Keeping the Fire Burning After the Torch is Passed

Retaining Clients When the Rainmaker Leaves

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Executive Summary

What actions do firms take to successfully retain clients when a (rainmaker) seller leaves?

Best practices research.
This is a descriptive study; not a statistical analysis. The purpose of the research was to identify the best practices of firms that successfully retained clients upon the departure of the key person who maintained client relationships.

Why is the study important?

- Firms need to know how to protect their most valued assets - their relationship with clients.
- Firms need proven methods to transition clients from one rainmaker to another if conditions warrant it.

Who participated?
Society for Marketing Professional Services (SMPS) members with senior level management titles were identified. Professional Services Marketing Association (PMSA) members were also identified for the study. Both groups were encouraged to complete a brief pre-qualification paper and pencil, or on-line survey. In exchange for completing the pre-qualification survey, a copy of the research findings summary was promised.

An in-depth phone or face-to-face interview was conducted with 48 pre-qualified firm representatives. To qualify for an interview, the firm had to have each of the following conditions:

- One or more rainmakers who left the employment of the firm in the past three years
- Success in keeping, for six or more months, some or all of the departing rainmaker's clients

The selected interviewees came from a representative cross section of firms based upon geography, size of firm, services offered, and selling platform (full-time sellers, doer-sellers, or both).

What were the research questions?
The study focused on three questions:

- What actions do firms take to successfully retain clients when a key employee with an established relationship (rainmaker) leaves with advance notice? (i.e. involuntary termination, planned retirement, or resignation with advance notice.)

- What actions do firms take to successfully retain clients when a key employee with an established relationship (rainmaker) leaves without notice or with very short notice?

- Is there a difference in successful client retention when the rainmaker is a doer-seller versus a full-time seller?

Findings
The methods successful firms use to retain clients were largely the same regardless of the amount of advance notice of a rainmaker's departure:

Most firms used all or most of these retention actions:

- Immediate contact by a senior executive of the firm.

- Personal, honest communications with the client by a senior firm executive. The executive must explain the departure (or planned departure) of the rainmaker.

- Face-to-face meeting whenever possible.

- Quick identification and introduction of the replacement rainmaker (by the departing rainmaker, if appropriate).

- Frequent communications (phone, e-mail, face-to-face) during the early stages of the transition by the firm's executives and the new rainmaker.

- Enhanced and more frequent communications during the relationship transition period.

There was no difference in successful client retention between "doer-seller" versus full-time seller platforms.

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Introduction

Professional service firms win work when prospects trust them to solve their problems. “Trust” is the cornerstone of winning work and retaining clients. For most purchasers of professional services, trust begins with the key person (rainmaker) who really cares about the client’s problem and can orchestrate a solution. Relationship-based selling is the single most powerful method of securing new clients and keeping existing ones. People don’t care how much you (or your firm) know until they know how much you (and your firm) care. That means it is a person-to-person business.

What actions do firms take to successfully retain clients when a seller leaves? How do they proceed when a key employee with an established relationship (rainmaker) leaves? Dr. Dennis Schrag, The University of Iowa, Henry B. Tippie College of Business and President of The Longview Group, studied this question. Professional service firms that successfully maintained clients after a rainmaker departed were identified. Each was asked to explain how it kept its clients. This research study, sponsored by the Society for Marketing Professional Service Foundation provides insight into these successful firms’ best practices.

Research Objectives

There were three primary research questions:

- What actions do firms take to successfully retain clients when a key employee with an established relationship (rainmaker) leaves with advance notice? (i.e. involuntary termination, planned retirement, or resignation with advance notice.)

- What actions do firms take to successfully retain clients when a key employee with an established relationship (rainmaker) leaves without notice or with very short notice?

- Is there a difference in successful client retention when the rainmaker is a “doer-seller” versus a full-time seller?

The study made no effort to identify rainmaker relationship transition methods used with prospects.

