



DO BUSINESS FASTER™

Jim's Profit Accelerator 209 Stem the Flood—The Bandwidth Trick

Part of leadership is handling the clumps of problems. Problems never come at the pace of solutions, so what to do?

SPEED BUMP: Problems come at different speeds than solutions.

Here's how exceptional leaders do it:

Sharpen Priorities—When you're hit with a pile too big to finish promptly, pull back and delay some topics (if possible, see if you can cancel some entirely). Allow yourself and your company to not work on everything at once. You (and your people) have limits and time is fixed (24/7), so what you choose is as vital as how you resolve the issue. Choose what to work on the best you can (that is, set priorities) based upon what the business needs. That's usually driven by risk or depth of damage to the business.

Delegate—Yes, here it is again. There seems to be a direct correlation between the size of the problem and a leader's instinct to "handle it" himself. The opposite is almost always better: Find your best leader to tackle this one, and hand it to him. Delegation lets you help without controlling, minimizes your time, and uses your unique skills only. Delegation also forces a leader to make the task very clear—the essential first step for a solid solution.

Chop Meeting Fat—Let your meetings be brief, limiting the agenda and the team to those needed for the solution. Meetings of 15–30 minutes usually get the same work done as meetings twice the length. Frame the problem crisply. If possible, frame a general approach and set the team free to finish, with a hard due date. The higher the risk with the problem, the shorter and more frequent the meetings should be. This will sustain progress, especially if they are 15-minute standups aimed at showcasing blocks to progress.

In a metal fabrication business where I worked, quality problems suddenly loomed. Since we made parts for Daimler Trucks, and Daimler required that the parts be put on the truck as soon as Daimler received them (and the trucks were moving down the assembly line), problems emerged instantly. We found the problem quickly, pointing to a press brake operated by our best and most experienced operator. When we talked with him, we discovered that the back stop on his machine was missing a set screw, allowing tolerances to drift. He was undergoing chemo for cancer, was not his usual sharp self, and believed his team lead's promise to get the stop fixed. Meanwhile, dedicated pro that he was, he adjusted on the fly to keep production going! We fixed the back stop within an hour.

ACCELERANT: What problem clump will you try this technique on 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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