

Jim's Profit Accelerator 39: Output Is Your Growth Accelerator

Formula One cars are the fastest racecars in the world, when turning corners is part of the race. Their power, grip, and aerodynamics deliver what is needed—whether it is speeding up, stopping, or cornering.

These cars accelerate from 0 to 100 mph and then can stop in less than five seconds. Their lateral acceleration (cornering) near 6G leads drivers to do special neck exercises to maintain control in high-G turns. Thousands of inputs (design features, specifications, and trial tests) deliver the critical outputs of speeding up, stopping, and cornering. And those outputs are inputs toward the real output: winning a race. Successful Formula One teams, just like yours, test every activity against its impact on the three winning attributes.

But wait, there's more: Folks figured out those three keys to success and then designed everything to achieve those keys.

SPEED BUMP: Which activities in your business have the greatest impact on results?

Yes, inputs and outputs can be different in different situations. Crystal clear outputs can yield these benefits:

- More efficient path to success
- Faster problem solving
- Organization alignment toward things that matter most

The trash-hauling firm where I worked changed the definitions of outputs and inputs. Instead of viewing trash pickup as an output, it became an input toward refining the sequence of those pickups. Part of that sequencing was letting drivers go home when they'd finished their pickups. That yielded this output: enhanced efficiency, which boosted company net worth 20 percent in two years. That efficiency enabled us to avoid investing in an additional truck and driver, an enormous expense in that business.

SPEED BUMP: Not all outputs contribute to key goals. Do yours?

To-do lists are crippling. That list is almost always about inputs, not outputs. The problem when we focus on "what to do" is that it's easy to ignore the real question: What impact do I want?

SPEED BUMP: The activities you choose (inputs) control your impact (outputs).

Use this simple activity evaluator to choose your inputs (activities):

- **Impact:** What output will it deliver?
- **Power:** What difference will it make?"
- **Choice:** Is that the output I want?



Definitions can be helpful, even if you think you already know the meaning of the words. Critically, we're talking about inputs, which are actions that impact an organization. We're talking less about personal pleasure, peace of mind, or sense of accomplishment. Those are essentials in your life, and they are—wait for it—outcomes!

Outcome: A result, a dependent variable, a worthy goal

Input: An activity that yields an outcome

Test your output savvy: Which are outputs? (The answers are below, so don't peek.)

1. Put ski gear in the car
2. Meeting
3. Meditation
4. Practice a skill
5. Analysis of efficiency
6. Cash review
7. Peace of mind
8. Thrill of skiing the hill
9. Business improvement
10. Enhanced skill

11. Profit & customer satisfaction
12. Cash well spent
13. Customer order ships

(Answer: The outputs are numbers 7–13.)

SPEED BUMP: Outputs should push toward established goals.

That's the theory, here's the pragmatic action: See that your version of the Formula One car's core outputs are defined for your organization and that all activities advance those core outputs.

ACCELERANT: Can you name an output for each activity on today's to-do list?

Call me.

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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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