



DO BUSINESS FASTER™

Jim's Profit Accelerator 192 The Upside of Agitators

The myth is that folks who disagree are hard to be around and don't care about personal relationships. What if the truth were that folks who ask good questions deliver these benefits to their organization?

1. Improve meeting quality
2. Improve plans
3. Improve execution
4. Move toward reality
5. Move to action sooner

What if you could help deliver these, and be admired and respected to boot?

SPEED BUMP: Folks who ask the real questions are invaluable.

These insights are validated in research reported by Charlan Nemeth, UC Berkeley psychology professor, in her book *In Defense of Troublemakers*. Groupthink is real, is frequently damaging, and blocks rapid access to truth, she says. Her studies are based upon juries. Here's a power quote from a review in the *Wall Street Journal*: "Juries that included dissenters 'considered more facts and more ways of viewing those facts.' Consensus... 'narrows, while dissent opens, the mind.'"* Worse, our desire to agree with others (groupthink) pulls us away from different and sometimes better solutions. And brainstorming, according to Nemeth, with its lack of critical evaluation, encourages the collection of bad ideas (as you likely expected).

What can we do with this?

Learn to ask questions and encourage others to do the same. Nemeth says that hard questions speed things up instead of slowing them down. Here are some starter questions to get even the most compliant person to step into the ring:

1. Why should we do that now?
2. What is the benefit of that?
3. What is the evidence for that?

SPEED BUMP: Build your questioning muscle by asking questions.

The foundation of questions is real curiosity, and a willingness to use your private thoughts to formulate a question about something that just doesn't seem "right." It may be a hunch, and it may be wrong, but the question it prompts may spur the meeting toward the right end.

One way to kick-start a group is for the leader to ask questions like the above, and to ask each group member to ask one question sometime during every meeting.

And...let the speaker answer the question. Don't intervene or "help." Show your folks that you have the confidence in them that you say you do.

ACCELERANT: Which group will you galvanize with questions 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?"

*Philip Delves Broughton, *Wall Street Journal*, May 10, 2018, p. A15

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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