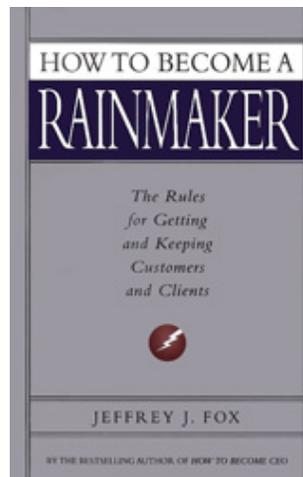




WISDOM IN A NUTSHELL

How to Become A Rainmaker

The Rules for Getting and Keeping Customers and Clients



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ISBN 0 7868 6595 4
Hyperion New York 2000
169 pages

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The Big Idea

Inspired by Native American tradition, the Rainmaker is one who uses his power to bring rain to nourish crops that feed the tribe. In sales, a rainmaker is the revenue-bringer to a company. She brings the very lifeblood of the organization and makes the cash register ring. Here are the rules to being the Rainmaker, the salesperson that gets and keeps customers.

Rainmaker Credo

- Cherish customers at all times.
- Treat customers as you would your best friend.
- Listen to customers to decipher their needs.
- Give the customers what they need.
- Price your product to its dollarized value
- Show customers the dollarized value of what they will get
- Teach customers to want what they need.
- Make your product the way the customer wants it.
- Get your product to the customer when they want it.
- Give your customers a little extra, more than they expect.
- Remind customers of the dollarized value they received.
- Thank each customer sincerely and often.
- Help customers pay you, so they won't be embarrassed and go elsewhere.
- Ask to do it again.

Always answer the question, "Why should I do business with you?"

The answer has to be tailored to fit your customer's agenda. You need to make her feel good, or solve the problem for her. Calculate the economic benefit per dollar and show her the consequences of life without your product, in terms of dollars and cents. More often, it is best to graphically show how much the customer will save when she puts your product to good use.

Obey marketing's first commandment.

Treat customers as you would treat yourself. Don't overcharge, put them on endless hold, or give them the runaround. Service is the key word. Put yourself in his shoes. Deliver on every promise and add a little bit extra.

The customer doesn't care about you.

Do not make excuses for not making a delivery. He doesn't want to hear it. Clarify and summarize what he wants from you and determine how you can help solve the problem.

Always plan every sales call.

Script what you are going to say. Rehearse with a colleague. Anticipate customer objections. Even if it is a fifteen-minute sales call with a decision-maker, that crucial fifteen minutes has to be planned so every minute counts. Practicing and planning for days before the call should be the norm. But allow yourself to be flexible when it comes down to the actual call. If the customer says she will order after just 60 seconds into your hour-long presentation, then stop talking, take the order and leave gracefully.

A good sales call can bring in revenue for years to come. Here is a pre-call checklist:

- Write down your sales call objective
- Prepare questions to ask the customer
- Show them something
- Anticipated concerns and objections
- Points of difference vis-à-vis competitors
- Meaningful benefits to customers
- Dollarization approach, investment return analysis
- Strategies to handle objections
- Closing strategies
- Expected surprises

Fish where the big fish are.

The chances of a good catch are greater when you go to the pond with more fish. Don't waste your precious time selling to the wrong person. Big companies, more successful customers, and those with a high probability of needing your product are better fish.

Show them the money!

Rainmakers sell money. They don't concentrate on all the good qualities of a product, but more on how the product will save time and money for a customer.

One good example is how the number one salesperson for a drug company concentrated his efforts on selling to drugstore owners, and not to the end customer. By offering one free case for every five cases of product purchased, or a cash benefit equivalent of \$25, the salesperson offered the incentive for drugstore owners to sell more of the product. It's always about the money. Earthquakes don't count.

Rainmakers either make the sale or they don't. Rainmakers never have an excuse. Make the quota, no matter what crisis hits your area of responsibility.

Killer sales question no. 1

“Do you have your appointment calendar on hand?”

First, send a short letter to the customer detailing the dollarized benefit. The letter must be compelling enough for him to take your follow-up call.

Once on the phone, ask the first killer question, “Do you have your appointment calendar on hand?” This question leads to that important appointment 90 percent of the time.

Always take the best seat in the restaurant. You want to sit with your back to the wall. You do not want anything to distract your customer from you.

Don't drink coffee on a sales call. Coffee is a waste of time. It spills. It takes precious minutes to prepare, and distracts you from the business at hand.

You're not at lunch to eat lunch! You are not a golf game to win or play your best. You don't go to a cocktail party to party. You are there to make a sale. Order a simple dish that is easy to eat and make sure it is inexpensive. It's okay if you don't eat anything. It is hard to take notes while eating anyway. It's not about the food; it's about getting the next appointment, and getting a commitment, getting the bill, and moving to a close.

