

**INFLUENCE, PERSUADE, AND SELL
IN ANY SITUATION**

RAIN MAKING



CONVERSATIONS

Including
free RAIN Selling™
online learning
modules

MIKE SCHULTZ & JOHN E. DOERR

Praise for *Rainmaking Conversations*

“*Rainmaking Conversations* is the ultimate strategic guide to creating dialogs so valuable that they rise above the noise, create engagement, and make you the anchor others must unseat in order to compete.”

—Ardath Albee, Author of *eMarketing Strategies for the Complex Sale*

“*Rainmaking Conversations* is the one sales book you should absolutely read if you want to become a top sales performer while also maintaining the highest integrity.”

**—Paige Arnof-Fenn, Founder and CEO,
Mavens & Moguls LLC**

“*Rainmaking Conversations* hits upon an eternal truth: that despite the technology, the complexity, and the noise that surrounds us today, sales arise from a dialog between two people. But it doesn’t just theorize and observe, it presents a practical, step-by-step guide to developing the psychology, skills, knowledge, and processes necessary to excel at winning new business. If you put into practice just half of the ideas in this book, you’ll never struggle with sales again.”

—Ian Brodie, Managing Director, Rainmaker Academy

“Those who can’t make rain think it’s about luck and personality. Real rainmakers know that it’s about hard work, preparation, and proven methods. Except for the hard work, everything you need is in this book.”

—Thomas H. Davenport, Author of *Competing on Analytics*

“In [a] commoditized world, value is the key differentiator. And the brain trust at the RAIN Group has done it again. This isn’t a book—it’s a symphony.

They provide daily practices that anyone who sells can implement into their efforts immediately. Read this book and you won't just make it rain, you'll make it POUR!"

—**Scott “The Nametag Guy” Ginsberg, Professional Speaker,
and Author of *How to Be That Guy***

“Trust drives sales, and conversations drive trust. Really great salespeople have conversations that create trust, with sales as the natural outcome. *Rainmaking Conversations* is a how-to book that goes way beyond tactics; it's about integrating trust, relationship, and sales.”

—**Charles Green, Founder and CEO, Trusted Advisor
Associates, and Author of *Trust-Based Selling***

“Today's crazy-busy prospects won't waste their time with you unless they get value from every interaction. In *Rainmaking Conversations*, you'll learn how to make that a reality.”

—**Jill Konrath, Author of *SNAP Selling* and *Selling to Big
Companies***

“There are too many books on selling but once in a while one comes along with a fresh approach. This one is worth reading even by the seasoned professional.”

—**Philip Kotler, S.C. Johnson & Son Distinguished Professor of
International Marketing, Kellogg School of Management,
Northwestern University**

“While many books exist on related subjects, *Rainmaking Conversations* provides a fresh and well thought out strategic sales path from “hello” to “let's get started” for all of us who are committed to growing our organizations. Kudos to Schultz and Doerr on this compelling read. Let it RAIN!”

—**David Lissy, CEO, Bright Horizons Family Solutions**

“Schultz and Doerr have given us a perfect prescription for profitable selling. They've zeroed in on exactly what it takes to be a rainmaker—the sales conversation. The chapter on value propositions alone is worth more than

the price of the book. Don't think twice. Buy this book. Read it, apply it, and watch your sales success soar."

—Michael W. McLaughlin, Author of *Winning the Professional Services Sale*

"In the hypercompetitive world of selling and all the expert opinions floating around it, Schultz and Doerr present an eloquent 'thinking person's guide' to long-term success in building and maintaining successful customer relationships. If you believe that excellence in sales and service are not mutually exclusive, that buying trumps selling and listening outweighs talking, your world view will be highly receptive to the lessons they teach regarding the required competence, preparation, and skills for professional selling success. If not, find a new career."

**—Peter Ostrow, Research Director, Sales Effectiveness,
Aberdeen Group**

"There are lots of books on selling but few as free of fluff as *Rainmaking Conversations*. Read it and you'll see a clear, convincing, and compelling case for how to sell in virtually any situation. Kudos to Schultz and Doerr for writing such a valuable book. Highly recommended."

