

moving too fast

completing tasks very quickly, with errors, missing information or inaccuracies



The ability to work with jackrabbit speed is typically recognized and rewarded in business. Simply put, companies like employees who can cruise through their to-do lists at Mach3 with their hair on fire. Because, after all, time is money.

But time is not money if that efficiency is not matched with effectiveness and accuracy. Racing through assignments only to deliver sloppy results not only costs businesses plenty of moolah every year, it could cost you your stellar reputation, health or (gasp) job if your great-balls-of-fire pace results in a doozy mistake, or compromises your well-being.

So, how do you know if you're moving too fast? And, importantly, how can you slow down without impacting quality or your approval rating at the office? Here are a few ways to spot, and fix, the situation:

Your Typos Are Being Noted I sent an email to a client the other day—my proposed strategy for his project. In the note, I suggested, among other things, that we showcase his specific knowledge of the “footware” industry. Fortunately, he was more than good spirited about it.

But it doesn't always end that well. When you're sloppy or unclear in your correspondence, in presentations or proposals or really any written communication you use as means to get your job accomplished, it can (at a minimum) make people think you're lazy or careless. If you're hearing repeated feedback on one specific “tiny little sloppiness” issue, it's probably time to start focusing on finding a way to avoid it.

How To Fix: Double check everything you distribute. Seriously. Unless it's a 152-page presentation deck, it will probably only take you an extra few minutes—minutes you easily recoup by not having to clear up what you meant in your original communication.

You Miss An Important Meeting Or Deadline Another billboard-esque sign that you're moving too quickly is when you flat-out miss an important meeting or deadline, because you were whipping along so quickly that you either failed to enter it into your calendar or simply overlooked it.

You really only get so many chances in situations like this, especially if that meeting or deadline is a crucial one. Not to mention, you just end up feeling like a failure, and that's just no good for your self-esteem.

How To Fix: Figure out what specific thing or things are out of whack here. Do you lack a viable planning system? Do you have unconnected calendars, meaning if you record a meeting in one place, you can't see it in another? Pinpoint first, and then strive to come up with tangible safeguards so that, no matter how rapid your pace, you don't miss the stuff that truly matters.

You Make An Error That Costs The Company Money Yeah, this one's often a doozy. Not going to lie. And it's worse if “costs the company money” equals large sums of money. Let's assume we're talking middle of the road (or less) cash here. But even when it's nominal, guess what? Companies don't like it when their employees make costly errors, especially if they're avoidable (and especially if there have been conversations prior about “being more careful”). If, and when this happens, you need to *own up* and mobilize, swiftly.

How To Fix: First, the fix probably depends on how much money your speed has just cost the company. If it's an enormous amount, you may be kindly asked to exit stage left. But, assuming it's not nearly that extreme, the solution involves taking responsibility (immediately) for the error and then—when possible—proposing how you will correct (or reduce the impact of) the error. Next, you follow through. It's also very important that you digest thoroughly how this happened and create safeguards as you move forward, so that it never happens again.