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Book Title: How to Become a Rainmaker

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Summary:

- Rainmakers don't sell fasteners or valves or washing machines or double-paned windows or tax audits or irrigation systems or training programs or golf clubs. *Rainmakers sell money!* They sell reduced downtime, fewer repairs, better gas mileage, higher deposit interest, increased output, decreased energy usage, more wheat per acre, more yardage per swing.
- Rainmakers help the customer see the money. Rainmakers turn benefits into dollars. The plumber who generates the most revenue doesn't charge \$50 for a service call, he sells a clean, dry basement for \$100, saving the customer's thousand-dollar carpet.
- Always show the customer the money. Always dollarize (see "A Rainmaker Extra," page 148). Quantify the customer's return on his investment in your product. Calculate the financial consequences to the customer—the cost of going without your solution.
- The Rainmaker asks the customer, "Based on analysis, it looks like you can save \$180,000 per year with the solution. Can I assume there are probably a number of things that have to be done before you are completely comfortable with this approach? OK, so before we get into this in any depth, can I get your agreement on the analysis? Will you look at the facts and decide for yourself if they make sense?"
- Rainmakers always ask, "Is there anything else that concerns you?" Or, "What else may be prohibiting us from moving ahead?"
- Today's decision makers are usually too busy to see a salesperson unless the customer has a problem. Busy customers will not see a salesperson to chat, or talk about baseball. Busy customers are not doing a survey on the latest fashions sales-people are wearing. If the customer agrees to see you, it is because the customer wants something, needs something, has a problem. It is your job—the Rainmaker's job—to find out what that is.
- **Killer Sales Questions #3**
 - So, why did the customer agree to see you? The customer agreed to see you because there is something about ABC that makes the customer uneasy. You must underscore that unease.
 - Because you have preplanned the call, you are forearmed with how you and your company differ from ABC.
 - You answer exactly as follows: "Yes, that is a good company. Would you like to know our points of difference?" This is a killer sales question.

- Your response does not knock the competitor. To do so would be to impugn the intelligence of the customer. In fact, you do not even repeat the competitor's name.
 - The customer will answer yes because this is precisely the question he wants answered. He wants to know the difference between you and ABC so he can decide to go with you.
 - Your answer, your point of difference, will be forever what the customer thinks about you vis-à-vis the competitor. You will own that position.
- To calculate a call-to-close ratio, review last year's calendar (or the last few years) and count the actual number of sales calls made. Divide that number by the actual number of new sales.
- **"Miles Per Gallon" of Selling**
 - This means the Rainmaker calls on customers with large enough sales potential that, if closed, the resultant revenues will hit goal.
 - Less than 5 percent of all salespeople (and of all selling organizations) understand this concept intellectually, know how to calculate the math, know how to prioritize the probabilities, or have the discipline of the Rainmaker. Ninety-five percent of all salespeople will dilute themselves, by calling on too many customers and not allocating enough sales calls to close each sale. They will, in effect, run out of gas and not hit their goal.
 - Your available number of sales calls is your gas tank, your selling capital. If a home builder needs a mortgage of \$140,000 to complete the house, and his banker only lends \$130,000, what should the builder do, leave off the roof? It is better to lend \$141,000 than \$139,000. It is the same with selling. If it takes ten sales calls to close, don't plan eight. If it takes ten calls to make the sale, then it is better to make no calls than to make nine.
 - **Dare to Be Dumb**
 - The biggest criticism of salespeople by customers is that salespeople don't ask enough questions. Preplanned, practiced questions are arrows in the salesperson's quiver. Good questions get the customer talking, elicit information, allow the salesperson to listen, and demonstrate to the customers the salesperson's genuine interest. If you don't do a proper diagnosis, you won't have the correct prescription. Asking too few questions is asking to fail. Harken to the hotshot criminal detective who related her biggest fear while conducting an investigation: "I am always afraid I will not ask the one important question that unlocks the case."
 - There are a number of reasons why too many salespeople ask too few questions. Ineffective salespeople don't prepare enough questions in precall. They don't write the questions down. They mistakenly think questioning is intrusive, impertinent. Ineffective salespeople assume they already know the answers. Some actually do know the answers, but that's irrelevant. And some sales-people

are afraid that asking questions will diminish them, make them appear less expert.

