



THE RAINMAKER

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Introduction: Rainmaking in the Merger and Acquisition World

The Rainmaker as a Trusted Business Adviser

The Rainmaking Professional Selling Process

The Rainmaking Presentation Process

The Science and Art of Persuasive Communication for Rainmakers

“A Rainmaker is someone who can generate business both for themselves and a team within their firm.”

Many professionals in the corporate finance world dread the thought of giving a presentation. This approach can be so easily transformed into the desire and ability to present magically that it is criminal that the correct type of training has not been given in the past.

Presentations are not difficult once you understand what is required. The great fear of presentations arises from people's perceptions of what is required rather than facts.

Words lack importance

It is not what you say but how you say it in presentations that actually matters. In communication, 8% of the effect of communication is the words which are used, 32% the tone of voice and 60% the attitude. Over a period of 24 hours the 8% represented by the words drops to 0.8%. If you think back to a recent conference you have attended, can you remember more than 0.8% of what was said? What people remember is the impact of the speaker.





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90% of the impact you have on an audience is created in the first 60 seconds. The ability to manage your state and voice in this period is essential to your credibility as a presenter. Fortunately, the following techniques give you the skill to manage this.

Pre presentation

You should decide on your state before entering the presentation room. On entering, you should look around and smile – the audience is evaluating you before you go on stage. Your impact starts from the moment you enter the room. Audiences are able to identify the speakers at a subconscious level, usually because they are nervous whenever they enter or act nervously as they wait to speak. Your presentation starts before you enter the room.

Managing state

A technique to manage your state is to imagine yourself as an animal or a professional athlete that you would like to be when you are on the stage. A managing partner I worked with recently, imagined himself as a 30ft rugby player. He was rated 2nd out of 50 speakers for presentational impact at an international conference even though this was his first major speaking engagement. At a recent Budget breakfast seminar, the woman partner I was working with imagined herself as a lioness. The quality of the presentation which came across was superb. Adopting another persona when getting on the stage allows you to escape from and eliminate the effect of nerves.

The diminishing audience

As you stand in front of the audience, you can imagine yourself grow in height and stature until you are around 30ft tall and your audience has shrank down to around 1-2 feet in size. In this state, the audience will present you with no obstacles or threats.

Confidence

Confidence is the application of confidence to find out what you are like as a confident individual, stand up and remember times when you were confident, establish where you are breathing, what your arms feel like, what your legs feel like and what's going on inside your head. Now imagine yourself as standing in front of an audience of 1,000 people and notice where you are breathing now, what your arms and legs feel like, now go back and forward between confident and presenting state 5 times. You will notice that the presenting fear state starts to diminish and disappears as a new state is created.

Looking at the audience

The effect of looking into the eyes of the audience is profound. A number of promi-

nent speakers have learned to look around the audience and their eyes travel across the top of the heads of their audience. Their audiences do not feel connected to the speaker. The correct approach is to identify individuals in the audience and hold your gaze with them for approximately 6 seconds then move on. With a room of 40 you can establish eye contact within the first 4-5 minutes with everyone in the room.

Lecterns

The use of lecterns should be avoided. The key to being a presenter is that you have the confidence to stand out in front of your audience and engage with them. A lectern is like a barricade that you go behind and peer over the top of at your audience.

Powerpoint slides

A number of presenters use powerpoint and look up to the slides with their back to the audience or their body half way on to the audience. The effective way to use powerpoint is to have it as something that occupies the 'visuals' in the audience. You should use a remote control to change the slides. Do not keep turning round to look at the projector. Make use of modern technology and have a computer screen out in front of you which has the bullet points which you are using for your talk.

The opening

Many presenters spend hours trying to think of how they will open, what are the clever words, is there a joke that they can use? The opening which appeals to the majority of your audience is the one where you actually recognise the three types of people within your audience.

The three types are:

- kinesthetic (process decisions by feeling)
- auditory (process ideas in words)
- visual (process decision using pictures)

The presentation opening should therefore encompass these three elements: start with "how are you feeling" and tell the audience how you feel, make reference to listening to the excitement in the audience before the presentation and then refer to what they will see during the course of your presentation. This approach awakens kinesthetics to activate their feelings, resonates with those who are auditory and intrigues those that are visual.

Rainmaking presentation structure

A talk structure which is applicable to all subjects is one which is built upon the past, present and future. This approach is dynamic, paying due regard to the past, considering ►

the present and creates a vision of the future. Audience reaction to this type of dynamic approach is extremely high. For instance, you can talk about when you joined the firm, what the position is now and your vision of the future. In client situations you can refer to "this is the position as we see it in the past", "this is where you find yourself now" and "as you look into the future" you create an enhanced future for your clients based on what you can do for them.