Never wear a pen in your shirt pocket. That pen may bleed onto your shirt. Don't bring anything that may distract the customer from your sales pitch. Turn off your cellular phone. Keep your pens in your briefcase. Do not take any chances on things that may decrease the odds of making a sale.

Killer sales question no.2

“Would you like to look into the facts and decide for yourself if they make sense?”

By agreeing to decide for herself, the customer eliminates the option of not deciding. The customer cannot ignore the facts laid out before her. If the solution presented benefits her, she will buy.

Rainmakers turn customer objections into customer objectives. It may be the color, the size, or the noise of that motor. By restating the objection into question form, you hone in on the real issue bothering her. Rainmakers know that every objection must be addressed. The customer may not want a binding commitment just now, so maybe you could offer a free trial, giving something a try never hurt anybody.

Always make a mid-job, next-job recommendation. A caterer who is serving a summer party may remind her host that Christmas is only five months away. Rainmakers always look forward to the next possible sale, when they are in the middle of a job, they start selling the next one.

Treat everyone you meet as a potential client. Be as polite to the lawnmower man as you are to the president of a bank. You never know if that receptionist you meet today will become the vice president of the company tomorrow. Do not make unnecessary enemies. People prefer pleasant, confident salespersons. Treat everyone as a potential client. Anyone can help you or hurt you.

Heed the biggest buy signal. When the customer agrees to see you, this is the biggest buy signal. Most decision-makers don't have the time to meet sales people. The sales call appointment is the biggest buy signal. They have a problem and you sell the solution. Show up on time, and never blow off an appointment.

Killer sales question no. 3

“Yes, that is a good brand. Would you like to know our points of difference?”

So the customer has mentioned ABC's prices are better than yours. Don't repeat the competitor's name. Outline the points of difference in terms of long-term cost to the customer. You don't have to be better, just different.

How did the headmaster of an all-boy prep school sell the idea to parents? By emphasizing the main point of difference from co-ed schools. Having no girls at the school gives students fewer distractions from their studies. This makes them better prepared for a college education. Rainmakers sell that which is different.

Always return every call every day. Rainmakers know returning phone calls is a basic courtesy. Rainmakers are never too busy to return a phone call. With today's technology and mobile communications, you have no excuse for not returning a call.

Learn the miles per gallon of selling. If it takes ten sales calls to make a close, don't plan eight. Know how to calculate your call-to-close ratio. If a book publisher invites 100 people to a book launch, he may close only two sales. To make 10 sales, you need to invite 500 people.

Rainmakers don't plan a thirty-mile trip with twenty miles' worth of gas.

Beware the myth of time and territory management. This is an old concept for the door-to-door type of selling. It harks back to the days of unfocused selling. You don't go around knocking on any door hoping to make a sale. You call on high potential clients and use your time on fewer accounts that bring in bigger cash.

Always taste the wine before a wine tasting.

Never assume something you can check. Check the projector equipment before you make your presentation. Check the microphone before you make a speech. Make sure your website works before you show it to a potential investor. Test things in private before you try to sell in public.

Dare to be dumb. A good pre-planned question will get your customer talking, giving you more information to work with. The Rainmaker asks enough questions to find out more about the customer, and he eventually becomes one of the highest paid salespersons in the company.

Always do an investment return analysis. Do the math and show your customer how your product will benefit the company economically. The greater the return on investment, the more compelling it is for the customer to purchase. It also helps your customer sell the solution to the other decision-makers at his company. He needs the investment return analysis to convince his colleagues.

Always be on "high receive". Always listen and be on the watch for key information that will help clinch the sale. Don't talk unless the customer has finished. Take notes. Don't think about what you are going to say next. Turn off your cell phone. Rainmakers focus solely on the customer in front of them and give him undivided attention.

"Onionize". This means the Rainmaker must get to the core of the customer need. Peel away the layers and ask "why" and "how" questions often. If you don't care about the answer, then don't ask the question.

Be sincere. If you don't care about the customer's new baby, dog, or set of golf clubs, then don't ask the question. You will waste precious selling time. Customers appreciate someone who can get down to business. Ask questions relevant to the sale only.

Never be in a meeting. You are not on vacation. You are traveling. You are out of the office or meeting with a client. The Rainmaker is never "in a meeting", she is on the job site, at a photo shoot, or doing research, traveling, giving a talk at a convention, but never "in a meeting". There must be someone available, like your assistant, to take your calls and be competent enough to get the right information when you are temporarily unavailable.

Present for show, close for dough. Don't depend on a fancy audio-visual presentation to make the sale. Don't think a beautiful brochure will do the job either. The Rainmaker uses these materials as a tool, but the actual sale is made with his skill at helping the customer decide.

