



DO BUSINESS FASTER™

Jim's Profit Accelerator 254 The Secrets of Successful One-on-Ones

The one-on-one (OOO) can be a powerful tool to guide your business. It's a bit like fly-by-wire, but potentially more powerful. The basic rules for the CEO/COO/president are simple:

- One subordinate at a time
- Explain purpose at the first meeting
- Set aside a time (weekly or every other week)
- Make the time sacred (only vacation or illness interferes)
- Use it to help your person (not tell her what to do)
- Make a simple agenda and stick to it
- Let your person run the meeting and maintain the agenda

SPEED BUMP: One-on-ones work best as an informed sounding board.

SPEED BUMP: One-on-ones are for your person, not you.

When I ran a manufacturing company, our production manager was a highly competent leader who wanted to correct everything that was out of line. He knew better, but that didn't stop him. A main result of our OOO's was to help him let go of all but the most vital issues, so that his effort had high leverage on results. Not perfect, but remarkably effective. I mostly asked questions and listened (partly because he probably would do what he wanted to do anyhow!).

The agenda of your OOO is always the same:

1. **How did we do?** This can include key results from last week, progress on key initiatives, progress on selected department goals, and so forth.
2. **What do we need to do this week?** Turn away from the past to the immediate future and pick the top three items that need attention. Identifying them sets up next week's discussion about how we did.
3. **What's in the way?** Here is where clarification and focus can help dramatically.

Clarification questions can include:

- Why is that?
- What's the evidence for that?
- Why is that a problem now?
- Who needs to attend to that?

Meeting output should be a shorter, sharper, and higher-impact task list for your person (not for you).

SPEED BUMP: If you want success, use this format. Don't "sorta" do it your way.

Your person owns the agenda, including writing it for each meeting, giving it to you, taking action notes, and so on. You are mostly a listener and questioner, not a director. It likely will take practice to shift from direction to question, but you'll learn what's in your person's mind, how she sees the world, and how she's planning to respond. With that picture, your thoughts and comments can be fewer and more potent.

Your questions (to yourself) always are:

- Are these the right things to focus on, given our goals?
- Does this person have what she needs to be successful?
- Is there someone else who can substantially impact results?

ACCELERANT: When is this week's OOO?

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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