

Creating Gravitational Pull

How the Very Best Rainmakers Attract Clients

Over more than 20 years of observing, coaching and researching the most successful sales professionals, sales programs and techniques, I believe I have found six characteristics common among the most successful rainmakers. They share competencies and disciplines which appear to 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, I believe, they consistently apply these six highly-developed disciplines and competencies in their practice.

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

Following are the observed competencies high performing service professionals use to create gravitational pull.

1. **They 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, my research indicates that this T-Shaped knowledge includes at least three general types of knowledge on the horizontal axis: 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-though deep specialization with few competitors is certainly a worthy goal. But they do need to be among the very few with the 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.
2. **They build 'Trusted Servant' relationships.** They form close emotional bonds with these 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 opportunities 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.

3. **They 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.
4. **They 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 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.
5. **They 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 written, but it is clear their strategies for creating 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 splashiness 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.
6. **They have an attitude of positivity and compassion.** Attitude is everything. And nowhere is that more evident than in the attitudes common among highly successful rainmakers. They are empathetic, compassionate, optimistic and forgiving- making them highly approachable. They often have a great sense of humor and seem to truly enjoy their lives and work. And 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, deeper career fulfillment, heightened peer respect and more interesting relationships- all benefits reported by the rainmakers I have had the intense pleasure to observe and coach.

About Group Dewey Consulting

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



Eric Dewey, MBA is Managing Principal of Group Dewey Consulting, and has over 25 year of marketing and business development experience in four industries including chief marketing executive and practice administration roles at two AmLaw firms and the largest plaintiff's securities class action firm in the United States. He holds an MBA and two marketing certifications and writes the blog, [Lawyer Up!](#) He can be reached at eric@groupdeweyconsulting.com or 502-693-4731.



Robin Dewey, MPH, is a Principal of Group Dewey Consulting and has more than 25 years of experience in curriculum development and training. As a senior curriculum specialist with the University of California, Berkeley, Robin has developed a wide range of training programs for companies and organizations throughout the United States, Asia and Europe. Robin's focus ensures training programs and curriculum are developed to meet the needs of a wide range of learning styles, modalities and mediums using participatory educational methods. In addition to her training expertise, Robin has worked in house for two law firms and has extensive experience in project management and process evaluation. Robin can be reached at robin@groupdeweyconsulting.com

