



DO BUSINESS FASTER™

Jim's Profit Accelerator 242 When There Is No Follow Through

Leadership is sometimes about pointing the way, but more often it is about asking others to do what they need to do. The “ask” can be goals, action lists from meetings, tasks from problem-solving teams, and more. The challenge is seldom what to do—it’s usually getting it done.

SPEED BUMP: It’s not enough to assign tasks, regardless of whether you’re the boss.

What’s in your toolkit for the folks who are missing their deadlines? Here’s a starter list:

Ask, “What did you think the assignment was? When was it due?” Listen closely, because likely the person will tell you mostly what they understood. If they understood it wrong, start with yourself, because this is a leadership learning moment for you. If so, clarify the task, check for understanding, get a due date, and move on.

If they understood it right but didn’t get it done, here’s an approach:

1. What’s in the way?
2. What do you need to get it done?
3. What is the simplest way to answer the question?
4. When do you think you’ll have it?

SPEED BUMP: If the deadline is missed, ask about it immediately (within minutes).

Yes, you can wait until your next one-on-one if it’s a minor matter. (But if it’s a minor matter, why are you managing it?)

Sometimes there’s more to the delay than is being discussed, at least at first. If you suspect more, use this two-step approach:

1. Listen very closely and pay attention to voice inflection. Look at eyes, posture, and body language.
2. Ask more questions like these:
 - How are you thinking about approaching it?
 - When will you start it?
 - Who will you work with on it?
 - What project is higher priority for you right now?

If you get fuzz now, there's something else at play, and it's up to you to dig it out. If you don't, you'll have a repeat in a few days: "What's in the way?" (or some variation). Same song different verse.

Now you're into wasted time, rework for you, and warning signs about either your communication or the skill or will of your person.

So, here's a heavier duty approach. Just use one or two; it's not an interrogation.

- That's not like you, what's going on?
- Look, we really need this—what's a real date when you can do it?
- What will it take to get this done? We keep talking about it, but it's not getting done.
- Tell me how you are going to approach this issue/task?
- Tell me how you are going to tell this story to your team?
- This is dragging on. What's that about?

And the final step (before a write-up): ***Let's sit down right now and do this together.***

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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