Advice to a baby-sitter. A baby-sitter sells a relaxed evening and a neat home. A mother gave her teen-age daughter these two tips on baby-sitting: No matter how much trouble the kids were, when the parents come home, you say everything was fine. Second, leave the house a little cleaner than you found it.

Rainmakers do the job, don't complain, and give the customers a little extra.

Killer sales question no. 4

"Is there anything else that is keeping you from going ahead?"

The Rainmaker is around when a sample is to be tested. Never do a demonstration without an agreement to go ahead with the sale if the test is successful. Rainmakers get buying commitments before they give selling demos.

The Rainmaker gives an order to get.

- If you give a sample, get an agreement to test.
- If you give a product demonstration, first get an agreement to buy if the demo proves the product works as claimed.
- If you give a brochure, get an appointment.
- If you give a discount, get more volume.
- If you give a free drink, get a next dinner.
- If you give a favor, get a due bill.
- If you give a solution, get paid.

Sell on Friday Afternoons. Excellent times for calling on decision-makers are after three on Friday afternoons. This is because people tend to be more relaxed, have their guard down, and are already thinking of their weekend plans. Fridays let customers "sleep on it" over the weekend.

Early morning sales calls are great too. There are fewer interruptions, and the customer's agreement to the unusual early morning hour is a big buy signal.

“Break the ice” at the end of the sales call. You can comment about the interesting painting on your way out to the elevator. If you have only minutes to make the sale and get a commitment to buy, you don’t waste the first few minutes on icebreakers.

Four steps to the sale:

- Getting a lead, referral, an introduction to the decision-maker
- Getting an appointment to meet the decision-maker
- Meeting the decision-maker face-to-face.
- Getting a commitment to a close or to an action that leads directly to a close.

Don’t make cold calls. No busy decision-maker has the time to drop what she is doing to entertain someone without an appointment.

Show the chain. Sell the first link. If the customer agrees to the first step, the customer has bought the chain, unless you break it.

Rainmakers know basic manners are important to making sales calls. They use good manners with everyone at all times. Bad manners are a sign of bad upbringing.

- Don’t talk with food in your mouth.
- Don’t go to a meeting coughing and sneezing
- Be sure you are dressed properly.
- Be sure your hands, car, and samples are clean.
- Fix your hair.
- Offer to carry heavy items
- Stand up when an older person or woman enters the room
- Say please and thank you.

Killer sales question no. 5

“Why don’t you give it a try?”

This allows people freedom from a binding commitment. It is revocable. Sometimes just asking this killer question can lead to the final agreement, and make the big sale.

Love voice mail.

- Leave a compelling message.
- Prepare it in writing.
- Brainstorm for different ways of saying the message.
- Keep it short, like 30 seconds.
- Practice your voice-mail message.
- Use a third-party reference.

- Be ready in case the customer picks up the phone.
- Speak clearly.
- Introduce yourself first.
- State the purpose of your call.
- State the benefit and dollarized value.
- Suggest a limited time frame for your meeting.
- Give you phone number and don't rush it. Always say "area code" before reciting the three-digit code.
- Thank the customer and say if she can't return your call, you will follow up.

Be the best-dressed person you will meet today. But don't overdo it. Your dress should signal confidence, success, professionalism, and attention to detail. It should show that you respect the customer you are meeting with.

Why breakfast meetings bring rain.

- Customers know a breakfast meeting is an unusual investment in time. It is a positive buy signal.
- Breakfast is less expensive than lunch or dinner.
- Breakfast saves your customer time. The venue should be on the customer's route to work.
- Breakfast meetings are less prone to cancellation. The day's interruptions haven't begun yet.
- Don't walk out of the restaurant with your customer. Allow him to leave in peace and privacy. Excuse yourself to make a phone call.
- Breakfast meetings jumpstart your sales call for the day, long before others have even started theirs.

Here's my card.

- Business cards should not be cute or cluttered. Less is more. Aim for an elegant, understated look. Engraving on a cream tone always looks good.
- Business cards are called business cards because they are supposed to help you meet potential customers.
- Business cards are handed out by Rainmakers when asking for a recommendation or referral for future business.

Killer sales question no. 6

"Have we covered everything that is important to you?"

Rainmakers ask the questions others wish they had asked.

Ten things to do to get business today:

- Send a handwritten note.

- Clip and send an article of interest.
- Talk to a satisfied client and ask who else you might help.
- Send a thank-you gift to someone who referred you.
- Give your business card to someone with influence.
- Send a letter to the editor of a magazine your customers read.
- Add fifteen people to your mailing list.
- Leave a compelling voice mail.
- Make an appointment.
- Call a client you haven't spoken to in two years.