—Michael Port, New York Times Best-Selling Author of *Book Yourself Solid*

"Buyers choose to do business with people they like. True rainmaking, the kind that makes you 5 or even 10 times more successful than the plodding average, comes from mastering conversations with buyers. In this book—chock-full of compelling stories and winning techniques—Mike Schultz and John Doerr show you how to master the art of rainmaking."

**—David Meerman Scott,
Best-Selling Author of *The New Rules of Marketing & PR***

"Nothing happens without sales . . . and Mike Schultz and John Doerr have effectively provided us all with the book on sales that will make things happen! *Rainmaking Conversations* is a must read!"

—Leonard A. Schlesinger, President, Babson College

“I love this book. Why? Because *Rainmaking Conversations* isn’t yet another collection of empty tips-and-tricks calories that provides no real nourishment to your career. It is, on the other hand, a compelling, interesting, far-reaching, and highly relevant guide to being who you need to be, and precisely how you need to do what you need to do, to be among the elite, that top 10 percent of sales professionals who are ‘The Rainmakers.’ Folks, take it from me. This is the real thing.”

—Dave Stein, CEO and Founder, ES Research Group, Inc.

“In *Rainmaking Conversations*, Mike Schultz and John Doerr give a practical and inspiring set of action steps to preparing ourselves for sales success. What a thorough and accessible program they have laid out here! No fluff, no abstractions, plenty of meaty anecdotes. This book provides a solid to-do list for professionals who want to get more business without flailing around.”

**—Ruth P. Stevens, President, eMarketing Strategy, and Adjunct
Professor of Marketing, Columbia Business School**

RAINMAKING CONVERSATIONS

RAINMAKING CONVERSATIONS

INFLUENCE, PERSUADE,
AND SELL IN ANY SITUATION

MIKE SCHULTZ
JOHN E. DOERR



WILEY

John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Copyright © 2011 by The Wellesley Hills Group. All rights reserved.

Published by John Wiley & Sons, Inc., Hoboken, New Jersey.

Published simultaneously in Canada.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning, or otherwise, except as permitted under Section 107 or 108 of the 1976 United States Copyright Act, without either the prior written permission of the Publisher, or authorization through payment of the appropriate per-copy fee to the Copyright Clearance Center, Inc., 222 Rosewood Drive, Danvers, MA 01923, (978) 750-8400, fax (978) 646-8600, or on the web at www.copyright.com. Requests to the Publisher for permission should be addressed to the Permissions Department, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 111 River Street, Hoboken, NJ 07030, (201) 748-6011, fax (201) 748-6008, or online at <http://www.wiley.com/go/permissions>.

Limit of Liability/Disclaimer of Warranty: While the publisher and author have used their best efforts in preparing this book, they make no representations or warranties with respect to the accuracy or completeness of the contents of this book and specifically disclaim any implied warranties of merchantability or fitness for a particular purpose. No warranty may be created or extended by sales representatives or written sales materials. The advice and strategies contained herein may not be suitable for your situation. You should consult with a professional where appropriate. Neither the publisher nor author shall be liable for any loss of profit or any other commercial damages, including but not limited to special, incidental, consequential, or other damages.

For general information on our other products and services or for technical support, please contact our Customer Care Department within the United States at (800) 762-2974, outside the United States at (317) 572-3993 or fax (317) 572-4002.

Wiley also publishes its books in a variety of electronic formats. Some content that appears in print may not be available in electronic books. For more information about Wiley products, visit our web site at www.wiley.com.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data:

Schultz, Mike, 1974–

Rainmaking conversations : influence, persuade, and sell in any situation / Mike Schultz, John E. Doerr.

p. cm.

ISBN 978-0-470-92223-1 (cloth)

ISBN 978-1-118-02575-8 (ebk)

ISBN 978-1-118-02576-5 (ebk)

ISBN 978-1-118-02577-2 (ebk)

1. Selling—Psychological aspects. 2. Persuasion (Psychology) 3. Influence (Psychology) I. Doerr, John E. II. Title.

HF5438.8.P75S36 2011

658.85—dc22

2010045649

Printed in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

To Erica.

—MES

To Chris, John Michael, and Andrew.

