

JOINING THE BIG LEAGUES

BREAK THE

ENTRY BARRIERS

TO RAINMAKING

Even though the barriers may seem overwhelming, it's not too late for you to play in the big show. But you have to understand what has been holding you back and adjust your moves accordingly.

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The road to rainmaking is paved with significant obstacles—the first of which is simply getting started. Many lawyers find themselves mentally locked into a lifestyle of servicing their partners' clients. They just can't seem to embark on a serious effort to bring in business of their own. Do you match that description?

If you want to enjoy the increased income, power and freedom of rainmaker status, you'll have to understand the barriers to entry and then take action to overcome them. Fortunately, the tasks required for transitioning from "grinder" to "finder" are practical and achievable. Here are some of the

mind-sets that block the road to rainmaking—and techniques for breaking through each one.

The Complacency Factor

Barrier: Things seem good enough for now. You enjoy your work. You have adequate income. And you're optimistic that if you stay on your current course, your practice will grow at an acceptable pace.

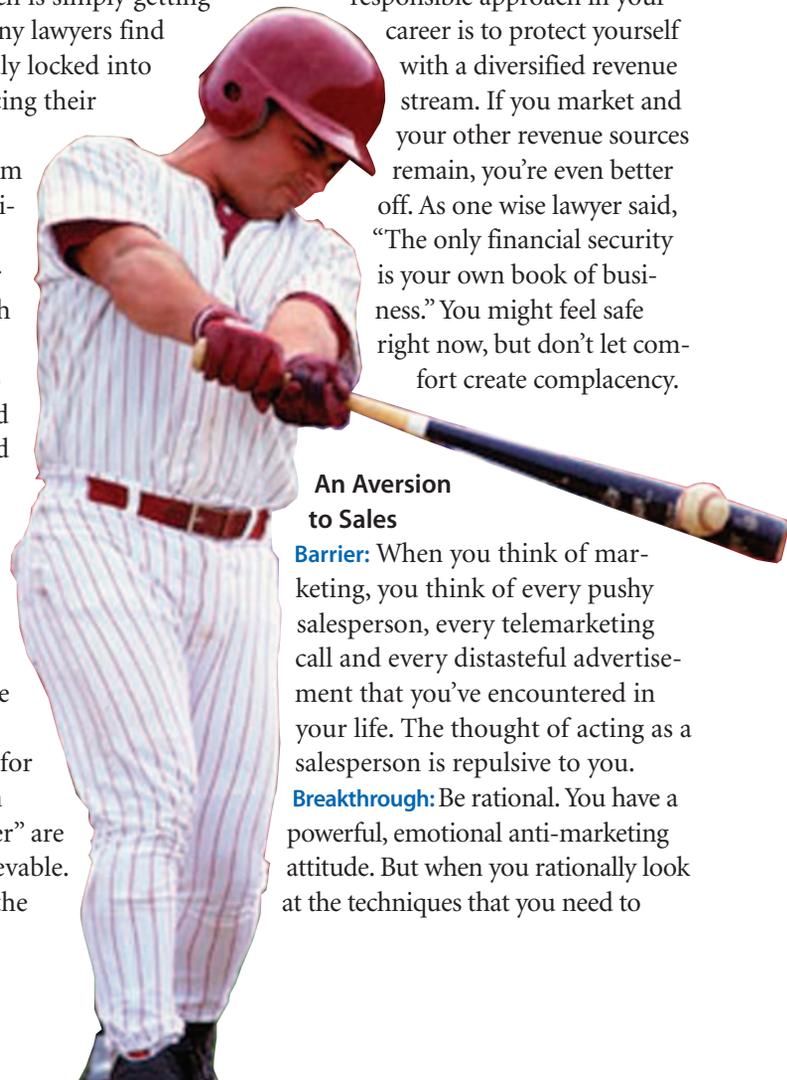
Breakthrough: Think about what would happen if your current sources of revenue dried up. Be financially conservative and consider the marketplace. It's a simple fact of life that clients—even those who appear to be solid—can and do go out of business. Clients also regularly move to the competition.

Rainmaking partners move, retire or die. This is not fear mongering or negative thinking. It is the harsh reality. The responsible approach in your career is to protect yourself with a diversified revenue stream. If you market and your other revenue sources remain, you're even better off. As one wise lawyer said, "The only financial security is your own book of business." You might feel safe right now, but don't let comfort create complacency.

