



DO BUSINESS FASTER™

## **Jim's Profit Accelerator 225 Which Kind of Charisma?**

Some leaders have charisma so powerfully that when they walk into a room, the place lights up and folks think, "Wow. He's really impressive!" For the rest of us that model seems out of reach, though it would be great if we could learn those chops. Here's the "but": Working for a charismatic leader is almost always about him. It's about meeting his goals, communicating in his style, even adopting his values. None of that is bad by itself, but it neatly trims the capacity of his people. They focus on pleasing him instead of doing what the business needs with all their skill and drive.

**SPEED BUMP:** Charismatic leaders are attractive, but not necessarily the most effective.

Let's back up. Leadership, at least in my book, is about getting folks into positions that tap their potential, their imagination, and their drive to develop themselves and do well for the business. You'll note that there's no mention of a leader in that at all. That's strange, since successful leaders do it with their people, not by themselves.

What's the alternative?

What about a leader who enters a room and its occupants suddenly stand taller, feel better and more competent, and challenged to be their best self? Or, as Colin Powell said, "When your people stop coming to you for help, you stop being their leader." Peek behind that statement, and we go to folks who we think will help us, or at least won't use us as a backdrop for their next theater.

Where does this happen? It's all too common in the privately held business run by the founder. She's struggled through years and years of difficulties to build a business that has survived, and she's developed a charisma of sorts in order to attract and retain competent people. In the early years it's about her, regardless of how she plays it. She necessarily votes on all the major issues and may also micromanage the others to reduce the risk of failure. It's hard to fault that approach while the business is small (fewer than 30 employees), because it works and may be necessary.

**SPEED BUMP:** The leader who makes folks feel taller is remarkably effective.

The pivot, however, shows up when it's time to bring in a successor leader. It's not so much about competence, because you can hire or fire for that. It's about the ability to lead folks so that they will choose the new leader instead of the founder. This goes on in the mind of each

employee, whether they're aware of it or not. When the new leader relies on personal charisma like the old leader ("wow, look at him!"), it can become a charisma competition. If the new leader relies on lifting others and making them feel good about themselves and the company, the essential shift of allegiance happens more seamlessly and is more likely to endure.

**ACCELERANT:** Which kind of charismatic will you be this week?

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](http://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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