—JED

Contents

<i>Acknowledgments</i>	<i>ix</i>
Part One Getting Ready to Make RAIN	1
1 Introduction	3
2 The Most Important Conversation You'll Ever Have	19
3 Goal and Action Planning: Making the Most Rain	27
4 Understanding and Communicating Your Value Proposition	35
Part Two RAIN Selling Key Concepts	49
5 Rapport	51
6 Aspirations and Afflictions	59
7 Impact	71
8 New Reality	85
9 Balancing Advocacy and Inquiry	95
10 Digging Deep into Needs: The Five Whys	107

11	16 Principles of Influence in Sales	115
12	Tips for Leading Rainmaking Conversations	135
Part Three Maximizing Your RAIN Selling Success		153
13	Prospecting by Phone: Creating Rainmaking Conversations	155
14	Handling Objections	181
15	Closing Opportunities, Opening Relationships	195
16	What You Need to Know to Sell	205
17	Planning Each Rainmaking Conversation	215
18	How to Kill a Sales Conversation	221
19	Putting RAIN in Your Forecast	237
<i>Appendix and Online Resources</i>		<i>239</i>
<i>About RAIN Group</i>		<i>257</i>
<i>About RainToday.com</i>		<i>258</i>
<i>RainToday.com Membership</i>		<i>259</i>
<i>About the Authors</i>		<i>260</i>
<i>Index</i>		<i>262</i>

Acknowledgments

In order for this book and any of our books to come to fruition, a number of people have to continue to do the real work so we can take the time to write. For that, we'd like to acknowledge our colleagues at RAIN Group and RainToday.com: Bob Croston, Erica Stritch, Mark Fortune, Mary Flaherty, Michelle Davidson, Adam Tokarz, Kelly Kerr, Zach Rachins, John Michael Doerr, Terese Riordan, Jae-ann Rock, Jim Miller, Sandy O'Dell, and Sue Brisson for keeping everything moving forward. Thanks especially to our internal editors John Michael Doerr and Erica Stritch who were not afraid to tell us when we needed to go back to the drawing board and rewrite until it was just right. This book is infinitely better due to their willingness to push, prod, and cajole. Thanks to Scott Whipple for his fine work in preparing the graphics for the book.

We'd also like to thank Mike Treske (John Hancock Annuities Distribution, John Hancock Wood Logan), Nicole Giantonio (Buck Consultants, a Xerox Company), John Calucci (McLane, Graf, Raulerson & Middleton, PA), John Flavin (Edgewater Technology), Dan Cohen (Linkage), Lilian Eilers (The Blue Ocean Company), Marcus de Layen Vian (IRIS Software and Services), Marisa Edmund (Edmund Optics), Mike Sheehan (Hill Holliday), Jim Keenan (Pace), Mark Gowrie (AchieveGlobal), David Carrithers (Centennial Contractors), Richard Wetenhall (formerly Mercer and McKinsey), Kevin Davis (Topline Leadership), Jere Doyle (Prospectiv) and Deborah Dumaine (Better Communications) who generously gave their time to lend their thoughts and experiences to the content of the book.

To Dave Kurlan and Rocky LaGrone (Objective Management Group) thanks for your thoughtful insight into what it take to be a true rainmaker.

To our valued clients, we repeatedly thank you for the privilege of working with you and accepting us as members of your teams. To the authors, contributors, members, and readers of RainToday.com, we appreciate your continued support, content, questions, and interactions with us through the years.

We are also grateful to our editor at John Wiley & Sons, Inc., Daniel Ambrosio, along with Ashley Allison and Lauren Freestone, who once again helped us keep on target through the editing process, and to everyone else at John Wiley & Sons, Inc., who helped see this book to its final form.

—Mike Schultz and John Doerr

I can never thank my mom, Gloria Doerr, enough. She continues to inspire me and everyone else in our ever-expanding extended family with her ability to stay young and work hard even at 84 years. (Sorry, Mom, everyone knows your age by now.) I also want to thank my in-laws Jeff, Al, Rob, Jessica, and Randy, who were not mentioned by name in our first book but should have been. Of course, I continue to draw strength from the warmth and caring of my sisters Jean, Judi, Jen, and Jodi, and my brother Jim and all their children, in-laws, and grandchildren. And to my friends who have become a part of that family. I am what I am because of all of you.

