

Jim's Profit Accelerator 125: Enough Is Enough

That vintage parenting line applies remarkably well in the NFL and in business. Consider Joe Flacco, the 31-year-old Baltimore Ravens quarterback who is paid more than legendary Patriots quarterback Tom Brady.* Flacco's record since 2008 has been consistently good enough to play four Super Bowl games, win one, and have the best post-season record of any NFL quarterback since 2008. He does all of this with receivers who have been mediocre at best. So what's the point?

SPEED BUMP: Set goals you can reach, and reach them. Consistently.

Target consistently good performance, with modest improvement year over year. Do what it takes to deliver that kind of performance—rather than huge improvement at anything—because most of business is a marathon, and the rewards go to those who finish.

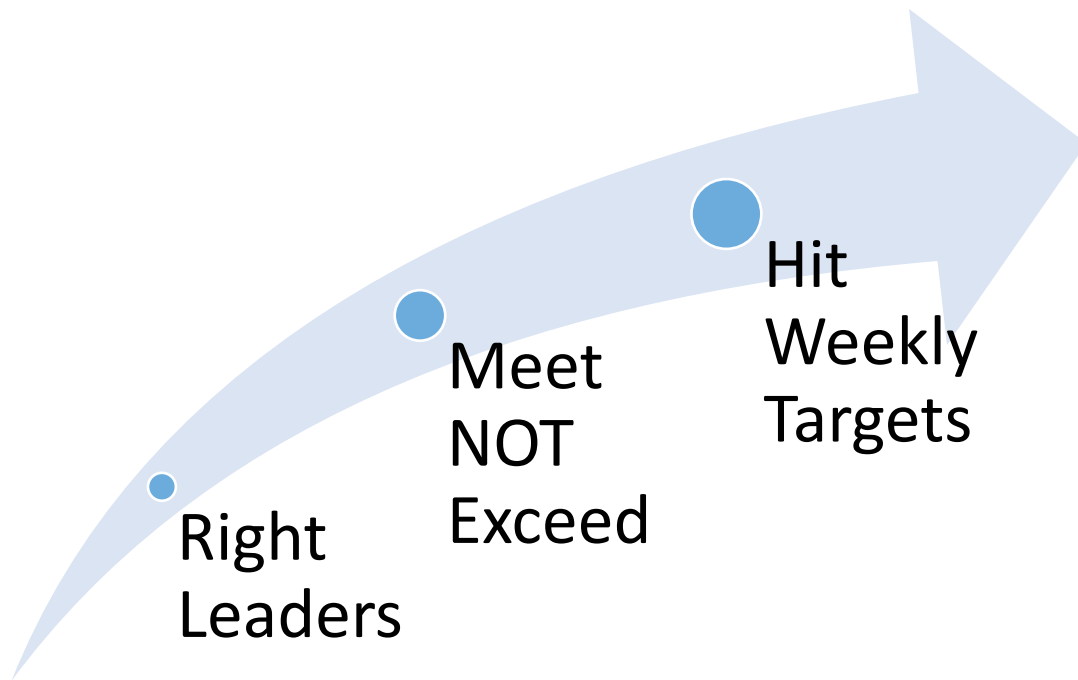
Here are three foundations of consistent success:

1. Pick leaders for perseverance and talent, not skills. The talent you want to seek is “finding a way to get it done.” That kind of talent shows up in high school, and it shows up at work. The single best measure is reliability stacked on top of innovation on the job. Skills can be learned by most people. After all, were you born with the skills you now have? Of course not. You learned, and so can most of your people.

2. Never try to exceed customer expectations. This tired slogan about exceeding expectations is built on the hope that customer satisfaction will occur in spite of performance, not because of it. The cost of exceeding is both overinvestment and failure work (i.e., repair/replacement work because the job wasn't right the first time). Why not just reliably meet their expectations? Think about it: Who do you choose to fix your car? Not the world's best mechanic (how do you measure THAT?). You choose a reliable mechanic. *Exceed* has limited customer value, but it's a way to exhort employees for better performance. Why not just manage to the real targets, and hit them?

SPEED BUMP: Reliability beats exceeding expectations.

3. Aim at hitting weekly targets each and every time. Living this goal means that in the rare case that your team misses its target, it's a big deal, and it means a scramble to make it right. It's specific and it feels right. More important, hitting weekly targets builds the strong satisfaction that can drive over most bumps without spilling anything.



SPEED BUMP: Exhort for excellence by praising the people who meet their goals.

One of Alan Mulally's tools in his remarkable turnaround of Ford Motor Company (2006–2010) was tough goals that were possible to achieve with great effort. If you haven't learned the difference yet, bring your magnifying glass to the seam between certainly doable and doable with great effort. Your job as a leader is to find the right point on that seam.

ACCELERANT: What goal could your team reach with maximum everyday effort?

For more information on how you can accelerate revenues and profits in your business, please call or email me.

*WSJ 12/12/16, p. A16.

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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