

Bringing out the Rainmaker in You

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It is estimated that 45,000 people graduate from law school each year. Securing a job after law school is competitive. Although law school teaches students effective analytical, legal research and reasoning skills, rainmaking skills are not taught. However, rainmaking skills can be learned.

When lawyers secure their first legal job, it is important that they do not lose sight of the fact that they must not only be an effective advocate for their current clients but they must also have a strategy to attract new clients and retain current clients. The ailing economy has forced many lawyers to use creative and innovative ways to retain clients. Partners of law firms are evaluating their associates based on their lawyering skills and simply put, the amount of money the associates bring to the firm. It is not acceptable at many firms to simply be the “worker bee” attorney anymore. Sure you can do the work. You were hired because you were able to distinguish yourself from other candidates. Once you get the job, how do you compare to your fellow associates? A rainmaker is an attorney who can do the “worker bee” attorney’s job and cultivate clients. If you were in the partner’s shoes and had to choose between working with a “worker bee” attorney and a “rainmaking” attorney, who would you choose?

Here are some tips to help bring out the rainmaker in you. You need to earn **R**espect, pay **A**ttention, be **I**ntelligent, **N**etwork, earn **M**oney, be **A**vailable, **K**eeP in touch, and be **E**fficient and **R**ealistic.

Respect

Earning respect in your field is critical in order to become an effective rainmaker. To earn respect, be dedicated to your firm and your clients so that you achieve positive results. Become the “go to” attorney in your area of the law. Your clients and peers will grow to respect you and refer clients to you.

Attention

Pay attention to your client’s needs. If your client tells you that they are not technologically savvy, you should not plan to primarily communicate with them by email. Listen to your clients. Lawyers are known for talking but listening and catering to your client’s needs will pay off in the long run. As an extra, if your client references a special occasion such as their birthday or anniversary, send them a nice letter or card on the occasion.

Intelligent

Be intelligent! Remember, you have to know the law to be a great lawyer. Participate in CLE’s, even if they are not required by the state where you are barred. This is a great place to meet lawyers with your same interest.

Network

Networking is key. Building relationships with your peers can prove to be profitable. Network with all lawyers and do not overlook attending events with lawyers who practice in a different area.

Money

Make money. Although this tip may seem obvious, it is important to remember to earn money. Do not get caught up in spending more money than you earn on networking events and dinners. You can have the same conversation with a potential client over coffee that you can have with them at a restaurant and not pay five star restaurant prices.

Available

Be available for your clients. Always make each client feel as if they are your only client. If the client is constantly being sent to your voicemail, you may be replaced with a lawyer who will make time for the client.

Keep in Touch

After attending a networking event, what do you do with those business cards? Follow up. Staying fresh on your peer's minds will get you referrals.

Efficient

Your clients will appreciate your efficiency, when they look at their bill. Do not waste your time and most importantly, do not waste their time and money.

Be Realistic

If a client questions your genuineness, you risk losing them. Although you can learn to be a rainmaker, if your conversations appear scripted or forced, your client will likely seek an attorney that is an effective communicator.