

Want More Clients? Motivate Your Team.

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To understand what factors promote successful client development, or “rainmaking,” it makes sense to start with the individual behaviors that distinguish Rainmakers (RMs) from Client Service Partners (CSPs). In a recent article, Lawyer Metrics **documented** Rainmakers’ relatively greater willingness to take risks in a professional setting. A second dimension to business development concerns the ways that partners interact with other team members. On this dimension, the data indicate that Rainmakers and Service Partners have different tendencies.

These findings derive from a statistical analysis of **Management Development Questionnaire** (MDQ) assessments data, which Lawyer Metrics collected from over 300 partners (including both Rainmakers and Client Service Partners) at more than 30 large law firms. We analyzed the extent to which scores on each of the 20 MDQ factors differentiated RMs and CSPs, and on two group-interaction factors—“Motivating Others” and “Teamwork”—the scores of RMs and CSPs differed markedly. In short, RMs scored significantly higher on Motivating Others, and CSPs scored higher on Teamwork.

People who receive high “Motivating Others” scores (as Rainmakers do) tend to encourage members of their teams to think independently. They also prefer to delegate responsibility, thus motivating team members through empowerment. In contrast, people who receive high “Teamwork” scores (as do Client Service Partners) bring a collaborative approach to professional interactions. Teamworkers prefer to execute matters and solve problems through cooperation and place a high value on helping and supporting other team members.

To illustrate the contrasting styles of RMs and CSPs empirically, we calculated summary statistics capturing the distribution of the Motivating Others/Teamwork scores for the Rainmakers and the Client Service Partners. Specifically, for each factor and each group, we calculated the average, or “mean,” along with the 25th and 75th percentile scores. The results are presented in Figure 1, which, moving left to right, lists the 25th percentile, mean, and 75th percentile values.

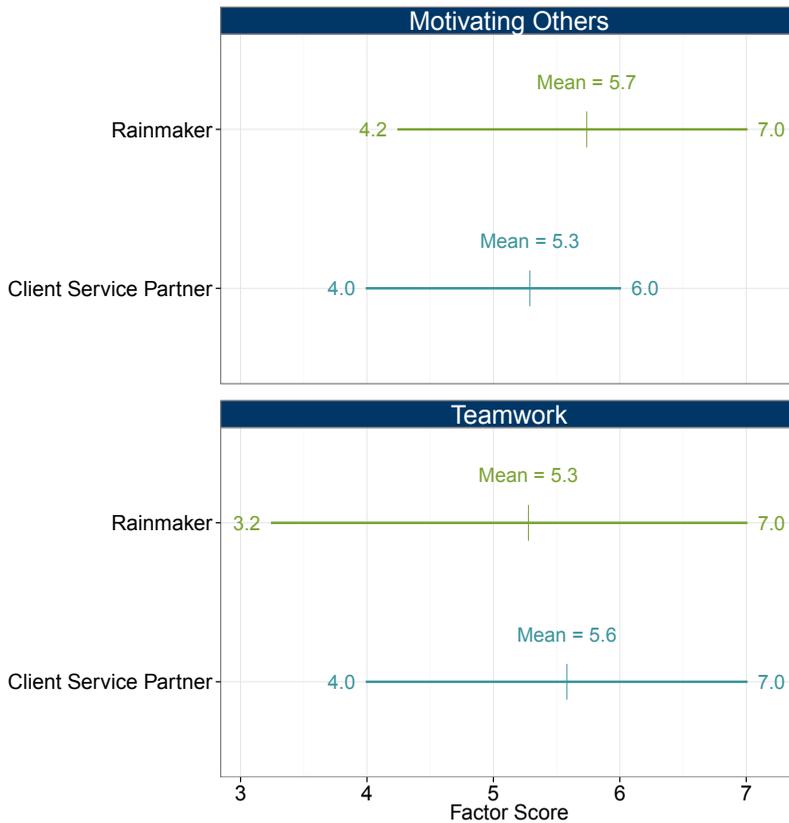


Figure 1. Motivating Others and Teamwork Score Distributions for Rainmakers and Client Service Partners

Looking first at the Motivating Others results (top panel), Rainmakers' scores are uniformly higher than the scores of the Service Partners. The Rainmaker mean (5.7) is 0.4 units higher than the CSP mean (5.3), and this difference in means is statistically significant. At the 25th percentile, the score for RMs is slightly larger (+0.2), and at the 75th percentile, the score for RMs (7) is a full unit (+1) larger than the score for CSPs (6). In finding that the values for Rainmakers are consistently larger, we conclude that RMs prefer to delegate and empower other team members to a greater degree than CSPs.

Turning to the results on Teamwork (bottom panel), we observe a different pattern. The

Rainmakers' mean Teamwork score (5.3) is lower than the mean Teamwork score for Service Partners (5.6), and the 25th percentile for Rainmakers is nearly a full unit lower than the 25th percentile value for Service Partners—3.2 versus 4.0, respectively. To be sure, there are some Rainmakers who favor collaboration, in that the 75th percentile values for RMs and CSPs are equivalent (7). But on average and at the low end of the group distributions, the differences in values indicate that Service Partners more strongly favor Teamwork behaviors.

In summary, Rainmakers and Client Service Partners favor differ-

ent approaches when they interact with other team members. Rainmakers prefer to delegate in order to motivate their teams, reflecting their ability to maintain control over client matters without sacrificing efficiency. Client Service Partners, in contrast, tend to approach job-related tasks by working collaboratively with team members. The help and support that they provide makes CSPs instrumental to firm morale.

In the end, these two approaches to working with other lawyers and with clients complement rather than conflict with each other. Firms need delegators and collaborators to serve clients *and* the organization effectively.