



DO BUSINESS FASTER™

Jim's Profit Accelerator 179 Your Trigger Alert

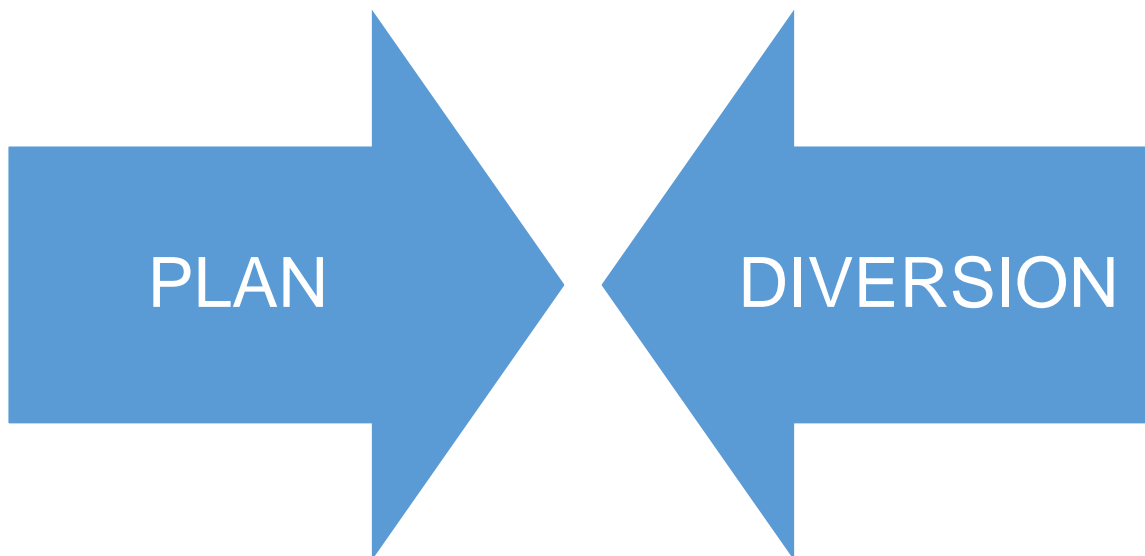
Trigger alerts are a fashionable, if questionable, attempt by colleges to warn students of potentially unsettling material in an upcoming lecture or book. (Yes, I know. Just move on. That's a different topic.)

If you're a leader, your biggest challenge to success isn't competition, poor execution, weak product design, or (insert other concern here). It is, says Joth Ricci, disruption. Disruption that can be either good or bad. (Joth is the successful CEO of three companies, one at a time).

SPEED BUMP: Disruption is an interruption that diverts from your plan.

Stipulate that the most successful companies build an annual plan and follow it as well as they can. It's often a struggle to follow it, for many reasons. Strangely, many of those reasons are self-inflicted diversions.

Here's how it looks:



Good disruptions come in forms like these:

- Better ideas
- Potential new customers
- Product line extensions that can be “easily” produced
- Software upgrades
- Bright ideas from good customers.

After you observe that these all look good, remember how full your days are, how reluctant your team is to take on a new challenge, and how much you’ve committed to deliver this year’s results.

SPEED BUMP: If your plan is good enough, stick with it.

Yes, there are also interruptions that can be problems, such as customer complaints, quality gaps, ballooning overtime, and so forth. The worst are Cerberus interruptions—complex, interesting, appealing—that are tough to prioritize and worse to fix. Step away from them if possible. (Cerberus is the mythical dog with three heads who couldn’t decide which plate of food to eat first.)

For those, stop being like Cerberus, and choose none of the interruptions if possible. If you must attend to them, quickly prioritize, accelerate repair of those with highest impact, and ignore or outrun the rest. Intense focus on executing your plan beats the small repairs reaching for your attention along the way.

What does trigger alert have to do with it? Create your own, to snap you out of reflexively chasing everything that’s misfiring. It’s a decision, best made in the flush of launching this year’s plan, which feels good. Task yourself with watching for trigger alerts every day. Even better, make it a topic with your management team.

Definition of Trigger Alert: A brusque warning that we’re being pulled from our plan by the next shiny thing (or ugly thing). It’s not how shiny, it’s the strength of its diversion.)

Why bother? Why not exploit opportunities as they arise? If opportunities fit within the plan, treat them like all opportunities: evaluate benefit, allocate minimum resources, measure results, and so forth. If opportunities don’t fit, push them to next year. If they won’t last, they likely aren’t worth the disruption now.

If your plan or your measures are weak, shore them up. Use the adrenaline of the new opportunity to drive to clearer plans (probably simpler) or sharper measures.

If your example to your team is that *you* chase the next thing, they’ll let up on the plan and chase *their* shiny object.

SPEED BUMP: More measures are seldom better. Instead, sharpen your top three.

Here's the cycle:



ACCELERANT: When today did you miss your trigger alert?

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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