

REPLACING
- THE -
RAINMAKER

WORKSHOPS

CLIENTS

This workbook accompanies the audio workshop. It includes speaker's notes, which summarize the content covered in the workshop. It also includes activities, which you'll complete during the workshop, and a continuing education assignment, which you'll complete after the workshop. The continuing education assignment gives you a chance to apply the theory you learned in a practical setting. At the end, there's a quiz to test what you've learned as well as space to make notes and information on where to go to learn more.

SPEAKER'S NOTES

Learning outcomes

- You'll learn about the importance of doing good work.
- You'll learn how to gain comfort asking your clients about potential opportunities.
- You'll learn several strategies for identifying clients who could be valuable sources of new business.

The biggest slice of the pie

- In most firms, clients are the most prolific source of new business.
- Your clients know you and they trust you to do your job well.
- Business development success depends on knowing how to mine your existing client base for new business.

Two avenues

- There are two primary avenues for winning new business from existing clients.
- The first avenue is to sell more work to those clients.
- The second avenue is to ask those clients for referrals to new clients.

Do good work

- You have to do great work to ask for more work.
- Meeting expectations isn't enough; you have to exceed expectations.
- Once you've done great work, you should ask your clients for new business.

Leverage your success

- There's significant value in becoming a client's most trusted advisor.
- As their most trusted advisor, you can leverage your position into new business.
- You can either suggest new products or services or ask for referrals.

Good news opportunities

- Asking for more work and referrals is also a function of timing.
- The perfect moment to ask for new business is when you've demonstrated your value.
- Ask when your actions are still fresh in your client's mind.

Good works x asking

- The formula for winning new business is "do good work x asking."
- You have to both do a great job and ask for an opportunity.
- Doing just one or the other isn't enough.

A lack of knowledge

- Clients often don't know the full extent of the services you provide.
- They fail to recognize that they could benefit from engaging your services in more ways.
- Get in the habit of educating your clients about what you do and for whom you do it.

"You always look so busy"

- Clients often don't realize you're looking for new work.
- Clients often believe that introducing you to other clients will dilute the level of service you give to them.
- Make it clear to your clients that you are looking for new business.

Ask outright

- Being willing to ask for more work is often a big hurdle for accountants.
- They incorrectly assume that doing good work automatically leads to more work.
- You have to be willing to ask for new business if you want it.

Think creatively

- Opportunities come in a lot of different forms.
- A client's other advisors can turn into valuable sources of new business.
- Clients who are financial professionals are a great source of introductions.

Classify

- Classify your clients into three tiers: "A's", "B's" and "C's."
- "A" clients will bring in the most work and produce the most referrals.
- Not all clients are created equal so don't appropriate your client service assets and resources equally.

A, B, C

- To classify your clients, start by listing your clients by annual fees from high to low.
- Your "A" clients will be those in the top 20 percent of your list.
- Your "B" clients will be those in the top 20 to 50 percent of your list.

A, B, C

- Consider other qualitative and quantitative factors to finalize your classifications.
- Quantitative factors include realization rate, average billing rate and payment history.
- You should also consider the probability of increasing fees in the future.

A, B, C

- You should also consider the probability of generating referral business.
- You should also consider the success and growth of a client's business.
- Rapidly growing businesses offer the potential for growing fees.

A, B, C

- You should also consider the niche relevance of your clients.
- Clients in your niche areas take on extra importance.
- It will be a lot easier to establish a niche if you already have happy clients in that niche.

A, B, C

- You should consider qualitative factors as well, such as how organized and prepared the client is.
- Ask yourself whether you like working with the client.
- Ask yourself whether they've demonstrated a willingness to follow your advice.

Allocate your efforts

- Focus on cultivating relationships with "A" and "B" clients.
- Firm partners should reassign their "C" clients to other members of the firm.
- Continually re-evaluate client classifications.

Client spotlight

- A "client spotlight" helps you generate more business from existing clients.
- In a "client spotlight," a firm partner highlights a client who has significant potential upside.
- Partners should highlight clients who have recently undergone a significant event.

Client matrix

- A “client matrix” is similar to a “client spotlight,” but relies more heavily on numbers.
- With a “client matrix,” each partner creates a matrix for their top 10 clients.
- The goal is to identify areas where you might be able to offer a client additional services.

