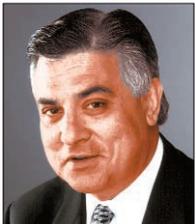


# Effective rainmakers can produce a flood of sales

**T**he quest for most businesses — small, medium and large — lies in generating qualified sales leads. For the company marketing to a highly targeted base of hard-to-corrall prospects, the C-suite types in particular, the need becomes more pressing, the process more complex and the success more elusive.



## Marketing on a Shoestring

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Enter the rainmaker, the subject of sales mythology, part-man, part-god.

That hired gun is sometimes considered a solution of last resort when business is down or flat and “for some unknown reason, our message isn’t getting out to prospects, and we’re not getting invited to the pitch.”

In most cases, the rainmaker fails to deliver. Why? The expectations are unrealistic; the time frame for the delivery of results too immediate and short term; the company is not really committed to the process; the incentive compensation basis is out of skew. The list goes on.

In spite of the difficulties and risks associated with the process, rainmaking is a viable process if executed with strategic discipline and managed with professional care.

Professional rainmakers don’t close the sale. That’s not their job. Their responsibility is to profile the prospect, fill the information gaps and conduct a highly qualified pre-sell that establishes the foundation for a cost-effective and time-efficient follow-up sales blitz.

For the client who uses a rainmaker,

the benefits can be substantial. Dedicated rainmakers, particularly those operating on an outsourced basis, can provide a customized sales service that saves time, delivers faster results and is more effective and more accountable in generating prospect opportunities.

The successful professional rainmaker tends to love the thrill of the chase, is normally more persistent as a result and can often exercise executive judgment because of a successful business background and prior history of sales success.

Bottom line, good rainmakers know how to get in the door and make a strong pre-sell. Naturally, the stronger the pre-sell, the better the ultimate close rate.

Headquartered in New York, Corporate Rain Inc. is one of a handful of rainmaking consulting businesses servicing the corporate marketplace. The company, which boasts clients such as insurance giant AIG, Amadeus, Deloitte & Touche, E\*Trade, Avaya Communications, Kroll and Cohn & Wolfe, employs 35 associates, both full-time employees and independent contractors who have had extensive experience in a corporate executive position. These high-level sales “cowboys” work the phones on behalf of CRI’s clients, which run the gamut from medium to large-sized companies.

Because the biggest obstacle in getting to the prospect decision-maker is making it through the gatekeeper, persistence coated in trust and lacquered in courtesy is a must. For that reason CRI associates are experienced (over 35 years of age), and carry significant

business and corporate scar tissue, which allows them to exhibit executive judgment and demeanor.

Most have chosen to exit the corporate rat race, yet they still practice in their chosen field, executive sales. CRI maintains that it averages a pre-sell hit rate of 10% to 20%. CRI associates:

- Position themselves as staff members of the client they are representing.
- Make repeated calls to targeted prospects, qualify the prospects according to client criteria.
- Set up meetings for client top executives.
- Glean detailed information from each prospect that will assist the client in tailor-making the pitch in each case.

Evidently, the process works. Says Brad Smith, CRI executive vice president: “Amadeus is a classic example of how the system works and delivers.” CRI executives met with key Amadeus players to plan strategic coordination, undergo pitch training (for CRI associates) and learn company background and capabilities. In less than five months, CRI landed 70 meetings with key prospects and provided competitive feedback that helped Amadeus further fine-tune its sales process.

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