



Jim's Profit Accelerator 144 Pilot Leadership versus Gardener Leadership

I once watched a Coast Guard helicopter rescue team practice on a boat off the coast of Maui. It got me thinking about leadership since flying a helicopter demands full concentration plus both hands and both feet—all the time. It's not unlike being a CEO, especially when you're the owner too. You have your own job to concentrate on, and you can't always see what everyone else is doing, but adjustments have to be made.

The gardener, by contrast, knows that his job is to enable plants' natural growth inclination. That means choosing plants to fit the climate, soil, light, and so forth. It also means fertilizing, watering, and pruning. You get the idea.

SPEED BUMP: Are you multiplying the natural talent of your people?

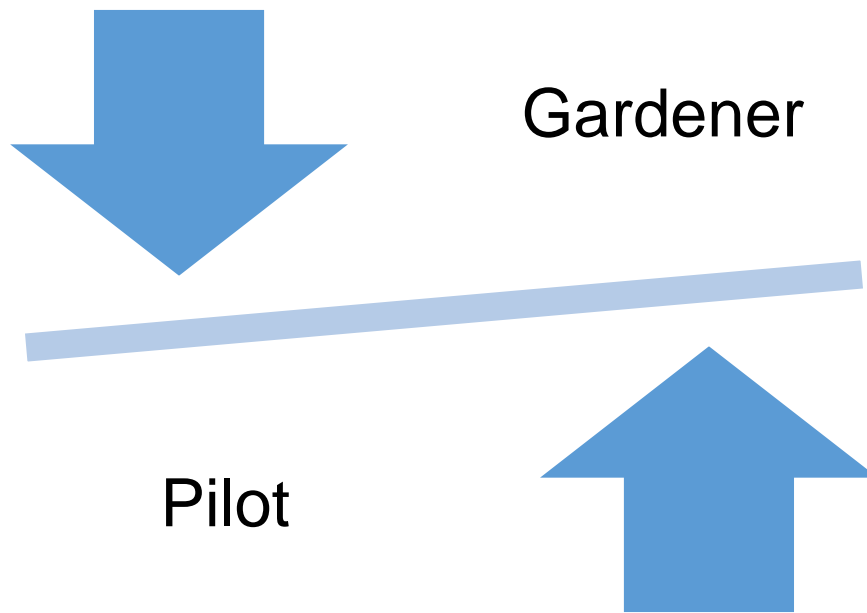
Both pilot and gardener are disciplined, focused, and willing to do what success requires. Both control much that goes on. The difference? The pilot must make things happen. She literally controls every move of the helicopter (even responding to wind gusts and weather). The pilot's hand is in everything that the chopper does or doesn't do. The gardener views himself as an aid, a supporter of the natural growth of healthy plants. His job is to protect the plants through a successful growth season—and even to help accelerate that growth. Yet he doesn't make the plant grow. He can stunt its growth, but it pretty much grows itself, in a healthy environment.

Leadership is about providing tools, guidance and encouragement to help your key leaders flourish. Pruning is sometimes necessary, as well as repotting.

SPEED BUMP: The drive to excel comes with the plant; it's not injected by the gardener.

One of the toughest changes for a leader to negotiate is moving from leading a function (sales, operations, etc.) to leading a company. It's hard for a helicopter pilot whose training is hands-on to shift to the role of gardener. The successful gardener chooses his plants carefully; the pilot doesn't choose his helicopter.

The new CEO starts by using the leaders she's given. It's only after a while that she realizes that much of her success comes from choosing the plants to fit the future that she anticipates.



SPEED BUMP: The #1 job of a successful CEO is to optimize her team.

The CEO of a company that I've worked with found herself "helping" key leaders do their jobs. Their departments were underperforming, and the CEO dove in to help (as she'd done when she led a department). It was a revelation to hire a department leader who happily lit up his team, seeking limited but essential help from the CEO. The light went on: the CEO then measured her other department leaders by their ability to deliver results with precision help from her (the CEO).

ACCELERANT: Where should you move from pilot to gardener?

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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