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More on My Evening With Multimillion-Dollar Rainmakers

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Special to the Legal

In my last article (“My Night With a Few Multimillion-Dollar Rainmakers,” published April 24 in *The Legal*), I shared some observations and tips that I garnered from meeting with a handful of rainmakers who each had \$5 million to more than \$20 million in business annually. I was amazed at the enormous response to the article and especially floored by how many other extremely successful lawyers wrote me — wanting me to tell their story. So without further adieu, and because you asked for it, here are more tried and true tips and reflections from the real McCoy — lawyers who make it look easy and continue to bring in millions to their firms year after year.

• *Tip: Hire the best people to support your practice and recognize their work.* Great rainmakers surround themselves with a team of really smart and engaged people who help them do great work for the client. From the secretary to the lawyers who work on the matters, the most successful lawyers told me that hiring the right people was key



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has been helping lawyers and law firms expand their practices for 25 years. She is a former attorney with Morgan, Lewis & Bockius and was its first marketing director. She is president of Stacy Clark Marketing

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to their success. These rainmakers also make it a point to regularly praise their team members — both publicly and in private — and such praise is a huge motivating factor to their employees.

• *Observation: Business development is a huge priority for these lawyers all the time — not just when their workflow is down.* They are relentless about it in a good way and their drive to bring in more work and keep their books of business in the millions is present every day. They enjoy “the hunt” a great deal but “the prize” even more, and when you talk to them about their typical day, it is often the case that they spent as much time on business development as they did on billable casework.

• *Tip: Make yourself indispensable to a client.* Don’t just litigate a

case — look for the big picture to advise the client on how to avoid litigation in the future. If you advise a business executive on his or her estate matters and see a great deal on office space, tell him or her. The idea is to demonstrate to the client that you are someone constantly thinking about his or her interests. Along these lines, one rainmaker told me that he gives away his “time, talent and treasures — for free” constantly. Just helping people and expecting nothing in return says more than anything else.

• *Observation: These rainmakers have the art of spinning a story for illustrative purposes mastered.* They are terrific conversationalists. One lawyer weaves inspirational lines from current movies into so many of his conversations that he is known for it. You remember him for this. It makes it really fun to talk with him and distinguishes him from other lawyers.

• *Observation: These lawyers are in the trenches working on clients’ complex matters, even if they are small, and their clients like this a lot.* These lawyers get that sometimes the client does not

want to be handed off to another lawyer but wants them. Clients hear from them frequently and see them working on their cases. This is what they are buying and they appreciate having the personal attention of their top lawyer. It does make them feel special.

• *Tip: These lawyers have shown me that there are at least two tried and true ways to grow your practice.* The first is to help write or push through legislation that you are then seen as the ultimate expert on — either locally or beyond. The second is to own a very specific, yet hot, area of law. As an example of this, one of the rainmakers seized upon a very narrow recession-proof practice area and then owned it. She set up a microsite on the area, blogged about it, met with reporters with story ideas on the subject, constantly was on the lecture circuit speaking to targeted clients and potential clients on it and wrote prolifically in materials read by her target audience. Her “full-court press” included providing volumes of useful information on her website that other practitioners went to in an effort to educate themselves on the area, fully recognizing her as the leader in this field.

• *Observation: These lawyers exude confidence.* They have very firm handshakes and they always look directly into your eyes, making you feel like the center of their universe for the duration of the conversation. These men and women make you feel like you are in the presence of the greatest and you intuitively get why they are so

successful. They also praise people regularly, including their opposing counsel. Those upon whom such praise is given feel special that the lawyer appreciated their work, and they don’t forget the rainmaker.

• *Tip: If you represent a client who has multiple office locations, visit all of their offices and introduce*

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them to members of your firm or others who can help them locally.

Rainmakers in firms with multiple office locations go out of their way to make sure the client has a local lawyer at the firm reach out to them.

• *Observation: Most of the lawyers I talked to are “joiners.”* What I mean by this is that they love bringing people together who don’t know one another. If someone is looking for a job, they put him or her in touch with possible employers. If someone is looking to better understand an industry, they set him or her up with seasoned industry executives to talk to, and they do all of this passionately and for free. They relish the idea of being in a position to be able to help. And, boy, do they have grateful fans for doing so, which of course translates very often into legal work.

• *Tip: “Touch” your most important clients regularly.* One rainmaker carries a list of his clients with him in his wallet and checks it daily to see if he can provide the client with a meaningful “touch.” Most of the lawyers I spoke to are constantly getting on planes, trains and highways to personally meet with clients for free on their turf. Appreciate that you have to do this on a regular basis, or realize that other law firms will try to “touch” your client for you.

You can do this. Get up, get out and get going. •