

Rainmaking Corner

This month, the Rainmaking Subcommittee chairs interviewed Gilda Turitz, a partner at Sideman & Bancroft LLP, about the most important tips and success strategies she has learned through her career in making it rain.

Q: What is the most surprising thing you have learned about rainmaking?

A: The most surprising thing is how personally satisfying rainmaking success feels. While I always felt gratified and satisfied by doing a great job for an existing client (e.g., winning a dispositive motion, an arbitration, or a trial or getting a great settlement), I get an even more energizing feeling of satisfaction from bringing new clients and new work in the door.

Q: Are there reasons to engage in rainmaking efforts that lawyers may fail to appreciate?

A: Yes. At least initially, lawyers may fail to appreciate that developing your own book of business gives you power within your law firm and options to pursue other opportunities that you would not have without rainmaking. By power within the law firm, I mean that, because rainmakers are usually recognized in firms as the people who bring in the business and control the clients, they are generally held in high esteem by their colleagues. I have found that my firm was more likely to be flexible and willing to accommodate my initiatives or needs (e.g., pro bono projects, support for taking on a time-consuming bar association position, or greater latitude for work-life balance issues).

Q: How do you make time for rainmaking?

A: I consider rainmaking a priority and make time for it. I have read many time management books and learned how to prioritize rainmaking efforts, build them into my workday, and block out time for larger projects, such as writing an article. For me, devoting time to rainmaking has meant sacrificing time from other hobbies and pursuits. It is all a question of prioritizing time and deciding that the rainmaking time is worthwhile. After all, rainmaking is an investment in yourself.

A key question a lawyer has to ask is: How much time am I willing to invest in building my client base and my reputation to attract more clients? There are always choices to make about how to balance that time with raising a family or other personal interests that you want to pursue.

Q: What useful rainmaking tips can you share about how to become a rainmaker?

A: Get to know your client's business and the industry and economic environment in which your client competes. Identify and understand their issues, concerns, and areas where you may be able to provide a benefit. To do that, you need to invest your time in research and development, such as reading trade journals that your clients read and attending industry seminars. Once you do, you will find a lot to talk about with them, and they will differentiate you from other lawyers that do not understand their business nearly as well as you do.

Q: What have you learned the hard way while trying to bring in business?

A: To bring in business, you must follow up in a timely manner. There have been times when I did not do the follow-up that I should have due to the press of business on my desk at the moment. When I had time to return my attention back to rainmaking, I felt that it was too late to follow up, and the momentum was lost.

Q: Has writing articles and giving speeches helped you get business?

A: Yes. Writing articles and speaking can get you business if your efforts are reaching the right audiences and helping you to gain a reputation as someone with true expertise in a specific area. If you are able to get in front of people that are in a position to retain or recommend counsel, speaking and writing will contribute positively to your chances of getting business. Speaking and writing also add to your credentials and is increasingly important for visibility and name recognition in today's world of web presence, social media, and search engine optimization.

Q: How does rainmaking keep you passionate about the practice of law?

A: I love learning something new every day about the practice and business of law. I am excited with each new client and case that comes in as a result of my rainmaking efforts. For me, seeing my efforts pay off keeps it fresh and keeps me passionate about my practice.