



Jim's Profit Accelerator 131: Interminable Collaboration

Teamwork is now worshipped alongside such pearls as accountability and growth. Although teamwork is a vital tool in the high-performance organization (spare me the muttering about how it's a sop to millennial laziness), its management is tricky.

For the executive manager, three leadership tools can enable effective teamwork. The trick is knowing when to use which.

SPEED BUMP: Collaboration can replace results with delay when improperly led.

This isn't the cliché "American haste versus. Japanese thoroughness..." Instead, think of teamwork as a range of collaborations rather than a process with a single entry and exit. How to bring success within reach for your team? Successful teams always include these structures, explicitly or implicitly:

- **Goal:** What's the output?
- **Process:** How will we get there?
- **Ownership:** How much does each member invest in success?

These exist in permanent teams (e.g., executive team) and ad hoc problem-solving groups.

SPEED BUMP: The purpose of a team is to bring success sooner—and make it endure.

The convener of the team is responsible to choose and use the right frame to launch the team. These frames define the leader's role in the team, as well as in accountability for reaching its goal. The right team with the wrong launch is a rocket likely to miss its mark. These frames are most common:

- **Drive:** The leader actively manages the team process to balance data input with timely result. The team needs the outside structure that the leader provides. The danger is that the leader pollutes the team's result with her bias.
- **Delegate:** The leader convenes the team, frames the goal and rough time frame, and steps away to let the team craft and implement the answer. Leader is available but has minimum involvement. The risk is wasted time, either in the pain of reworking an inadequate solution by the Direct method (above), or in delaying execution of essential actions.

- **Facilitate** (Collaboration): Same as Direct, except that the leader guides the work session content, speed, and discipline without directing the outcome. This is the top of the pile for effectiveness, but takes great patience and skill by the leader to provide the right mix of pace, options, analysis, and closing to action.

SPEED BUMP: Learn to facilitate great results instead of driving them.



SPEED BUMP: Winners know when to drive, when to delegate, and when to facilitate.

The University of Oregon football team slid from national championship contender to also-ran by sloppy individual preparation and weak coaching leadership. Player wandering moved from shortcuts in weight room routines and ignoring rules about late-night parties to a spate of violence in the community and sloppy play. The culprits were a mix of weaker players recruited and coaches not enforcing discipline. It looked like an example of weak delegation, and it cost the coach his job and the team its season.

ACCELERANT: Which technique will enable your team to play well?

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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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