Professional Service Industry Conditions

- The professional service industry is highly competitive for deep-pocket strategic clients
- Typically 80 percent of a firm's revenue comes from 20 percent of its client base
- Rainmakers move to other firms, burnout, retire, die, or are asked to leave
- In most firms, the development and maintenance of a specific client is the responsibility of one key person in a firm
- Many organizations promote this powerful one-on-one relationship -one firm representative to one client representative
- Firms invest heavily in developing client relationships. It is not unusual to spend years courting a strategic client
- In many organizations successful rainmakers resist internal efforts to gain access to or information about "their" clients
- Rainmakers often "guard" their clients from others within the firm and external to the firm
- Firms' profitability is typically higher when securing work with established clients
- Firms' cost of sales is typically lower when securing work from established clients

Many firms rely heavily on a few individuals with close client relationships. When the rainmaker leaves, the *firm's relationship* might be in jeopardy. Some departing employees might seek to take their clients with them to a new organization.

This study is important because:

- Firms need to know how to protect their most valued assets - their relationship with clients

- Firms need proven methods to transition clients from one rainmaker to another if conditions warrant it

Literature Review

Senior business honor student Greg Schrader, working with Henry B. Tippie College of Business Associate Library Director Eva Hock, conducted extensive literary investigations seeking previous studies or descriptions of best practices of professional service firms' client retention. The RDS Business and Industry database and the Lexis Nexis Academic database yielded no pertinent information

Additional investigations included:

- Kennedy Information Service for the broader consulting industry

- Marketing associations for interior design, law, public accounting, medicine, and dentistry

- Sylvia Cutler, SMPS National Bookstore manager, could identify no research, studies, or similar literature on the topic

The researcher was not successful in finding literary resources on client retention with professional service firms.

There are considerable resources that describe the process of winning work through trust/ relationship-based methods. Lore International Institute, a Durango, Colorado based firm that provides primary research, consulting, and training services worldwide, published a white paper entitled "Winning More Than Your Share."

> "Achieving the transition from opportunity selling to behaviorally differentiated customer relationships leads to time share, mind share, wallet share, and market share - resulting in winning more than your share."

Lore offers the following model that explains the critical importance of sustained relationship building and maintenance to win work This model, is presented in the Lore International Institute white paper "The Business Development Audit: A Power Tool For Building Competitive Advantage"

The Lore model is significant because it shows the critical nature of relationship development and maintenance in winning work and keeping clients. Relationship based issues account for 70 percent of the total impact for winning work, according to Lore's research. The role of the rainmaker in establishing faith and maintaining communications and trust is critical in the process of winning work.

Opening Impact on winning **20%**	**Middle** Impact on winning **70%**	**Closing** Impact on winning **10%**
Get to know the Market	***Get to know the Client***	***Get to know the Deal***
Market Analysis	Client Management	Proposal Management
Client Planning	Relationship Management ▫ Information Management ▫ Perception Management	Presentation
Strategic Planning	Opportunity Management ▫ Pursuit Management ▫ Capture Management	Negotiations
Business Planning		Contracting
Branding		

The Harvard Business Review On Point publication (November 2001) published the article "How to Lose Your Star Performer Without Losing Customers, Too" by Neeli Bendapudi and Robert P. Leone. The two authors are professors at the Max M. Fisher College of Business at Ohio State University. The article explains the authors' research with 57 US companies. The researchers investigated a diverse group of organizations from packaged goods to industrial products to traditional services. They reported, "…our study found that the strategies companies use to keep customers when they lose key contact employees are by and large ineffective."

They further reported that customers voice three major concerns when a key contact leaves a supplier:

1. I am losing my most important point of contact with the company.
2. The replacement employee won't be as good as my previous contact.

