

[Want to Be a Rainmaker? Try This](#)

By [Cordell Parvin](#) on December 4th, 2014

Over the years I have been frequently asked: How can build my practice and become a top rainmaker in my firm?

I always say that is a great question. It's natural to ask that question because when you are a rainmaker you have control over your destiny, you feel in high demand both by your clients and by your firm and you have the most coveted asset a lawyer can have-clients and a book of business.

Many young lawyers don't know where to start or how to best spend their time. Are you one of those lawyers? If so you are not alone. Let me offer some thoughts for you.



Start Here: Decide What You Want to Achieve

The first step for you is to discover what you want and then create a plan to achieve it. How did I do it?

If you are a regular reader you know that in 1978 I decided I wanted to become the preeminent transportation (highways/air/rail) construction lawyer in the United States and I developed a plan to achieve it. When I started I had a long way to go because I had never done any work for a transportation construction contractor.

Next: Create an Effective Business Plan

When I prepared my business plan for that year and every year thereafter, I did both a top down approach and a bottom up approach. In the top down I wrote down all the actions I wanted to take.

I still have my 1999 business plan. I saw that it included workshops for four clients, presentations at four construction association conventions or meetings, my monthly Roads and Bridges magazine column and visits to 20 construction contractor clients.

In my bottom up approach I decided how non-billable much time I would devote to client development and estimated how much time each of my action items would take. I broke my plan down into 90 Days Plans and then further broke it down to a weekly plan. Each week I planned my client development activities and I tried to do something, no matter how small an activity, each day.

Build Your Profile: Writing and Speaking to Get Hired

Most rainmakers have built their profile and focused on becoming the “go to” lawyer in their field. Look at their bios. You can build your profile by writing and speaking. Whenever you find something your clients need to know, write an article or a blog post. When you do identify a problem or opportunity and offer a solution.

Your goal in writing articles or blog posts is to have your potential clients see you as the person to handle the solution.

Make Your Presentations to Business Clients Different Than Other Lawyers

I urge you to make your presentations to business clients different than other lawyers. Many lawyers think, write and speak linearly. As a result, they give the audience the history of Swiss watch making in a series of incredibly wordy and boring PowerPoint slides when the audience really just wants to know the time.

Make your presentation more like a rock concert. Start strong and end strong and have your audience wanting to hear more from you. Make your slides visual and when possible includes some multi-media. Engage your audience by asking questions and getting them involved.

Finally: Build Relationships

Client development is also about building relationships. As a starting point, become more focused on your contacts. You should not have random lunches with contacts when you can't find anyone in your office with whom to eat lunch.

Clients typically narrow their choice of lawyers based on reputation, but they hire based on how well you connect with them. When you meet in person you have a very short time to develop trust and rapport. There is a way to do it and it begins by generally caring about the other person.

So, What's the Bottom Line?

You can become a rainmaker. Do it by planning your time wisely, developing your profile and reputation and building relationships. What else can I do to help you?

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 or contact him at cparvin@cordellparvin.com.