A special thanks to Over the Hill Basketball and my friends on the court. As we have heard repeatedly, it is this twice-a-week activity that keeps us off the streets and more fun to be around. It certainly does that and so much more for me.

Finally, to my wife, Chris, and to my sons, John Michael and Andrew, who continue to provide love and support—and that's all that matters.

—John Doerr

To my wife and best friend, Erica Schultz, each day we spend together is a joy and a privilege. And to my family, Stan, Nancy, Marvin, Linda, Allyson, Mike, Mikey, Mikayla, Dave, Alena, Shirley, and everyone else. For your continued love and support, I can't thank you enough.

—Mike Schultz

PART ONE

GETTING READY TO MAKE RAIN

1

Introduction

Ideal conversation must be an exchange of thought, and not, as many of those who worry most about their shortcomings believe, an eloquent exhibition of wit or oratory.

—Emily Post

It's 4 PM on a Thursday and you're about to meet the CEO of a major company you'd like to win as a client. The conversation starts as you walk into the office, approach the CEO, stretch out your hand, and say, "Nice to meet you, Jill. I'm Steve Webb."

Fast forward to a meeting about four months later—3 PM on a Wednesday this time. You head into the office. Jill gets out from behind her desk and says, "Good to see you again, Steve. Here's the check for \$1.2 million that you need to get the process underway. Let's schedule the kickoff for next Friday."

Suffice it to say, a lot has to happen between "nice to meet you" and "here's a check for \$1.2 million." Yet two things are true:

1. This *is* how it happens.
2. Conversations form the bridge between "hello" and "let's go."

As sales trainers, sales managers, and sellers ourselves, we've had the privilege of observing and analyzing thousands of telephone and face-to-face sales conversations. All too often we see salespeople say "hello," but never get to "let's go," because of mistakes they make in

their conversations. We also regularly see salespeople unable to generate the conversations they need. Limited sales conversations = limited sales opportunities.

We wrote *Rainmaking Conversations: Influence, Persuade, and Sell in Any Situation* for salespeople, business leaders, professionals, and anyone who wants to create and lead masterful sales conversations—conversations that fill the pipeline, win new deals, and create the greatest opportunities for the largest, most secure, and most profitable accounts.

If this is what you want to do, *Rainmaking Conversations* is for you.

RAIN, RASP, and 10 Rainmaker Principles

RAIN, RASP, and the 10 Rainmaker Principles form the core of the RAIN Selling method—the training and development program we at RAIN Group employ to help companies create dramatic improvements in sales performance and to help individuals become top-performing rainmakers. We cover a number of topics throughout the book, all to help you have the most and best sales conversations, and all connected to RAIN, RASP, and the 10 Rainmaker Principles.

RAIN—Your Guide to Rainmaking Conversations

RAIN is an acronym for Rapport, Aspirations and Afflictions, Impact, and New Reality. These concepts are the core concepts you need to remember to lead a rainmaking conversation. In addition, the “A” and the “I” perform double duty, standing for *Advocacy* and *Inquiry*, and the “IN” will help you to remember to maximize your *Influence*. The RAIN acronym is also a nod to the fact that this process is focused on *rainmakers*—a common name for people who bring the most new clients and revenue into an organization. RAIN is the central theme of the book and is your guide to leading successful sales conversations.

Graphically, RAIN looks like Figure 1.1.

R is Rapport—Chapter 5: The ability to build rapport in sales conversations is an old concept that is more relevant and more important than ever. At the same time, rapport is talked about less and less in the sales training

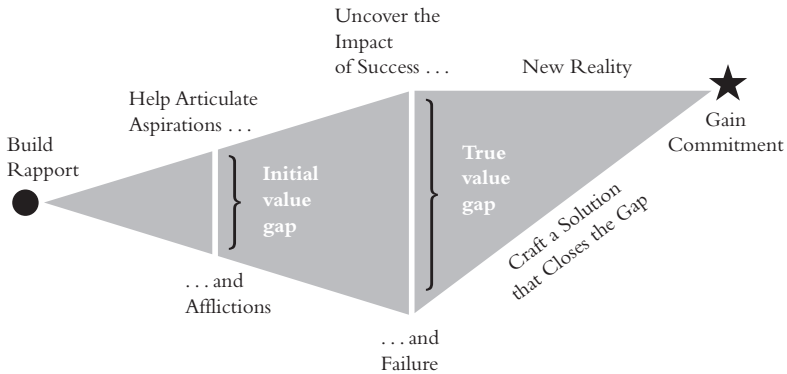


Figure 1.1 RAIN Selling

community, often dismissed as a ploy to make a superficial connection with a potential customer. We agree—you shouldn’t make superficial connections, you should make *genuine* connections. Genuine rapport sets the foundation for the rest of the conversation, and creates the opportunity for trust and a strong relationship.

