

Creating Gravitational Pull

HOW THE VERY BEST RAINMAKERS ATTRACT CLIENTS

Top rainmakers seem to attract clients as if they have an irresistible gravitational pull. They don't 'sell'. Instead, clients seek them out. While others are prospecting and selling, great rainmakers have more work than they can handle, feed work to other attorneys and often turn down work that they don't want to do.

How do they do it?

Research shows that the very best rainmakers share six powerful non-selling disciplines that, when used in combination and on a regular basis, creates a 'gravitational pull'. These are the keys to attracting quality clients.

SIX KEYS TO RAINMAKING SUCCESS

Over more than 20 years of observing, coaching and researching the most successful sales professionals, sales programs and techniques in four professional services industries, I have found that the most successful practitioners share certain competencies and disciplines that attract client inquiries. In combination, these six factors generate what I call a 'gravitational pull' of clients to a rainmaker's practice or law firm. As such, they rarely have to 'sell' their services. The work comes to them because they consistently apply these six highly developed disciplines and competencies in their daily life.



Clearly there are other factors at play that influence a client's selection of a lawyer or law firm. And, equally true, not every rainmaker will exhibit every quality fully throughout his or her career let alone in every interaction. But these six components were the most commonly observed among legal professionals who had a long track record of above average performance.

Moreover, these qualities have the added appeal of common sense.

If you are struggling to build a book of business, my advice to you is this: What you know, who you know and how you are drives your success as a professional. Master these six tips and you'll begin attracting new clients, friends and powerful relationships.

IT'S IMPORTANT WHAT YOU KNOW

Top professionals develop 'T-Shaped' knowledge. The term 'T-Shape Professional' originated in the engineering industry to describe professionals who are knowledgeable in a broad area of topics (the horizontal bar of the 'T') but deeply knowledgeable in one narrow area of expertise (the vertical bar of the 'T'). For lawyers, this T-Shaped knowledge includes at least three general types of knowledge on the horizontal bar: broad knowledge of business, (specifically basic financial, operational, human resource and marketing knowledge); broad knowledge of legal operations and technology (such as e-Discovery, knowledge management, industry trends, process improvement, legal project management, etc.); and broad knowledge of the general legal practice area in which the attorney works (that is, what we normally expect of a competent practitioner). The vertical axis represents one to two areas of deep specialization, that is, a unique



or exceptionally deep understanding of a specific issue, law, industry, business practice or circumstance that sets the attorney's experience apart from more generalist practitioners. They don't have to be the only one with this specialized knowledge. But they do need to be among the few with the highly specialized training, knowledge or experience. Promoting this vertical knowledge niche becomes the magnet that attracts new inquiries, prospects, and media interviews, and which fuels the referral process.

IT'S IMPORTANT WHO YOU KNOW

Top professionals maintain a valuable network of contacts and resources. They pay close attention to who they know, who knows what, and who they need to know to add valuable connections to their contact network. They prioritize these contacts and carefully manage their relationship building efforts. It's difficult to tell where their professional relationships end and their personal relationships begin. They surround themselves with like-minded professionals with shared values in every part of their lives. For those in their contact network that fall outside of this orbit, they keep a current inventory of the skills, knowledge and relationships of the remaining contacts in their network, and connect and refer these people in a way that constantly adds value to all those touched by their network.

IT'S IMPORTANT HOW YOU ARE

Top professionals build 'Trusted Servant' relationships. They form close emotional bonds with their clients and engage them with a selfless focus on the needs and wants of the client that generates loyalty to that attorney. They are authentic in their commitment to their clients and often are willing to take short term losses for the opportunity to embed more deeply in the client's business. They work hard to become critically involved, trusted partners to their clients by studying the client's business and its competitors; by expanding their relationships beyond the legal department; and by learning the operational, financial and human capital requirements of the business and sharing this knowledge broadly both within the law firm and with the client. This integration into the business of their clients makes them strategically important to the business and extremely difficult to substitute with another skilled attorney. It also fuels the referral process.

Top professionals perform 'random acts of kindness'. They are, essentially, selfless yet smart givers. And, importantly, they give without the expectation of reciprocity. They circulate through their business relationships probing and listening for ways to connect people, to do favors for people, and to share their knowledge and insights. They don't worry about giving away free legal advice or charging for a 'lawyer letter.' They make themselves a one-stop resource for solutions to problems, both professional and personal. These 'givers' listen much more than they talk. They are noticeably focused, inquisitive and attentive in conversations. This discipline is at the core of attraction, and it is driving force of new inquiries and expanded relationships. (See the recent book by Adam Grant, *Give and Take, Why Helping Others Drives Our Success* for a fascinating look at how 'givers, takers and matchers' network and build success.)

Top professionals plan and execute daily. They have a plan and work some aspect of that plan every day. They make business development as much a part of their daily routine as their first cup of coffee. They keep their plans simple and achievable. It may not always be a written plan, but their focus is clear. Their strategy is to create value for others. They understand the marketing tools that work best for them and incorporate those tools into their daily routine. They understand that success is the result of the frequency and repetition



of their efforts, not the size or glitz of the effort. They follow up consistently and have a bias for action. The consistency of this effort is what drives market awareness and reputation.

Top professionals have an attitude of positivity and compassion. Attitude is everything. And nowhere is that more evident than in the attitudes common among highly successful lawyers. They are empathetic, compassionate, optimistic and forgiving- making them highly approachable. They often have a great sense of humor and truly enjoy their lives and their work. Most importantly, they tend to eschew hierarchy and status, and treat everyone as equal and valuable.

There is no silver bullet. Building a rainmaker's gravitational pull takes time. These are not easy competencies and disciplines to incorporate into your daily routine. You cannot fake compassion or feign positivity. The key to these competencies are in the authenticity of them. You cannot simply 'talk the talk.' To be a rainmaker with gravitational pull, you must learn to 'walk the walk' and walk it every day.

Making these changes takes effort and focus. They require a deep personal commitment and continuous self-awareness and self-improvement. But for those willing to take the journey, the payoff is not just in greater performance but, more importantly, in greater happiness, career fulfillment, heightened respect and deeper relationships- all benefits reported by the rainmakers that I have had the intense pleasure to observe and coach.

ABOUT GROUP DEWEY CONSULTING

Group Dewey Consulting provides growth consulting and training services to law firms, practice groups and lawyers. Our core expertise is in business development coaching and training, lateral partner due diligence, marketing, opportunities research, practice group management and legal services strategy. We base our services on simple, sensible techniques and principles to overcome the complexities of a dynamic marketplace.



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