An Aversion to Sales

Barrier: When you think of marketing, you think of every pushy salesperson, every telemarketing call and every distasteful advertisement that you've encountered in your life. The thought of acting as a salesperson is repulsive to you.

Breakthrough: Be rational. You have a powerful, emotional anti-marketing attitude. But when you rationally look at the techniques that you need to





implement to build your book of business, you'll see they have no resemblance to the activities for which you have so much hostility. Effective marketing and selling of legal services means communicating value to quality targets—no pushiness, no manipulation. The reality is that, done properly, selling legal services is an ethical and appropriate activity for a lawyer.

That Time-less Feeling

Barrier: You have no idea where you would find the time for marketing. Your life is filled with activities. You are diligently servicing your partners' clients. You have some administrative responsibilities. You also have personal obligations, and you certainly want to have some leisure time for yourself.

Breakthrough: It's unlikely that you'll find large blocks of time to dedicate to business development, so capture minutes instead. Consider ways to improve productivity or simply shorten the time frame involved in some of the things you do. With a modest effort, you can pick up enough time every day to make a phone call or send an e-mail to a contact who might refer business. Many marketing activities take only a few minutes. Make a conscious effort to observe timesaving techniques on a daily basis and you'll be surprised at the marketing time you gain.

The Full-Plate Syndrome

Barrier: With everything that is on your plate, you're worried about what will happen if your marketing efforts succeed. You're afraid that you're too busy to take on new clients for yourself.

Breakthrough: Rely on your drive to meet a challenge. When you have the opportunity to enjoy the results of your efforts, you'll rise to the occasion. If it turns out that you can't accept a new matter at a particular time, you could refer the client to another lawyer

in your firm—which is the hallmark of a seasoned rainmaker. In the worst case, you could refer the matter to a lawyer in another firm. That way, you'll give value to someone who could return the favor in the future.

No Bull's-Eye in Sight

Barrier: You don't have access to good targets. In your day-to-day life, you don't encounter the kind of people who qualify as clients.

Breakthrough: Identify environments for meeting good targets, such as trade organization events. There is a process for meeting new people through organizations. However, it might take a while—a few years even—to find the right organizations and get access to the people you really need to reach. That's why it's so important to start now.

An Issue of Shallow Pockets

Barrier: Your firm prefers to reward results and is not willing to invest up front in the lawyers' marketing expenses—especially those lawyers who have not yet demonstrated rainmaking potential.

Breakthrough: Pay for it yourself. There aren't many investments that pay off as handsomely as marketing. Law is a profitable profession, and a few new clients can generate huge returns. Marketing is an investment in yourself. You invested in law school to further your career. You should continue to invest by building your practice.

First-Step Phobia

Barrier: It's not that you don't want to build a book of business; it's just that you're not clear about what to do. There are so many things you need to do to be a skilled rainmaker, you're unsure about which step to take first.

Breakthrough: Build a contacts database. For so many lawyers, business comes from existing relationships. That's why your first rainmaking to-do is to create

a list of all your contacts. Be thorough. Then categorize the list, prioritizing those contacts most likely to become clients or to refer business to your firm. If you commit yourself to building a comprehensive contacts list, you'll automatically think about marketing every time you recall an existing contact or meet a new one. Over time, after thinking about hundreds of names, you'll develop what's called "the marketing mind." When that happens, you'll regularly see opportunities you would not have noticed before. You'll begin to think and act like a marketer.

The Too-Late Malady

Barrier: At this point, starting seems to admit historic weakness. You may feel embarrassed that you've waited this long. So, to defend your historic behavior, you continue to postpone.

Breakthrough: Admit it. It's time to acknowledge that your lack of marketing has been a mistake. But don't beat yourself up. For whatever reason, you weren't ready. Now you are, however, so don't allow your bad habits to continue. Each year your failure to reach out makes the job even more difficult. Each year more contacts will slip through the cracks. And each year your reasons for postponing will feel more justified.

Accept the Freedom and the Fun of It

Breaking the entry barriers to rainmaking is one of the most significant things that you can do for your career. It can give you financial freedom. It can give you political clout. It can allow you to be more selective in the matters you accept. Plus, what surprises many lawyers is that once they get started, they actually come to *like* marketing and, indeed, view it as a pleasure. You might find that you enjoy it, too.

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