3. I'll have to start all over again and something is bound to fall through the cracks.

The researchers made ten suggestions on how suppliers can increase the chances of keeping customers including:

- Rotating key employees among customers
- Use teams to service customers
- Cultivate multiple contacts with customers
- Cultivate a strong corporate image
- Publicize the company's rigorous employee selection process
- Publicize the company's employee training program
- Showcase your employees
- Train employees to communicate your quality and attention to detail
- Notify customers quickly when employee turnover may impact them
- Provide customers a transition plan when a key employee may leave

The researchers noted that using only one or two of the above actions could be counterproductive in retaining customers. They suggested using all or most of the strategies.

The Researcher

Dr. Dennis Schrag was the primary researcher for this study. Schrag has experience as both a private sector and public sector client of professional design services.

He served as director of business development and human resources manager for Howard R. Green Company, a Midwestern consulting engineering/architectural/

technology firm. From 1998 to 2001 he was corporate marketing manager for The Stanley Group, also a consulting engineering/architectural firm.

For many years he was an adjunct professor at the University of Iowa Henry B. Tippie College of Business.

In 2001, he joined the faculty full time. He teaches a variety of MBA-level courses including "Developing the Professional Service Business," "New Venture Formation," "Entrepreneurial Marketing," "Dynamics of Consulting," "Business Policy," "Management Through Constructive Persuasion," and "Human Resource Management."

He was the founding president of the SMPS Iowa Chapter, and has contributed numerous articles to the *SMPS Marketer*.

Schrag is the President and founder of The Longview Group, a consulting and training organization that serves the professional design and construction industry, nationally.

Research Methodology

Paper and Pencil, and On-line Pre-qualification Survey

The researcher sent personalized letters on University of Iowa letterhead to select SMPS/PSMA members. The mailing list was restricted to members with executive level job titles. The letter explained the nature of the study and that it was funded by the SMPS Foundation. Enclosed with each letter was a brief pre-qualification survey. A postage paid envelope was provided. The pre-qualification survey required no more than five minutes to complete.

The pre-qualification survey asked:

- In the past three years, have rainmakers left employment for any reason (including discharge)?

- If there was attrition, was the firm successful in retaining clients for six months, one year, and/or two years following the rainmakers' departure?

The researcher captured additional demographic, classification, and pre-qualification data.

In exchange for completing the pre-qualification survey, a copy of the research findings summary was promised. In some cases, selected members received several letters seeking their participation in the study. Respondents were given the option of completing the survey on- line.

Over 4650 personalized letters were mailed.

Chapter level participation

The researcher asked each SMPS chapter president to promote the study within their chapter. Each president was offered:

- A .pdf file with the pre-qualification survey designed as a postage paid self mailer
- Sufficient copies of the paper pre-qualification survey and postage paid envelopes
- An invitation to participate in the survey on-line using the research project website

In May 2004, seven of the larger SMPS chapters in the U.S. were selected for a second mailing. SMPS National Executive Director Ron Worth asked each of these chapter presidents to promote the study with their members.

In person request to participate

The researcher presented 12 national, regional, state, chapter, or local level training seminars to professional services personnel nationwide. At each, a copy of the paper survey and a postage paid envelope was provided. The researcher asked all seminar participants to complete the survey and return it.

The phone interview

To be selected for a phone interview, respondents to the pre-qualification survey needed:

- Attrition of at least one rainmaker in the past three years
- Some success in retaining clients after the rainmaker departed
- A willingness to be interviewed

A structured phone interview was used with most pre-qualified respondents. The phone interview took about 20 minutes to conduct. Respondents were called and an appointment for the phone interview arranged.

The phone interview posed open-ended questions. Respondents were asked about the actions they took to retain clients after the rainmaker departed. The interviewer probed for deeper and complete information. Data was handwritten during the interview and then keyed into an Access database.

Responses

- 179 pre-qualification surveys were completed and returned
- 56 pre-qualification respondents were appropriate for the study
- 48 completed phone or face-to-face interviews provided useful information

The qualified respondents provided a reasonable geographic distribution. Likewise, the qualified respondents represented a reasonable cross section of size of firms, types of firms, and selling platforms.

