



DO BUSINESS FASTER™

## Jim's Profit Accelerator 267 Are Your Lists Limiting You?

Most of us have some form of to-do list, and they likely are a necessary evil. Their benefits may include:

- Helping us remember
- Providing a foundation for choosing priorities
- Offering satisfaction as we cross items off
- Providing a calming activity while we face the firehose
- Providing a daily anchor
- Add your own benefit here: \_\_\_\_\_

**SPEED BUMP:** Your to-do lists likely divert your best efforts to secondary targets.

The better question is "How can we leverage our list toward better results?"

Before you jump in with your list of reasons, consider this: A prime reason for mediocre results is the compulsion to action, and the busy-ness myth. The myth is: "If I'm busy, I'm doing good work." Often, no. If I'm busy, I'm doing work, but in a time-starved world it's about results, not just actions.

The leadership challenges of lists:

1. They reward doing (inputs) instead of results (outputs).
2. They water down measures of critical results or problems.
3. They provide shelter from the angst of trying higher-payoff (uncertain) actions.
4. They delay serious work on the one or two things that are blocking the results that you want your organization to enjoy.
5. They drown priorities.
6. They flood communication.
7. They hang high-impact actions on a hook for "later," festering in your worry pile.

**SPEED BUMP:** Choosing priorities requires looking at results, not activities.

One of my clients, a successful CEO of a business with 400+ people, is experimenting with this daring shift: Instead of keeping action lists on the leaders of each division in the firm, the list moves to the division head to keep the lists for review with the CEO. The hope is that CEO time is spent on unblocking priority actions and diverting action from second-tier activities. Stay tuned.

A better way to use lists: Start your day building your daily priority trio (three is enough). Start your week building your weekly five priorities. For both, the list is about what you will do, or ask about, or start, or change, or... After your priority list is firmly in hand, feel free to make your list of “*stuff I don’t want to forget.*”

**PAYOFF STEP:** For each item on your priority list, write the result you seek. Sometimes you’ll see an empty result, which can point to changing priorities.

The leadership step that is seldom discussed: After choosing people, the top leadership job is to see that the right work gets done (priorities).

**ACCELERANT:** When will your lists start with weekly/daily priorities?

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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