



DO BUSINESS FASTER™

## **Jim's Profit Accelerator 205 Exorcise Necessary Evils**

When Ferdinand Magellan's flotilla completed its 42,000-mile trip around the world, a dispute hid the significance of the journey: The ship's log showed that they returned to Spain on Saturday, September 6, 1522. Local calendars showed the day as Sunday, September 7, 1522. So, the argument raged until no answer could be found, except the truth—the world was indeed round!

The conviction that the world is flat was a necessary artifact for life in the 15th and 16th centuries, even though it was false.

**SPEED BUMP:** Common truth often isn't true.

In the 496 years since, we still haul around facts that aren't true, don't we? Even as cold, hard businesspeople dedicated to truth and accuracy we still have our flat earth beliefs (called bias by some).

So why not dump some of this "noise"? Here's where to start:

### **Reports**

Which reports aren't used regularly? (Your CFO will tell you which she needs to keep your bank and owners happy—but there still will be many to eliminate.)

Sort reports into "what" and "why." "What" is results well enough measured to be believable or useful. "Why" is often an explanation whose useful life is short, but stays around just in case.

The rules:

- Unless you create the report or use it weekly, toss it.
- If an analysis is dated or for a special purpose, toss it (unless it can't be rebuilt.)
- If you aren't the creator of the report (or email), toss it.
- Look at each report for data that's of little or no use. Ask to have it removed, except when it can't be replicated.
- If you keep reports to protect yourself, work on the relationship that seems dangerous. It's the relationship that's a problem, not the document (and the document likely won't protect you anyhow).

## Meetings

Apply the same logic to meetings, meeting agendas, and meeting notes.

## Personal Techniques

- Ways of leading
- Ways of problem-solving
- Balancing talking and listening
- Ways of managing “wandering” in the organization
- What you choose to do yourself versus what you choose to delegate
- How you delegate and follow up

## Necessary Evils (NE)

These are actions, behaviors, ways of behaving, styles of problem-solving, when to ask the boss a question, etc., etc. The clue to NE may be that if it seems stilted, it likely is. Try to change it and see what you get. It may be fresh air, and it might be a breakthrough. Neither is likely without an “evil-plow”: a person who challenges things that stand in the way of success.

My favorite manufacturing manager regularly stuck his head in my office to say, “Boss you were ‘way’ over our heads this morning. What are you trying to say?” He was an invaluable delight.

**SPEED BUMP:** Unless you challenge noise, it will remain.

In early school years I was rewarded for having the right answer, which grew into insistence on having an answer and, if possible, being “right.” Years of leadership experience later, I’m realizing that my “right answer” is often at least incomplete, if not wrong. I’m working to ask and listen more and provide answers less. It works better.

**ACCELERANT:** What Necessary Evil do you want to erase?

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](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.