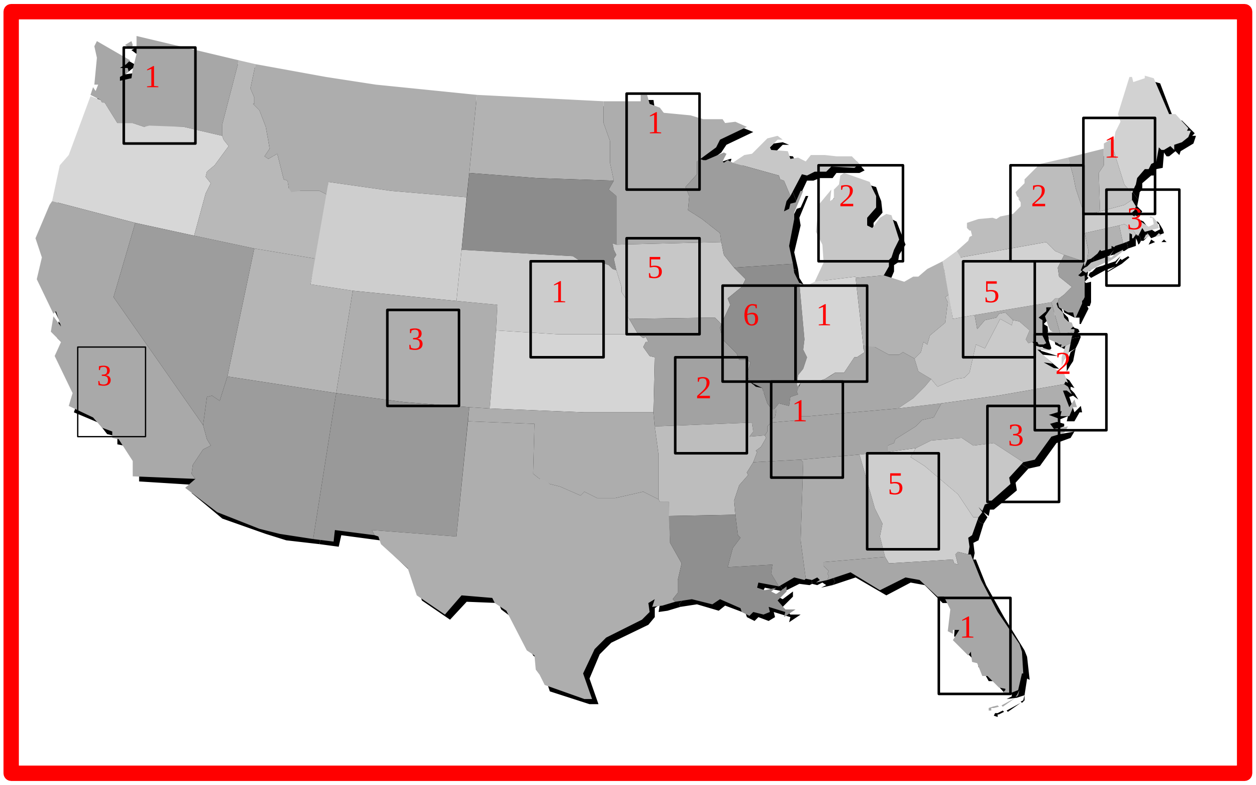
Geographical Distribution

Interviewees came from 19 states as follows on the next page.

Types of firms

Interviewees represented a wholesome cross-section of the professional design industry:

Organizations' services	Percent of interviewees
Architectural	9%
Engineering	33%
Architectural/ Engineering	15%
Engineering/Architectural	15%
Environmental	4%
Construction	15%
Other	9%



Size of Organizations

Interviewees came from a wide variety of firm sizes:

Range – Number of Employees	Percent of Interviews
1-19	18%
20-49	18%
50-74	18%
75-100	11%
101-149	9%
150-199	9%
200-349	5%
350-600	6%
601-1000	2%
1001 +	4%

What selling platform do the interviewee firms use?

