



DO BUSINESS FASTER™

## **Jim's Profit Accelerator 6: Are Your Questions Up to Speed?**

As a leader, have you made your mark as a problem solver? If in doubt, look at your latest résumé. Likely it lists problems solved. Most of us cut our teeth by grabbing a problem and wrestling a solution out of it, and in the process became known as someone who could find a solution to the tough ones — a powerful skill, and one that can cripple your effectiveness as a leader.

Have you made the essential shift from a solver to a questioner? This test will tell you.

***When you or your team faces a chance to raise your game significantly, do you:***

1. Offer a solution?
2. Offer ideas to build a solution?
3. Ask questions to pull others into solving the problem?

Top leaders move to number three. Always. Why?

- It speeds the time to an answer, because more skills focus on a solution.
- It multiplies a leader's bandwidth.
- It speeds up the organization: multiple problems can be solved at the same time.

**SPEED BUMP:** The fastest path to a great answer: *Ask expert questions.*

Expert questions pull new answers out of the ether. Here are some examples.

### **Expert Question 1: What Outcome Do We Want?**

Move past “the problem” to look at the canyon you're trying to cross. The problem isn't to replace the missing bridge. The problem is “how do we cross the chasm?”

Lee Co. of Nashville lost older skilled workers faster than they could train younger replacements. This was lethal for a firm that does mechanical repairs in commercial buildings. The problem at Lee isn't aging workers, or untrained workers. It's closing the gap between them well enough or soon enough. (There's that speed thing again.) Lee reframed the problem, using digital tools to help their top older workers train their 300+ younger workers on the job. Unheard of!

### Expert Question 2: What If We Ignore It?

Is this where we must spend our precious resource? Ignore the nagging feeling that pushes you to fix everything. My late friend Gene Dils, a dramatically successful business leader, husband, and dad (two sons were NFL quarterbacks), told me that one thing he learned from getting cancer is that “just because you *can* do something doesn’t mean you *should*.”

Remarkably, most business problems don’t need attention by management. They will dissolve like ice on a warm day if ignored.

### Expert Question 3: What Will It Take to Fix It?

Not *can* we, or *how* do we, but *what will it take*? Until you ask that, you’re keeping the problem and its solution to yourself. You’ve created a class of watchers trying to help without getting any on themselves. That’s a recipe for slow failure.

### A Clear Pathway

The better the questions, the better and faster the outcome.



Now the path to a better outcome is as clear as a nighttime runway with the lights on, so go for it. Fast!

**Accelerator:** What are you doing this week to teach your leaders to ask, not solve?

Call 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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