to three growth areas.
5. At least two of the goals are about growth in specific skills.
6. It requires the CEO to use real situations to stoke growth.
7. It specifies at least three outside growth sources.
8. Quarterly reviews specify progress and next actions.
9. Another company executive is an active “helper” in growth.
10. The CEO models personal growth from many sources.

SCORE YOURSELF: How many yes answers did you have?

7+: Your executives likely are growing.

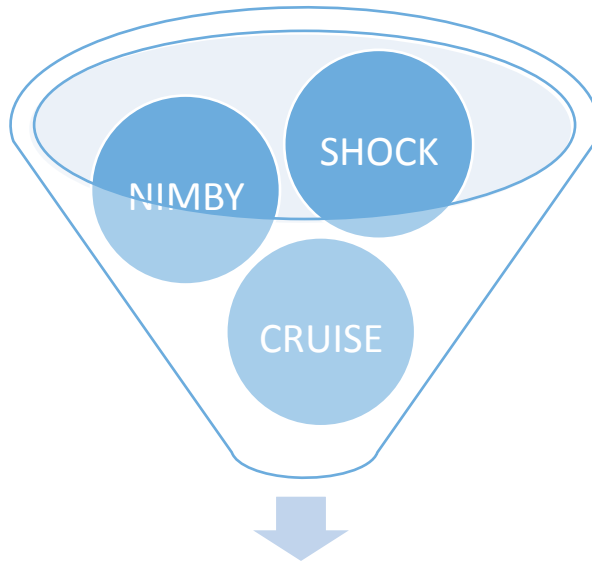
4–6: Middle of the pack: Self-satisfaction is a danger to your firm.

0–3: Buried in daily reacting: Your firm’s vitality is shrinking by the minute.

**SPEED BUMP:** Entropy dulls the sharpest blade with shocking speed.

What part does the executive play in his own deprivation? These common reasons for self-limiting behavior reinforce each other to deny the power of outside growth drivers:

- SHOCK: Promotion Shock multiplied by In-Box Flood
- CRUISE: I’m successful. Now I can stop climbing and cruise
- NIMBY: We don’t do learning here; we’re learning all the time.



## Deferred Growth

**ACCELERANT:** What personal growth plan will you launch?

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.

©Jim Grew 2015. All Rights Reserved. *Do Business Faster*