

## [Law Firm Success: Can Your Firm Afford to Not Develop Your Next Generation of Rainmakers?](#)

By [Cordell Parvin](#) on October 7th, 2013

I want to tell you about two law firms that were started years ago by lawyers my age. The firms are about the same size. They both are doing very well. Yet, they are vastly different.

One firm's lawyers my age are building the next generation of rainmakers. The other firm's lawyers my age have done nothing to develop the next generation. Eventually the lawyers my age will retire or leave for other reasons. One firm will survive and thrive, and the other will fold. Maybe each firm is happy with their future.

Suppose you want to be like the first firm and want to develop your next generation? Where should you start?



Recently I was asked to give a presentation on developing the next generation of rainmakers. I decided I would begin my presentation by describing how rainmakers are different. I believe most rainmakers have a high degree of [emotional intelligence](#) (EI). If you want to learn more about EI for lawyers, here is a good presentation: [Emotional Intelligence: A Necessary and Valuable Tool For Lawyers, Legal Departments and Firms.](#)

Looking at the components of emotional intelligence, I believe rainmakers have a strong ego drive. In part, they define themselves by the recognition they receive and by the sense of accomplishment they feel when hired by a new or existing client.

Most rainmakers are empathetic, meaning they have great ability to understand the world from their client's perspective. Rainmakers typically exhibit high ego strength/resilience, meaning they are able to bounce back from criticism/rejection or defeat in a trial.

Rainmakers are more likely to be sociable, outgoing and extroverted. They are comfortable with people either individually or in groups. Rainmakers typically set high goals for themselves and have a plan to achieve them. These are all examples of high emotional intelligence. But, I think rainmakers exhibit other characteristics:

- They really care.
- They expect more of themselves than others do.
- They have high energy.
- They inspire confidence.
- They have a passion for their work and their clients.

So what do the characteristics of rainmakers tell us about creating the future rainmakers? I think it tells us several things:

- Rainmaking will be natural for few and a challenge for many.
- You need to focus on raising the level of emotional intelligence.
- One size does not fit all (you need to customize your training and coaching to the individual).
- You need to teach associates to set goals and prepare a plan.
- Client development training should be interactive and experiential.
- There must be follow-up individual coaching.

Programs for 1-3 year associates should be vastly different than programs for more senior associates, which should be different than programs for income partners.

If you are in marketing or professional development in your firm, I urge you to read: [The Talent Code](#) by [Daniel Coyle](#). If you are interested, I want to form groups of five that every two weeks will share their takeaways from each chapter on how that chapter applies to development the next generation of rainmakers.

**Cordell M. Parvin** built a national construction practice during his 35 years practicing law. At *Jenkins & Gilchrist*, Mr. Parvin was the Construction Law Practice Group Leader and was also responsible for the firm's attorney development practice. While there he taught client development and created a coaching program for junior partners. In 2005, Mr. Parvin left the firm and started Cordell Parvin LLC. He now works with lawyers and law firms on career development and planning and client development. He is the co-author of *Say Ciao to Chow Mein: Conquering Career Burnout* and other books for lawyers. To learn more visit his Web site, [www.cordellparvin.com](http://www.cordellparvin.com) or contact him at [cparvin@cordellparvin.com](mailto:cparvin@cordellparvin.com).