Data mining

- Data mining involves performing an analysis on client data.
- Data mining helps you figure out which clients need services that you offer.
- Data mining draws on information from tax returns and client conversations.

Comb through the numbers

- One data mining option is to run an adjusted gross income report.
- Another option is to use screening software.
- Screening software allows you to identify candidates for specific products and services.

Pitch the client

- Make a plan for how to best pitch products or services to specific clients.
- When needed, plan to bring in other partners or senior managers with relevant expertise.
- The engagement partner needs to feel comfortable initiating a conversation.

Client service meetings

- Conduct client service meetings to generate more business from existing clients.
- Client service meetings demonstrate your commitment to your clients.
- Client service meetings showcase your technical and industry savvy and your commitment to continuous improvement.

Sit down and learn

- Ask the client about their business, challenges and what you can do to help.
- Also ask about your own performance.
- It's important to maintain an up-to-date understanding of your client's current situation and future goals.

Education all-around

- The first half of the client service meeting is an opportunity to sell more services.
- Take the opportunity to describe offerings that may be relevant to the client.
- You should come away with a good idea of how you might better serve them.

Make a connection

- Next share something of value with the client.
- Then move on to asking for referrals.
- Client service meetings are a great opportunity to ask for more work.

Respect your time

- Don't bill clients for this one-hour meeting.
- You don't have to conduct all these meetings in person if you're pressed for time.
- Meetings with “B” clients can be done over the phone and junior staff can conduct meetings with “C” clients.

Educate and inform

- Continually educate your clients about what you do.
- Share new ideas and services with clients on a regular basis.
- The excuse should never be: “I didn't know you did that.”

Track new business

- Track all new business created as a result of these efforts.
- Added revenue from existing clients has a habit of getting lost in new business reporting.
- Quantify and report all new opportunities with current clients as “new business.”

Summary

- Existing clients should be one of your most prolific sources of new business.
- The key is to both do good work and ask for more opportunities.
- You can sell more to your existing clients or ask those clients for referrals to new clients.

ACTIVITIES

If you’re completing these activities on your own, please write down your answers in your workbook. If you’re completing these activities in a group, please write down your answers individually. Then share your responses with up to two other people. Look for commonalities among everyone’s responses and discuss any differences.

Activity 1

Using the “Client classification” form located in the top right corner of your screen, assign a percentage of value for each listed factor and characterize as either required or desired. Supplement with additional criteria where applicable. Once you’ve established your classification criteria, pick five clients and score them according to the criteria you’ve established. Based on the score, classify them as “A”, “B” or “C” clients.

Activity 2

Pick a client who has recently undergone a significant personal or professional life change (for example, marriage, divorce, birth of a child, sale or acquisition of a business, retirement, succession to heirs, etc). Using the “Client matrix” form located in the top right corner of your screen, identify ways to better serve that client and grow your book of business in the process.

CONTINUING EDUCATION

Attend lunch n’ learn sessions to expand your understanding of the services your firm provides and to whom it provides them.

QUIZ

1. The most important piece of advice to remember when soliciting new business from existing clients is that you have to do great work to ask for more work.
2. One reason that firms don’t generate more business from existing clients is that clients don’t fully understand the extent of the services the firm provides.
3. “We’re always looking for more great clients like you. Do you know anybody who could benefit from our services?” and “Is there someone else I should be talking to?” are both good examples of how to ask for referrals.
4. Realization rate, average billing rate and payment history are rarely relevant criteria in classifying clients into “A”, “B” or “C” categories.
5. Data mining can be used to identify potential candidates for succession planning, employee benefit reviews, sophisticated income tax planning, deferred compensation strategies and many other products and services your firm offers.
6. Client service meetings are a great way to showcase your interest in your clients, your technical and industry savvy, your commitment to continuous improvement and your investment in helping them succeed.
7. The bulk of a client service meeting should be devoted to telling the client how you think you can better serve them.
8. You should send your clients communiqués about what you do and invite them to informational events to learn more about particular products or services. You want to constantly expand their understanding of what you do and how you can help them. The excuse should never be: “I didn’t know you did that.”
9. It’s not important to quantify and report all new opportunities with current clients as “new business.”
10. Assuming you do great work, most clients are only too happy to help you grow your practice. They just need to be asked.

NOTES

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information about additional workshops, or other Replacing the Rainmaker products and services, please visit ReplacingTheRainmaker.com.