



DO BUSINESS FASTER™

Jim's Profit Accelerator 227 Why Delegation Doesn't Happen

The power of delegation is woefully underestimated. It's seldom discussed, and actively taught even less. It's a core skill of successful leaders, yet it's almost invisible in the flood of conversation about growth, morale, purpose, financials, and even goals. It's as though somehow everyone figures that if you know your goal, you'll know how to go there with your team.

SPEED BUMP: Winning teams require exquisite delegation.

Myths in the way of expert delegation:

1. Everyone knows how to do it. This is flat wrong. It's about as reasonable as assuming that every kid can just get into a car and drive successfully (don't hit anything, don't hurt yourself, follow all the traffic rules, etc.) Most people aren't very good at delegating, don't consider it a core skill, and don't work to improve their performance at it.

2. Clear goals and measures make it easy. They make it less hard, but a clear target isn't the same as specifics about who will do what, who will check on progress, and who will step in to see that the goal is achieved.

SPEED BUMP: In many situations it isn't clear who will do what.

3. It's not on the short list of essential leadership skills. Leadership skills are learned by experience in the company of committed teachers. A prime task of a supervisor is to build the leadership skills of her key people, yet delegation doesn't make the cut in the training. When results fall short, it seldom is included in the list of remedies. Instead, remedies focus on process, which is also vital but doesn't replace crisp delegation.

One of my clients led a business unit that designed specialized pumping systems for petroleum products. His competitive advantage was design, yet he spent most of his time on bidding, detailed construction drawings, field progress reviews of installation, and cleaning up accounting problems. His business unit profits went to record levels when he learned to delegate specifically and well. It led to some adjustments in his team to get the right skills and attitudes on board (also a benefit). Best of all, he realized his personal goal of seeing his 12-year-old daughter play soccer!

Skill in delegation comes from guided practice built on sound principles. It can't be learned by reading about it. The principles are simple, but differences in individual people (delegator and delegatee) require subtle changes in approach.

Once delegation begins, the importance of the right priorities multiplies. It's like moving from a bicycle to a performance motorcycle. It will do more, but it requires more skill and care to apply the additional features.

SPEED BUMP: Active delegation leads to better priorities.

If this is a skill with power (it is), and you want more of it (you should), are you willing to learn how to do it and then teach it?

ACCELERANT: What will you delegate to whom this week?

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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