A genuine connection with a potential client is so important in selling because, all things being equal, buyers tend to buy from—and allow themselves to be influenced by—people they like. Rapport is an often-overlooked factor that can tip the scales in favor of one seller over another throughout the buying process: from who gets in the game at the beginning, to who is allowed to move along in the process, and even to who eventually wins.

I have always really liked this adage: “Nobody really cares how much you know until they know how much you care.” We try to drill people as much as possible to the idea of listening, absorbing, and really understanding so you, as a salesperson, can make the deepest connection and learn how you can help them the most.

—Mike Treske, President, John Hancock Annuities Distribution, John Hancock Wood Logan

A is Aspirations and Afflictions—Chapter 6: The “A” in RAIN Selling stands for Aspirations and Afflictions. Many sales methodologies suggest

that to sell products and services as solutions to needs, you must first uncover the problems or pain of the potential client. Focusing only on problems and pain (afflictions) can do sellers a disservice because problems and pain are only half of the story.

When customers buy, they are typically thinking as much about Aspirations (the future they are seeking) as they are about Afflictions (problems they'd like to fix). If you think about asking questions only in the negative, you will tend to probe for needs that way. You'll tend to ask questions such as, "Where are you unhappy with performance?," "What keeps you up at night?,"¹ and "What are your problems?" Think of Aspirations as much as Afflictions, and you will remember to ask future-seeking as well as problem-solving questions—questions with themes like "Where do you want to go?" and "What are the possibilities?" If you ask questions that look to the future, you will find that—instead of just bringing some Advil for the pain—you will be able to paint the most compelling, impactful, and comprehensive vision of a new and better reality for your clients.

Free RAIN Selling Resources Online

There's only so much space in any book, but there's so much to share with you to help you master the art of rainmaking conversations.

Thus, we've made numerous tools, resources, and additional learning content available to you on www.rainsalestraining.com/booktools.

Also, on the book-tools page, we've made lessons of our popular RAIN Selling training online free to you as a buyer of this book. We hope you find these additional resources helpful to your quest to succeed with your sales conversations and overall.

Free RAIN Selling resources: www.rainsalestraining.com/booktools

¹You'll find advice to ask the question "What keeps you up at night?" here and there scattered about sales books and sales advice materials. The concept is good to keep in mind, but don't ask the question verbatim like this. It's a cliché, and it usually comes across as contrived.

I is Impact—Chapter 7: After you uncover a prospect's aspirations and afflictions, the question then becomes, "So what?" If your afflictions don't get solved, then so what? What won't happen? Will they get worse? How will they affect the bottom line of your company, division, or department? How will they affect your life?

If your aspirations don't become reality, so what? In a business-to-business scenario, the questions that follow might sound like, "Will your competition get ahead of you if you don't innovate?," "Will you lose market share if you aren't aggressive in your strategy?," "Will you never be able to grow your business to a point where you can sell it and reach your personal financial goals?," and "Will the promotion you so desire continue to elude you?"

The exact "so what" questions will vary depending on the situation, but your ability to quantify and paint the "so what" picture is the foundation for how important it is for the decision maker to buy from you. This is of paramount importance to you, because although your competition is often another provider, about 23.6 percent of sales that are forecasted by companies to close end in no decision at all.² Lack of impact leads to lack of urgency to make a decision. This leads to delays. Time kills sales.³

Creating urgency for buying hinges on how well you help your client answer the "so what" questions, and how well you demonstrate the impact of buying from you.

N is New Reality—Chapter 8: One of the greatest difficulties in sales is helping prospects to understand exactly what they get when they work with you. Clients need an argument to justify the benefit to themselves and to other people involved in the buying decision. At the end of a well-managed sales process, your job is to create a vision of a New Reality that will be the best for your client, given their specific Aspirations and Afflictions and the Impact of doing (or not doing) something about them.