Interviewees in the study came from organizations with three selling platforms as follows:

Full-Time Sellers	**Doer-Sellers**	**Both Full-Time Sellers and Doer-Sellers**
24%	52%	24%

What percentage of the sellers using any platform was female?

Fifteen percent of the interviewed firms reported having female sellers. Of these fifteen percent, females represented an average of 19 percent of the sellers.

What is the average age of the sellers employed by the interviewed firms?

Respondents reported that the average age of the sellers in their firms was as follows:

Mean	**Medium**	**Range**
45	45	34-64

Why did the rainmakers leave their firms?

Many respondents did not feel comfortable responding to this question, so the data is incomplete. For those who did respond, the motivation for a change in sellers is as follows:

Reason for leaving the firm	**Percent of sellers who left**
Retirement	12
Involuntary termination	9
Lack of compatibility	9
Went to competition (or started own firm)	7
Selling platform changed	4
Transfer	3
Promotion	1
Merger	1
Died	1

How much time did firms have to transfer the relationship to a new seller?

Consistent with the above information on the departing sellers' motivation for leaving, the study found that management had a month or more notice in 70 percent of the cases. In the case of retirement, involuntary termination, selling platform changes, mergers, transfers, promotions, and the lack of compatibility (usually), management could anticipate the need to transfer the client relationship to another seller with a reasonable amount of time.

In 30 percent of the interview situations, management had two weeks or less notice.

Findings

This is a descriptive study, not a statistical analysis. The purpose of the research was to identify <u>the best practices</u> of firms that successfully retained clients upon the departure of the key person who maintained a client relationship. The researcher interviewed pre-qualified executives of firms. To qualify for an interview, the firm had to meet each of the following conditions:

- One or more rainmaker left the employment of the firm in the past three years

- Success in keeping, for six or more months, some or all of the departing rainmaker's clients.

The research involved an in-depth interview, in person or by phone. The respondents were asked to describe, in detail, the processes they used to transfer the relationship from the departing rainmaker to a new rainmaker.

Many firms were hesitant to discuss the methods they use to develop and maintain clients. Many preferred not to discuss the implications of a departing rainmaker.

In the pre-qualification stage over:

- 17 percent of the respondents indicated they had NO success in retaining clients after a rainmaker left.

- 34 percent of the pre-qualification surveys indicated no attrition of rainmakers.

- 34 percent did not want to be phone interviewed

The above are not mutually exclusive.

Question 1: What actions do firms take to successfully retain clients when a key employee with an established relationship (rainmaker) leaves ***<u>with advance notice</u>****? (i.e. involuntary termination, planned retirement, or resignation with advance notice.)*

When a firm has the luxury of having a month or more notice that a rainmaker is leaving, its actions can be planned and better arrange.

One firm made this statement when reflecting on replacing a retiring rainmaker:

> "The departing seller and replacing seller meet face-to-face with each client. They try to focus the meeting on the positive energy of the firm in providing seamless service. Usually a senior executive would also attend this relationship transfer meeting. There was enhanced communications during the first few months of the transition.
>
> Because of the problem of rainmakers leaving the firm, the organization is seeking more employees within the firm who can have a relationship with the client organization."

Another firm explained how it managed the involuntary termination of a rainmaker:

> "We had a well-orchestrated plan in place before we terminated the seller. Each of the three principals took some of the (departing rainmaker's) clients. Each called the assigned clients immediately after the seller was dismissed. They explained the seller was no longer with the firm. They further explained that they would assume the rainmaker's duties. They would be the client's primary contact."

> "Our clients are K-12 schools. Often the owner's representative and the owner's project manager is NOT the same person. There was immediate follow up within a week with a face-to-face meeting with the owner's representative, the owner's project manager, and our principal and our project manager."

> "We kept in constant contact with these clients and also our former seller's prospects. The contact must be immediate, face-to-face and must involve our most senior people. We know we must reestablish the trust right away. We do plenty of follow up and phone work after the transitioning

> meeting. And, yes, the former seller contacted our clients on behalf of his new organization almost immediately."

