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Drizzling... New Business Management

The second in a series of An Executive Summary for Busy Managers.

Hopefully the first of our executive summaries, "Stinky Fish," validated my statement regarding the five minute investment these summaries will take you to read. I hope it also provided you with a clear and concise description of the "Fish" series and how it could (or could not) help to make a positive impact on your organization. In any case, here we are again, hopefully the coffee is fresh... off to the races for the second summary in our series.

Many years ago my sister in-law gave me a book as a graduation gift from my MBA program. The book was called How to Become CEO: The Rules for Rising to the Top of Any Organization. Little did she know how much impact this book would have on my career. I have to say however, I figured out a much easier way than was proposed by Mr. Fox. Quit your paying day job, fill out the State and Federal paperwork and hang out your shingle. No one said anything about it being a positive cash flow organization, just that you had to run the organization. Anyway, as I made another trip to the library to do some research for an upcoming proposal to DARPA I stopped by the business book section again. This time a book titled How to Become a Rainmaker caught my eye. I did not really pay any attention to who the author was, but after I made it through the first few enlightening chapters I had this nagging feeling of Déjà vu. This book was so strong in its advice that I knew it could only be the same person that wrote the CEO book. Low and behold, while looking through the "also by Jeffrey Fox page" I was able to put two and two together after I saw the title of the CEO book.

Right off the bat I am going to say that if you are in Marketing or have any marketeers reporting to you, you absolutely must read this book. Rainmakers are tough to come by, they are even tougher to figure out. This book will give you a little insight into their inner workings as well as offer other marketeers advice on how to increase their probability of becoming a Rainmaker.

There is only one word that will do Mr. Fox justice... **HARDCORE**. Both of the books that I have read by Mr. Fox have excellent advice, but the extremes that he recommends that you take it to are really out there. In order to set the stage for my viewpoint I must give you a little personal anecdote. Everyone who knows me is well aware that between the hours of 6:30am and 10am I can be seen nursing my Starbucks coffee. Mr. Fox recommends that for true Rainmakers, you do not get in a car with a cup of coffee for fear that you will spill it and stain your clothes. Not bad advice, but in my opinion it may severely limit your enjoyment of the job unless you have a Starbucks in your office building. This is but one practical example of advice that you will encounter by reading this book.

"Rainmaker" is an outstanding assembly of good advice for how to make your day more productive as a salesperson. In my last job, I had responsibility for bringing new business in the front door. I practiced a few of the activities described in the book, but certainly could have benefited immensely had I read and put into practice some of the advice of the book. For example, "Rainmaker" talks about turning customer objections into opportunities. Each voiced objection by your potential customer is an opportunity for you to sell him or her on your product. It is an engaging activity where your potential customer is giving you immense insight as to why you are not their preferred supplier. They are also opening the door for you to respond and engage them in a conversation. If the customer says something as trivial as they do not like your product because the competition offers the product in multiple colors, you can find out from the customer what their color preference is so that you can go back to Engineering and find out what it would take to build this customers ultimate product. This offers you a lot of secondary benefits that at first may not have been apparent. First, it allows you to get a

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real understanding of what the customer likes and wants. Second, it allows you to offer the customer a feeling of individual attention by getting your Engineering group to just focus on him or her to answer the questions. And last but probably most importantly, it leaves the door wide open for you to re-contact that potentially uninterested customer. This is important because anything can happen over time. Who knows, maybe it takes you two or three weeks to get an answer out of Engineering. Once you call that customer back you may find out that in that time frame his or her current supplier made a really big faux pas and the customer is looking for an alternate supplier so he or she can save face with their boss. You never know what might transpire, but it is imperative that you have an open line of communication with a potential customer.

Perhaps the best advice that came out of this book was basically a description of how to live by the "Golden Rule." Fox talks about how not to litter because a customer or potential customer could be watching. Fox also talks about not belittling someone, no matter how far down on the food chain they may appear because they may be friends with a relative of one of your major customers. Basically, it is a case of do unto others as you would have them do unto you. Treat people with respect, no matter who they are because they may somehow impact your next potential big sale. Hopefully what Fox is preaching goes a little deeper than "do it because it might affect a sale." The "Golden Rule" is not a bad rule to live by... but you really ought to look a little further than just the next sale as to why you are doing it. Although a little intrinsic happiness gained from treating people with respect might just bubble over into your work life and cause you to smile at the right time or to even exude a level of confidence that will win over your next customer.

As I said earlier, "Rainmaker" is a must read if you have anything to do with Sales, Business Development or Marketing. Both bosses and employees should read this short compilation. In case you were wondering about the CEO book, that is more of a "fun" read if you have nothing else to do. It also is packed full of good advice, but again some of it is a little more hardcore than the even the best leaders need to follow. Being yourself and enjoying what you do is what will ultimately make you a success. Trying to change in an over-the-top type way just to impress your boss won't get you to the top. Good, sound management style and the ability to develop and implement long-term strategy is more important that whether or not you are seen at each office party with a soda pop in your hand.

Just my opinion and we all know what "they" say about opinions...

Thanks
JB

BreitIdeas is now offering another time saving service for our clients through our website. In addition to posting each of these summaries on the web, we are providing hotlinks to all of the books in the series as well as other relevant material that we think might be of value to you. So instead of going through the normal search activity, just pull up the www.breitideas.biz website and go to our "products" page.

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