²J. Dickie and B. Trailer, "2010 Sales Performance Optimization: Sell Cycle Review Analysis," p. 28.

³Time kills sales because of the Law of Diminishing Intent. This states that the longer a person waits to make a decision, the less enthusiasm they will have for the idea, and the less likely the decision will be a yes.

It's not selling someone something they don't want. It's about talking about their needs and positioning what you have to fulfill their needs.

—Nicole Giantonio, Vice President, Sales, Buck Consultants, a Xerox Company

A and I is Advocacy and Inquiry—Chapter 9: In RAIN, the “A” stands for Aspirations and Afflictions, and the “I” stands for Impact. The “A” and the “I” also help us to remember to balance Advocacy and Inquiry.

Many inexperienced salespeople believe their job is show and tell. And tell. And tell. Incessant pitching and presenting feels to buyers like they're being pushed. This can bore buyers, make them less likely to feel affection toward you, shut them down, and put them on the defensive. If you're doing all the talking, they'll feel like you are self-centered, don't care about them, and don't understand their situations and needs (even if you do). Worst of all, savvy buyers will peg you as an amateur and dismiss you.

Salespeople are often told, at some point in their careers, “The salespeople who succeed the most always ask great questions.” This is true to a point; asking incisive questions is critical to sales success, but some salespeople take the advice too literally. They always ask questions, don't share a point of view or an opinion, don't tell stories, and don't help set the agenda for success. Buyers get bored with this quickly as well, and feel like they're getting the third degree. Although questions can be quite valuable, buyers can feel they are missing out on the full value they should get from you if you just ask question after question. The key is to balance advocacy and inquiry and to learn when to use one or the other.

IN is Influence: In Chapter 11 we discuss the 16 Principles of Influence, which you can apply throughout your sales conversations. Master these principles and you'll become more effective in each stage of your rainmaking conversations.

Robust as it is, the power of the RAIN model is that while, like anything, the more you practice the better you'll become, you can apply it right away and have it make a difference. Just remember what RAIN stands for, and you'll be well on your way. Although elegant models have deep intrinsic value, they are also easy to understand and apply.

In *Rainmaking Conversations*, we outline concepts and give examples of each component of RAIN. Once you are comfortable with what happens

at each stage, you will be ready to lead masterful rainmaking conversations. Although these conversations come in many shapes and sizes, there are essentially six types of rainmaking conversations you'll need to be able to lead:

1. *Conversations with anybody* . . . where you begin new relationships, enhance current ones, and answer questions like, "What do you do?" Do this well at business events like conferences, seminars, and at personal events like the kids' soccer matches and family reunions, and you'll be able to turn these conversations into opportunities. Also, you'll help people know in what situations and to whom they should refer you. Succeeding here is the core subject of Chapter 4. Understanding and communicating your value proposition is essential for these initial introduction conversations, and it will serve you well in all types of rainmaking conversations.
2. *Prospecting conversations* . . . where you create a conversation that will eventually lead to a sale. Prospecting by telephone is the subject of Chapter 13.
3. *Core sales conversations* . . . where you lead each sales call, from the first sale to the close, with skill and confidence. You learn how to lead rainmaking conversations with RAIN Selling through the book, and you also get tips and examples of how to shepherd a great sales meeting in Chapter 16.
4. *Presentations and product demonstrations* . . . where you deliver key messages and content, share specifics about product and service capabilities, and deliver custom-crafted solutions to solve the needs of particular prospects. Entire books are dedicated to the art of presenting compelling presentations and delivering excellent product demonstrations. The concepts and frameworks you learn in the book will help tremendously with presentations and demos, and we provide tips and examples along the way.
5. *Winning the deal* . . . where you close the sale stage of the process, and open the customer stage. Closing is a much misunderstood and maligned concept in selling. In fact, some of the most recent consultative sales theories and popular books about closing have done sellers a great disservice, one that we aim to correct. We cover what you really need to know about closing in Chapter 15. And,

before you get to the top of the mountain, the last few steps often include difficult obstacles. Overcoming objections is the subject of Chapter 14.