These successful organizations engaged the following actions to retain their established clients:

Percent taking action	**Action**
100%	Immediate contact by senior executive of the firm; explanation of the rainmaker's departure
100%	Personal communications with the client by a senior firm executive
100%	Face-to-face meeting
90%	Quick identification and introduction of the replacement rainmaker (by the departing rainmaker, if appropriate). (Often the rainmaker replacement was identified and introduced before the departing rainmaker left the firm)
93%	Frequent communications (phone, e-mail, face-to-face meeting) during the early stages of the transition
25%	Have a second person within the organization who has some relationship with the client (technical lead, principal-in –charge, firm principal or other executive leader) [Relationship redundancy.]

Question 2: What actions do firms take to successfully retain clients when a key employee with an established relationship (rainmaker) leaves **without notice** or with very short notice?

For this study, short notice was defined as two weeks or less notice before the rainmaker left the firm. What actions did the firms take to keep their clients under these difficult conditions?

Here is a typical response:

> "The principals got together and divided up the [departing rainmaker's] clients and prospects among themselves. Then they assigned a project manager/doer-seller to each prospect/client. The principals arranged face-to-face meetings with the clients/prospects within 10 days of the rainmaker's departure. The principal and the new rainmaker met the client/prospect face-to-face and explained the situation. They assured the

> prospect/client that the horses were still there to do their work. We made concerted efforts to keep the level of service at, or above, the previous level. The principals communicated weekly or so with client/prospect via e-mail or phone to monitor the transitions. This continued for some time."

The procedure above reflects the key actions identified by this group of respondents:

Percent taking action	**Action**
100%	Immediate contact by senior executive of the firm; explain the departure of the rainmaker.
100%	Personal communications to the client by a senior firm executive to reestablish trust
100%	Face-to-face meeting as soon as possible with firm principal
80%	Quick identification and introduction of the replacement rainmaker
50%	Frequent communications (phone, e-mail, face-to-face) during the early stages of the transition

Question 3: Is there a difference in successful client retention when the rainmaker is a "doer-seller" versus a full-time seller?

The research shows no advantage or disadvantage of one selling platform over another. The techniques used to retain clients were essentially the same for organizations who had full-time sellers, doer-sellers, or both.

Additional Findings

Compatible Departures

There was no repetitive theme in the interviews when the departing rainmaker was retiring or leaving the firm with advance notice even under positive conditions. The following is a typical response:

> "The retiring doer-seller introduced the new doer-seller over a three-month period. The two, together, made multiple calls on the clients. Also they tried to involve the firm's senior technical manager when that was someone different from the new seller. There were multiple meetings so

> the client could become more comfortable and gain trust in the replacement. Lots of communication."

The transition is difficult:

> "The social contacts of the retiring seller were so critical - the new person does not have those social contacts to keep clients and win new ones. It is hard to have a perfect match between established clients and a new seller."

There were other instances when the planned retirement failed to yield trust transfer. For example:

> "The firm's key seller, who was retiring, was a social magnet. He was a prima donna about his relationships with clients. He wanted to "fade out" and therefore no relationship transfer was formally implemented. He would not allow it. He was a principal and had the power. We are trying to recover. We were able to keep many of the clients but it was a lot like cold selling. We kept trying to find someone [in the firm] who had any relationship or connection with these past/ present/clients, who could transition the relationship. The retiring seller had kept his relationships to himself."

Client Relationship Management Tools

As part of the interview process, the researcher asked if the firms that successfully retained clients employed a client relationship management system of any kind. The system could be as informal as regularly planned oral reports (with notes taken) to handwritten notes filed in a manila folder, to a sophisticated network-based client relationship management software (CRM).

The research shows that 51 percent of the interviewed firms had some type of client relationship management system.

