



DO BUSINESS FASTER™

Jim’s Profit Accelerator 10: Delegation Predicts Speed

Everyone pays lip service to delegation, but doing it is another matter altogether. That’s unfortunate because skillful delegation provides great opportunity to accelerate both your company results and your effectiveness as a leader. An added bonus is that you’ll be building the value of your business, which will accrue to you wherever your succession path takes you.

Delegation is relevant to every executive of any size firm who wants to do better. What does your delegation pattern predict about the value of your firm, your job satisfaction, and your financial security? Use this simple guide to see how you rank, and where your opportunity might be.

What Kind of Delegator Are You?

You:

- 1. Delegate routine tasks to allow time for higher impact activities.
- 2. Delegate tactical responsibilities that include modest risk and uncertainty.
- 3. Delegate most strategic and tactical responsibilities, subject to review before action.
- 4. Delegate favorite responsibilities that you used to prefer to handle personally. (These are often items that you’ve said you would “never” delegate.)

Scoring Summary

Type	Label	Payoff	Downside
1	Controller	Limited	Buried in detail
2	Reluctant	Modest	It’s never enough
3	Power Leader	Great results	Requires delegation skill
4	Future Builder	Legacy	More free time

SPEED BUMP: The more you delegate, the faster good results will come.

Bandwidth Principle: Every leader I’ve worked with has wrestled with personal bandwidth, or “No matter how smart I work, I’m still way behind.” There’s no excuse for this, and there’s a way that many

of my clients have overcome it. If you're a reluctant delegator or hog-tied by your bandwidth, you can overcome it too.

Here's the basic bandwidth equation:

$$E \times S / T = O$$

Key: T= Time E=Effort S=Skill O=Output

Supercharge your bandwidth: Delegate as much as possible to as many others as you can! That means move the tasks, not your time. In other words, delegate delicately.

Here's what happens to folks who supercharge their bandwidth:

$$E \times S / (1/2)T = O^3$$

Translation: Get at least three times as much done in half the time. The "get done" is accomplished by the organization, not just you. The time savings are yours, however.

The Speed Measure: Speed is about output, not input. Three times as much done in half the time is a 600 percent increase in output. If that's not speed, what is?

Operations VP Scott Gorman leads a highly successful production operation of 100-plus people. He was astounded to see the burst of output from his workers when he handed his leaders a short list of problems to attack. While he's still improving his delegation skills, he reports that his managers already have increased their impact on results, giving him more time to be strategic about his own focus. His Gemba walks happen more consistently, his calendar is less cluttered, and he reports having a clearer sense of what is actually happening in his organization, allowing him higher impact on results more quickly.

To be fair, his results required becoming a delicate delegator. Learning this isn't easy, but the remarkable payoff makes it worth it.

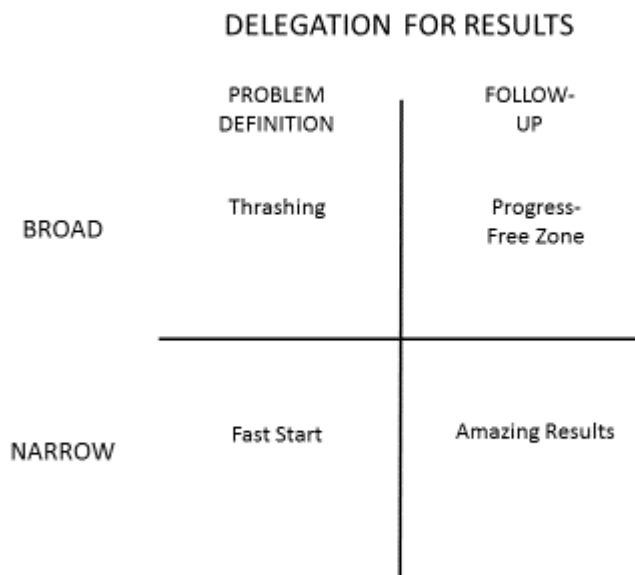
Principles of Delicate Delegation

1. Put a razor edge on the problem definition.
2. Pick your "receiver" carefully. Receivers take handoffs, and these folks need enough skill to start to problem solve, a willingness to seek help promptly, and a drive to push through comfort to new success.
3. Follow up with surgical delicacy. Following up is not woodpeckering your receiver to death, pounding repeatedly, "Are you done yet?" That behavior produces a larger hole, reluctance to risk, and limited progress, and its aroma is fear and lack of confidence. Instead, delicately ask these magic questions at pre-established checkpoints:
 - What progress have you made?

- How did you do it?
- Where do you want to go next?
- What do you think is the biggest obstacle right now?
- May I help you with that?

Go back and look at the questions again. Wording matters, because your demonstrated delicacy and care for the person will come back to you in amazing results. Driving immediately to problems communicates both a lack of trust and a flaming fear of failure. Both produce results, but not the amazing results you're looking for.

Here's what it looks like:



SPEED BUMP: Is reverse delegating (RD) part of your arsenal? If not, you're likely underperforming. What is RD? Asking for help!

At the edge of the ocean surf, your feet feel the pull of the tide before the water hits you. Likewise, when you feel the friction of a looming obstacle, stop fast, and ask for help right then. If the obstacle is big enough to matter, the first step is getting the question right. That will often jump-start your answer.

When a client and I were stuck with no forward progress, my "helper" suggested cutting back to just one thing at a time, to make the task small enough to do. We did; it worked. It's one thing to rehearse "eat the elephant one bite at a time," but for most of us it's a boost for a helper to point out the elephant so that we can take the bite!

ACCELERANT: What is the toughest problem in front of you? Will you delegate it?

Call me.

For more information, visit www.grewco.com.

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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