Standing still or moving

You should think of your presentation as a piece of theatre. Think about the stage as a platform with different areas which contain different messages. As you stand on the stage and look at your audience and applying the past, present, future rainmaking method to your presentation, walk to the right hand side of the stage when you are talking about the past then as you talk about the present move to the centre of the stage and as you talk about the future move to the left.

These three positions on the stage correspond to the eye patterns that people subconsciously use to categorise and store information. Individuals look to the left to remember the past and the right whenever they are envisaging the future. You are making use of this knowledge in where on stage you present your information to affect the subconscious of your clients.

The three dimensional presentation

If you stand straight on to your audience as if you are on parade, the audience will see you as 2 dimensional. As a presenter, you will find that your movements are quite restricted and you are easily put off balance. The Rainmaking approach is to stand with one foot forward and the other foot back. You will appear 3 dimensional to your audience; the audience will see you as having more substance at a subconscious level. Whilst standing at the right hand side of the stage, you should have your right foot forward and your left foot back. At the left hand side you should have your left foot forward and your right foot back. If you wish to experiment with this, stand in front of a colleague and stand directly in front of the individual – ask them how they feel, then stand at 45 degrees and ask them how they feel. They will feel much more relaxed with your 45 degree approach.

The importance of toes!

It almost seems silly to think about where your toes are pointing but the effect on an audience is dramatic. You should stand so that your right toe is pointing at the right hand side of the audience and your left toe is pointing towards the left hand side of the audience. I can hear you laugh as you think

about this. One woman solicitor at a recent conference said "women aren't built to stand this way". The effect on the audience is to include them all in the world that you are creating.

If you wish to focus on one single individual in the audience, you should bring your feet together and aim both toes exactly at them. The effect on the audience will be that everyone to either side will feel completely excluded from the conversation which is about to happen. The person you are speaking to will experience your full attention.

Preparation

When you arrive at the venue you should always, always, test out the sound system before the audience comes in. Your responsibility as the presenter is to make sure that everything works. Go rapidly through your presentation slides from start to finish and have someone walk around the room to test out what your voice sounds like in the far reaches of the room.

Coloured voice tone

As you speak you should imagine your voice bouncing off the back walls of the room. You should be listening for a certain resonance that comes back to you from the room, find that sound, that sound which is you.

To improve your voice tone, imagine that as you speak a cloud of coloured breath is emitting from your mouth; you are enveloping your audience in your favourite colour. As you imagine this, subtle changes occur in the range of sound that your voice produces for your audience. Your audience understands the effect of this on them at a subconscious level.

What do I do with my hands?

A significant number of people who experience presentation training ask: "What do I do with my hands when I get on stage?" The answer lies in the question: "What do you normally do with your hands during the day?" Your hands should hang by your side or move with conscious control whenever you are presenting. You should not clasp your hands together or hold on to notes in front of you. You should maintain a completely open style at all times during your presentation.

Should you write your talk out in full?

It is best to work from bullet point notes for your talk. This allows you maximum flexibility and also allows you to come across as you. People attending the talk are there to like you and buy your services.

Jokes

Comedians spend a life time learning how to deliver jokes. We spend our lives learning our professional subject but what makes you

believe that you can suddenly become a comedian? Be yourself, talk about your experiences.

Your stories

As a nation we love stories, so tell stories about what has happened in your business, not the fact that it was set up at a certain date and it grew to such a size – talk about how it grew, what were the challenges, what are the issues, what were the solutions that were generated in this industry or for similar companies by you, your firm or your team. Stories are what make the difference as far as your clients are concerned.

As you tell stories, your enthusiasm and the emotions you experienced at the time are demonstrated. It is you the audience is buying, not the words in your presentation.

Believe in your presentation

A solicitor asked me for advice when they were preparing a presentation on a new aspect of employment law and they said "I am so bored with this, I really find it terribly dry, what should I do to liven it up?" My response was don't give the lecture, find something else you are enthusiastic about. If you stand up and talk about something that you are bored about you will bore your audience and you will do yourself and your firm enormous damage.

Effectiveness of presentation training

A managing partner had not presented to a large audience ever before, after two three hour sessions, he came 2nd in terms of content and 2nd in terms of presentation style at an international conference with 50 other speakers present. Adopting the Rainmaking process to presentations is different and effective.

Conclusion

Success in the corporate finance and merger and acquisition world will be judged by how you come across in your presentations with your peer group and clients. The market is difficult and those that take the steps to polish their approach in the Rainmaking world will gain increased market share. ■



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