It is the researcher's impression that those firms with a client relationship management system had a distinct advantage in transitioning the trust, and subsequently were able to retain a larger percentage of their clients.

Those firms with a client relationship management system were asked what percentage of their rainmakers used the client relationship management system and if the use was mandated by the firm.

Of the firms reporting to have a client relationship management system, the average number of rainmakers using the system was 42 percent. Approximately 35 percent of the firms with a CRM system mandate its use by their sellers.

"It's hard to mandate anything with these people," reported one interviewee.

What advice do these successful firms offer their peers?

The final interview question was, "What advice do you have for others seeking to retain clients after a rainmaker leaves?"

Percent of interviewees offering this advice	**Advice**
26%	Build relationship redundancy into your firm. Multiple people in the firm need to have a relationship with the client.
16%	The more senior-level people within your organization must meet with the client and facilitate the relationship transition.
11%	When the transition begins, face-to-face meetings are essential.

Additional advice from interviewees:

- Always be completely honest with your clients.
- Don't lose your rainmakers. It is so expensive. They have so much knowledge in their heads.
- Plan the transition, when you have the advantage of advance notice
- It's hard to do, but firm officers MUST get client and prospect data from their sellers. This is firm-owned information, not personal information
- It's hard to build new relationships after your 25+ year seller goes to the competition.
- Use your technical people as the bridge from the old to the new rainmaker.
- Communicate, communicate, and communicate
- Good records really help.
- Manage your sellers.

Recommendations/Summary

Personal, honest, and sustained relationships build trust. The rainmaker is the person who develops and nurtures a relationship with a prospect. He or she transforms the prospect into a client and sustains a professional relationship to capture more work. There is evidence of best practices for firms seeking client retention when a rainmaker leaves. The triage actions are clear, simple, and very time consuming.

- Urgency - as soon as possible communicate with your clients. Let them know a transition is in process. Usually, there is home court advantage hearing the transition story from senior management instead of the departing rainmaker, or rumors on the street. (Word of mouth works for you and works against you. There are few communication systems as powerful as word of mouth.)

- Big guns - senior level management/principals must take a proactive role in communicating with the clients. In lieu of personal trust, senior management level commitment is demanded.

- Personal - keep the message positive, simple, and personal. "Henry was a fine fellow. You will enjoy working with your new Client Service Manager, Rachel. Our firm will provide seamless service as usual. I personally want to make this transition successful. Call me at any time."

- Quick transition - identify a replacement rainmaker as soon as possible. Senior level management should introduce the new rainmaker, when it is not possible or appropriate for the exiting rainmaker to do so. Build relationship redundancy into your organization-two or more of the firm's key people have a relationship with the client.

- Re-sell/re-commit - review why your firm was selected and reiterate those features and benefits to the client organization. Communicate this message several times.

- Nurture - nurture the new client/rainmaker relationship with frequent contacts/communications.

- Honesty - Be honest with clients, your firm, and yourself. Your competition will be intense during this transition. Established professional friendships are powerful. It will take time and energy to keep your client.

- CRM - Mandate the use of a consistent client relationship management data depot. Readily available information and clear understanding of the client organization, needs, and operations will allow for better, faster, and more successful client relationship transitions.

Appendix

Pre-qualification Survey

Interview Script

Has Your Firm Lost A Rainmaker in the Past Three Years?

The SMPS Foundation and Dr. Dennis Schrag from the University of Iowa-Tippie College of Business are studying how firms successfully transition clients after a rainmaker leaves. Results will be presented at the August 2003 SMPS national conference in Scottsdale. YOU CAN HELP! Please complete this short pre qualifying survey below. Mail it postage free in the enclosed envelope.

More information? 319-335-0982. (All information is kept confidential.)

