



DO BUSINESS FASTER™

Jim's Profit Accelerator 204 What's Your Evidence?

One of the fastest effective ways to shift a disagreement into action (or not), is to ask, “What’s the evidence?” Evidence comes in all flavors, of course, but the most useful shares these factors:

1. Specific enough
2. Good enough source
3. Applies enough to the current situation

The reason for “enough” is that the question is always about the depth of the data. Or, is it reliable enough for the problem we’re trying to solve? What’s tricky is that we can differ about what is “enough.” When that’s the case, spell it out: Move the debate to match the depth of the data to the risk of the problem being solved.

SPEED BUMP: The bigger the risk, the deeper the data must be.

Shift to the risk: What’s the likely downside of an error—what could it cost? Here are some possible costs:

1. Reputation with a customer
2. Direct loss of profit
3. Embarrassment

If you explore the possible cost and discover that it’s about embarrassment, an interesting reversal can happen: The penalty is emotional, not rational, and emotional costs, especially losses, are powerful motivators—maybe more than financial results! You may observe behavior that seems unrelated to the size of the problem. If so, that can indicate an emotional response that’s personal and unrelated to the business cost.

SPEED BUMP: If the response seems out of proportion, it usually is emotional.

When it’s emotional, shift your questions to something like, “What does this mean to you? Why is that?” Let the other person talk enough to work themselves back down the ladder they’ve climbed. (Yes, like working with an angry customer.)

Of course, it’s hard to do in the moment, so look for places to practice when you’re calm, and the other person is emotionally invested. Once you start looking, you’ll see it.

If this seems like theory, look at this excerpt from the front page (A1) of the *Wall Street Journal* on October 13, 2018: Now, one in 10 young adults want regulators to ban dihydrogen monoxide from food and beverages, according to a study by research firm Insights Now. Um, that would be H₂O, also known as water.

How would you convince the concerned young adult that the substance is water? Yes, it's a mix of examples and facts, starting with some basic chemistry. If you're not in the food industry this is just a funny story. If you're selling food to these folks, it poses a costly and potentially brand-damaging problem: Explain it by advertising or restate your ingredients and fight with the FDA.

SPEED BUMP: When influencing others, what's in their head is what matters.

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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