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PRACTICE POINTS

Nine Tips to Better Rainmaking

A few ideas to help improve your business development skills that you can practice over the next few weeks.

By Angela Steffen Meyer

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Most fitness trainers say it takes 21 days of working out to get you into a routine that you can continue to get in better shape. It also takes commitment to help you improve your networking and business development skills. Here are 9 tips to help improve your business development skills that you can practice over the next few weeks.

1. Make the Commitment

This is probably the biggest step you will make. If you don't make the commitment to change, you won't do it. Much like improving fitness, reading more, or learning a language, you need to commit to practice. You can do this!

2. Make the Time

The biggest excuse you hear from people about business development is that they are too busy. Most everyone is busy. Even five minutes a day or a week will improve your ability to become a better rainmaker. Put time on your calendar and block it out so you don't get disturbed.

3. Make a Plan

You need to plan out what you want to accomplish. What you want to do—whether it is setting up meetings, writing a blog, or getting on a program to speak—you must have a roadmap. Draw it up and put it where you can see it every day.

4. Make a List

We all know people, but do we ever make a list of the people that we feel are most important to us? You need to make a list of your clients, your connections, and your aspirational clients so that you know who you will be reaching out to in the next 10 weeks. 10 weeks, 10 names, 10 contacts.

5. Make a Call

Now that you have your list, make the call. It could be about regarding a case you are working on together or getting feedback after finishing the job. It could be about scheduling a time to meet at a networking event. Just check-in and reconnect. But when you do make that call, make it of value to the other person and be sincere in your approach.

6. Make the Ask

Unless you ask for the business, you typically won't get the opportunity. And while clients typically know that you are trying to get their business, it can be hard to ask for what you want. Practice saying, "I would welcome the opportunity to work with you. Is there a small project that I we can do together?"

7. Make a Connection

Remember you are building a relationship—provide an article that they might find helpful; do some "free" consulting; tag team with them on a presentation or an article submittal; give them some personal advice *if they ask for it*. I once met a client at a meeting who mentioned that his son didn't like to read all that much. I asked if they had read the "Magic Treehouse" books, and when he said no, I thought, well maybe his son would like them because my son did. I sent him a couple of the books and it turns out his son loved them. Simple acts of kindness go a long way.

8. Make a Post

Don't forget about social media. Share on LinkedIn or Facebook. It could be a firm post, sharing what someone else posted, or letting people know when you are speaking at an event. Lots of people are on social media everyday—let them see you on there as well.

9. Make it Last

If you develop a system, you can make it last. These are the things you must do consistently to become good at business development. You can do it!

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