This study is about firms that have successfully kept clients after RAINMAKERS departed. Rainmakers are those persons who sell services. How has your firm successfully retained clients after a rainmaker left? Let's start with a little background information:

Tell us about your organization:

A. What is your firm's primary service? *(Check one)*

☐ Architecture ☐ A/E or E/A
☐ Engineering ☐ Environmental
☐ Construction ☐ Other

B. Your firm's size (number of employees) *(check one)*

☐ 10 or fewer ☐ 50-100
☐ 10-25 ☐ 100-200
☐ 26-50 ☐ 200-400
☐ 400 or more

Tell us about your RAINMAKERS:

A. Are your rainmakers essentially: *(check one)*

☐ Full-time sales persons
☐ Doer/sellers
☐ Both full time sales persons and doer/sellers are employed

B. In the past three years, have one or more rainmakers left employment for any reason (including involuntary termination) as follows ***(check one all that apply):***

☐ With one or more months advance notice
☐ With two weeks or less notice
☐ No attrition

C. Within six months of the rainmaker's departure was your firm successful in retaining of the rainmaker's strategic/key clients?

☐ All ☐Some ☐None ☐ N/A

D. One year after the rainmaker's departure was your firm successful in retaining of the rainmaker's strategic/key clients?

☐ All ☐Some ☐None ☐ N/A

E. Two years after the rainmaker's departure, was your firm successful in retaining _____________of the rainmaker's strategic/key clients?

☐ All ☐Some ☐None ☐ N/A

May we call and visit with you to learn how your firm successfully retained its clients after the rainmaker left?
☐ Yes ☐ No, Thanks

Name________________________________

Title_________________________________

Organization_________________________

Address______________________________

____

City__________________State__________

Zip_____________

Phone (________)__________________

Email______________________

Years in current position_______

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Successfully Transitioning Clients After the Rainmaker Leaves
How Relationship-based Businesses Keep Clients

Dr. Dennis Schrag, The University of Iowa Tippie College of Business
The Society for Marketing Professional Services Foundation
The Longview Group

Interview Form

Date______________Interviewer____ In Person___Phone___

Database entry by_______Date_____________Human Subjects___________Y________Source___________________

1. First___________________Last______________________________Title__________
2. Position____Years /Position_______
3. Organization____Years /business______
4. Address____
5. Address2____
6. Address3____
7. City____
8. State_____________________________________Zip_________________________
9. Email____
10. Phone____
11. Org Type: ___A ___E ___E/A ___A/E ___Int D ___Env ___Con
12. Org Type Other: ____
13. No. Employees__10 ___10-25 __26-50 __51-100 __101-200 __201-400 __401+
14. Selling Structure: ____Doer/Sellers _____Full Time Seller _____Both
15. Selling Structure: Other____
16. How long this structure?____
17. Approximate number of rainmakers____
18. Percent women rainmakers____
19. Average age of rainmakers____
20. Attrition rate of rainmakers past three years (estimate)__________________________
21. Reasons rainmakers left____
22. May we quote you in future publications: _____Yes _____No

23. In the past three years, a rainmaker has left organization with:
    a. One or more months advance notice
    b. Two weeks or less notice
    c. Other____

24. Were you able to retain your departing rainmaker's clients:
    a. Six Months after rainmaker left
    b. One year after rainmaker left
    c. Two years after rainmaker left

25. What techniques(s) do your firm use to transfer clients to a new rainmaker?
    ____
    ____
    ____
    ____

26. How long have you used this technique?____
27. Have you used other techniques successfully? Describe:

____

____

28. Techniques you have used that were NOT successful:_________________________________

____

____

____

29. What issues surround the transiting system____

____

____

Best ____

Worse part____

---

30. Does your firm have a CRM system that is required of your rainmakers? **Y N**
31. Describe CRM____
32. What issues surround the use of the CRM?____

____

____

____

____

33. Percent of rainmakers that use it or other system______________________________________
34. Do you have systems to protect client/prospect information rainmakers gather? Y N
35. Describe ____

____

____

____

36. Advice to others who seek to retain their clients after the rainmaker leaves:

____

____

____

37. Do you know others who have successfully retained clients after the rainmaker left?

Name____

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