- All of these reasons are misguided and unacceptable. Customers love questions. Customers love to talk. Customers feel more secure with the salesperson who asks questions and listens and takes notes.
- **Always Do an Investment Return Analysis**
 - The concept of return on investment is simple, and it is the basis for nearly every business purchase decision. The Rainmaker knows this and uses arithmetic to show the customer how a \$2,000 investment in a lathe will save \$1,200 a year in reduced scrap. The reduced scrap is the benefit. The \$1,200 is the dollarization of that benefit. In this scenario the customer gets a 60 percent per annum return on investment.
 - The greater the customer's return on investment, the more compelling it is for the customer to purchase—that is, make the investment. A properly calculated investment return analysis shows the customer what it is costing per day to go without the solution. In the lathe example, the customer gets \$1,200 in savings returned. It is costing the customer \$100 a month not to buy the lathe.
 - Showing the customer what it costs per month, week, or day to go without the solution shortens the sales cycle.
- Ask interesting questions. Listen carefully. Don't daydream. Don't mentally wander when the customer is telling you something you've heard a hundred times before. Don't start talking until the customer has completely stopped talking. Don't think about what you are going to say next. Take notes.
- **"Onionize"**
 - Just as a sous chef peels an onion layer by layer, so, too, the Rainmaker helps the customer get to the "heart of the matter."
 - Rainmakers use the word *onionize* as a memory trigger to remind themselves to keep probing, to keep asking questions, especially "why," "why," "why," and "why."
 - This is how a Rainmaker onionizes the customer:
 - "Tell me how the current situation is worrisome to you."
 - "Why is that important to you?"
 - "How is that important to you?"
 - "What are the consequences if this continues unimproved?" "Can we try to find a solution that costs less than the problem?" "How often does the machine go down or stop working?" "What is the failure mode?"
 - "Why do you think that?"
- **Never Be in a Meeting**
 - When a customer calls, they don't want to hear that you are in a meeting. Customers don't care if you are meeting with the president of the United States, the pope, or anyone else. Customers absolutely lose it when told you are meeting with others in your company. Customers don't care with whom you are meeting—with one exception: It is OK if you are meeting with another customer.

It's OK because being with customers, and taking care of customers, is what you and everyone else in your company is supposed to do.

- If you are in a company meeting and a customer calls, always take the call. A customer call is an invitation to help the customer, to get or keep his or her business.
 - In addition to never being in a meeting, you are also never sick. You are traveling.
 - You are never on vacation. You are traveling, or out of the country, and will return calls as soon as possible. Meanwhile, so-and-so is available to work with the customer.
 - You have never "left for the day." You are out of the office or meeting with customers.
 - You are never "out to lunch." You are meeting with a client.
 - You are never "not in the office yet." You are at a breakfast meeting with a client.
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- **Show the Chain, Sell the First Link**
 - Showing the customer the step-by-step, agreement-by-agreement process, from first sales call to purchase order, is a compelling selling technique. Only Rainmakers use this technique. Most salespeople either don't know all the steps, or don't understand the linkage, or don't plan strategically, or are afraid of showing their hand.
 - A super salesperson for a specialty chemical manufacturer is a champ at showing the chain and selling the first link, thereby selling the chain and closing the order. At her first meeting with a prospective customer she proceeds as follows: "Mr. Customer, we have a great deal of success in this type of application, always giving you, the customer, a positive dollarized return on your investment."
 - "Assuming we can give you such a return, would you like to know the typical steps involved in solving this problem?"
 - "OK, good. First, we do a plant tour, and look at exactly how you assemble the product."
 - To close the sale, to get the final customer commitment, the Rainmaker might say: "You've looked at everything. Your concerns have been answered. Time is of the essence. You've heard our recommendation. Why don't you give it a try?" "Why don't you give it a try?" is a killer sales question. The "it" is your product. "Why don't you give it a try?" is not the same as "Why don't you try it?" or "Try it for a few days." To try a product for a few days is a trial. Getting a trial is a good selling strategy, but it is an interim step, not the final step, to getting a sale. To give something "a try" is, to most people, a revocable act, a decision that can be reversed. It feels temporary, impermanent. Subconsciously, people feel that to try something is to sample, to test, not a commitment to a decision. There is an assumed escape clause built into an agreement to give something a try.

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