



DO BUSINESS FASTER™

## Jim's Profit Accelerator 196 Balanced Leadership

Melyssa Lombardi, new University of Oregon women's softball coach (stay with me here), assembled a startling record as an assistant coach at Oklahoma. She and head coach Patty Gasso made four national championships and 12 appearances in the college world series. Lombardi produced 20 All-Americans in her 21 years as a Sooner coach, specializing in pitchers and catchers.

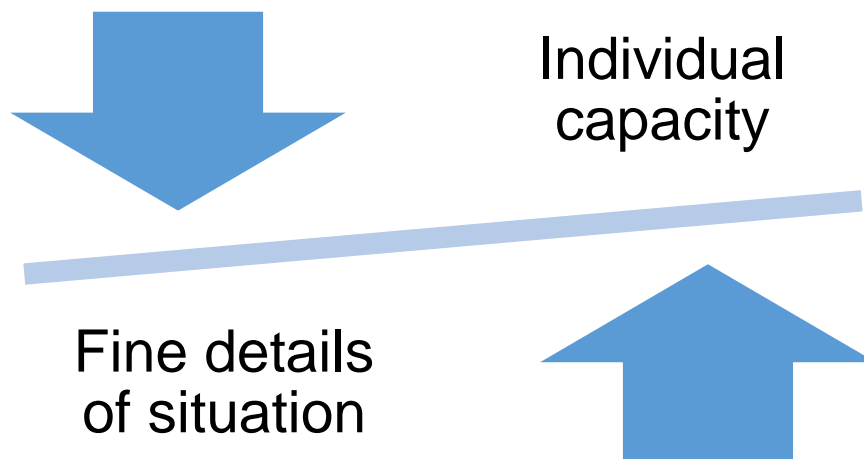
Here's the nub of it, as described by two of her players:

- *"She went into so much detail, and so much into depth."*
- *"She made our training unique and individual.... She really cares about us."\**

**SPEED BUMP:** Attention to individual differences and details of the game makes winners.

Much is made of knowing your business model, your strategy, your competitive advantage, your niche, and guiding execution with metrics. These are necessary, but they don't win games. It's what is done when the metrics or the details expose an opportunity or a weakness that matters. It's not in explaining the finding; it's in understanding your key leaders well enough to help them see their individual path to success in each unique situation. That path is what they'll do, and too often it's poorly defined with sloppy adjustment going forward.

Here's the balance:



**SPEED BUMP:** Using insights built on details helps leaders when the insights fit them.

Data is fashionable now, whether it's useful in individual cases or not. The real test of data is not its accuracy, but its applicability. Said another way, most reports and analyses are either sloppy, broad, or useless as guides to action. Sadly, the presence of the report is celebrated more than the actions and results it helps leaders achieve.

**SPEED BUMP:** Data is overrated, and it's essential.

Yes, context helps data become live and usable. That's a leadership job; it's not the job of the analyst. The analyst should always be asked to relate data to the current situation and its context, but it's the leader's job to make the detail useful.

At one point when I ran a manufacturing firm, I despaired of a monthly financial review with useful information. It was data-rich, but it systematically missed the Achilles heel of the business, which was a pricing model that couldn't adapt to changes in customer product orders and pricing limits. That problem showed up in the monthly margin data, but so subtle that the problem didn't emerge until a big part of our product mix shifted to new pricing rules from our customer. By then we were locked in with pricing that produced a loss, and returning to health was excruciating, producing lasting damage. A big part of the damage was that our leadership team, including our pricing person, didn't see the problem and respond in time, because we couldn't see how to do it.

Coach Lombardi personalized her teaching based upon both performance details and individual aptitudes. She taught different skills to different players to take advantage of their strengths, making more champions and winning more games than otherwise would have been possible. She lived the cliché "there's more than one way to skin a cat."

**ACCELERANT:** Do you need to pay more attention to details or individual skills?

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?"

\* *The Oregonian*, July 21, 2018, p. B1

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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