6. *Account management and expansion* . . . where you work to service, resell, cross-sell, and up-sell your current clients. Although, as you can imagine, the dynamics of leading a conversation with a current customer is a little different and usually much easier than a sales call with a new prospect, the principles of RAIN will help you excel in account management and expansion.

Rainmaker: Top performing salesperson. Rainmakers often outperform average sales reps by 300 percent to 500 percent.⁴

RASP—Four Keys to Rainmaking Success

Companies and individuals that achieve significantly higher sales results than the rest focus (whether they realize it or not) on four areas: Role Readiness, Action, Skills and Knowledge, and Process (RASP). This is what the best do. Unfortunately for those who seek to become top performers, too many well-known sales methods focus heavily on sales process and skills, but rarely on readiness, action, or knowledge.

This is both sad and unfortunate (well, sad and unfortunate to everyone else, not you, because you're about to learn a better way), and it's also backward. Here's why:

Role Readiness: The degree to which a person is *fundamentally* prepared to succeed in sales.

Action: The execution of activities that will lead to sales.

⁴According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics in 2009, the top 10 percent of wage earners in sales made 295 percent more than the median, www.bls.gov/oes/2009/may/oes410000.htm. Having analyzed the numbers ourselves from many organizations across industries, we've seen this to be largely accurate (depending on obvious factors like compensation structure), with the top sales reps earning much more.

Skills and Knowledge: Skills—the various abilities needed to sell, and the degree to which a person can perform them well. Knowledge—the grasp of information needed for selling, and the ability to discuss relevant information and topics fluently.

Process: A system or framework in which to perform actions to achieve the best possible sales results.

Role Readiness

We once had the “pleasure” of working regularly with a middle manager who had a bad attitude. How bad? Let’s call him Darth. He was defensive, purposefully vague, withheld information, tore people down to build himself up, spent more time sneering at colleagues than collaborating with them, and wielded a red light saber. Every once in a while, however, the Emperor, Darth’s boss, whom Darth respected deeply, would coach him to drop the bad attitude and actually help his colleagues.

For two weeks at a time, he would! He’d make his intentions clear, smile, build rapport in meetings, throw no one under the TIE fighter, and fulfill the commitments he made to others.

After two weeks . . . good-bye Anakin and welcome back Darth.

The moral of the story: Just because someone has the skills and knowledge to be able to do something doesn’t mean that that person will do it. Attitude and intent trump skills every day. This happens in sales perhaps more than any other area we’ve ever encountered.

Watch your thoughts, for they become words.
Watch your words, for they become actions.
Watch your actions, for they become habits.
Watch your habits, for they become character.
Watch your character, for it becomes your destiny.

—Anonymous

Many sales-training programs focus on sales process and sales skills, but they rarely focus on assessing and enhancing the drivers of sales

success, or minimizing defractors that prevent success. These crucial elements and hidden weaknesses tremendously affect salespeople's abilities to have success in their conversations. If you want to succeed, you have to be ready.

- Chapter 2 helps you understand and adopt the mind-set that propels rainmakers to success.
- Chapter 11 helps you understand the principles of influence so you can apply them in your rainmaking conversations.
- Chapter 16 helps you succeed by sharing with you the knowledge that rainmakers employ in their sales conversations; the more of this knowledge you have, the more confident you'll be when speaking with customers and prospects.
- Chapter 17 helps you be ready and prepared to succeed in every call.
- Chapter 18 helps you see how common mistakes and hidden weaknesses derail sales conversations, and helps you avoid making them yourself.

Action

We've seen more people *intend* to become top performers in sales than those that actually do it.

Assume for a minute that someone is ready to succeed in sales, has the skills and knowledge, and has a great selling process . . . and then she goes on vacation for six months. Not much selling happens.

Action in sales is a simple concept: You succeed if you do the right amount of the right things effectively.

- *The right amount.* Most salespeople can get more done every day by setting overall goals, setting activity targets, and pushing themselves to find ways to get more done. Rigorous action planning and strong processes help immensely here.
- *The right things.* Always ask yourself, "Am I doing the things right now that will help me achieve my goals fastest?" If you're not, then you're probably not doing the right things. At a recent RAIN Group webinar, we polled the attendees, asking, "Do the people in your