

Jim's Profit Accelerator 57: Where's Your Rainmaker?

Apple (yes, that one) is a lousy exemplar for most mortals, including most business leaders. And yet, mixed in with the whoosh are some details to go to school on. Here's one: Apple's mystical success happened because of two people: Steve Jobs and Jony Ive. They were Apple's rainmakers (and Ive still is).

Apple's rainmakers made breakthrough products. What if you don't have a breakthrough product or service? Get a rainmaker. It's a person, not a team.

SPEED BUMP: Really successful firms have a rainmaker who produces big clients or big products.

How big are Ive's products? Apple's 100,000 employees depend on his taste. It's estimated that if Ive retired, Apple's valuation would drop 10 percent: \$71,000,000,000. Yes, Apple's design team (19 people) is the envy of the world. But it is Ive who pulls home runs out of that group, selling 1.9 billion Apple products whose final design is Ive's.

Which kind of rainmaker do you have?

1. **The Senior Spirit:** A CEO who has wide acquaintances and deep skill in linking her firm's potential with substantial clients (or industries) who will drink deeply from the well of the firm's expertise. Mines big opportunity like a gold digger on a mission. This CEO carves a simple niche for herself: Build human relationships with other CEOs, and enjoy the fun of doing great things together.
2. **A Smokin' Good Sales Team:** Led by a strong sales manager, this team works beautifully together, pulling in impressive flows of orders consistently and reliably. They are students of the sales relationship process, providing superb answers that help clients to meet their goals.
3. **A New Product Flood.** In electronics, like cars, new products draw new customers. Since most products, like many movies, are evolutionary and modestly different, their sales pull is equally modest. Hitting it out of the park, like Apple, requires Apple-like innovation married to irresistible storytelling.

It turns out that a Senior Spirit will beat a Smokin' Good Sales Team or a New Product Flood every time. Why is that? Because big steps, rainmaker-size steps with their huge clients, are made almost entirely on emotion. To be fair, the emotion floats on a sea of reality, about how well the product functions and how reliable the customer service is. None-the-less, it's emotion that moves people.

About those new products: Unless they drive powerful emotions, you'd better have a personal rainmaker on your team to generate the emotion-power that fuels bursts of sales. Says Ive: "There are some shocking cars on the road." He complains of "design distress over things developed to be different, not better."

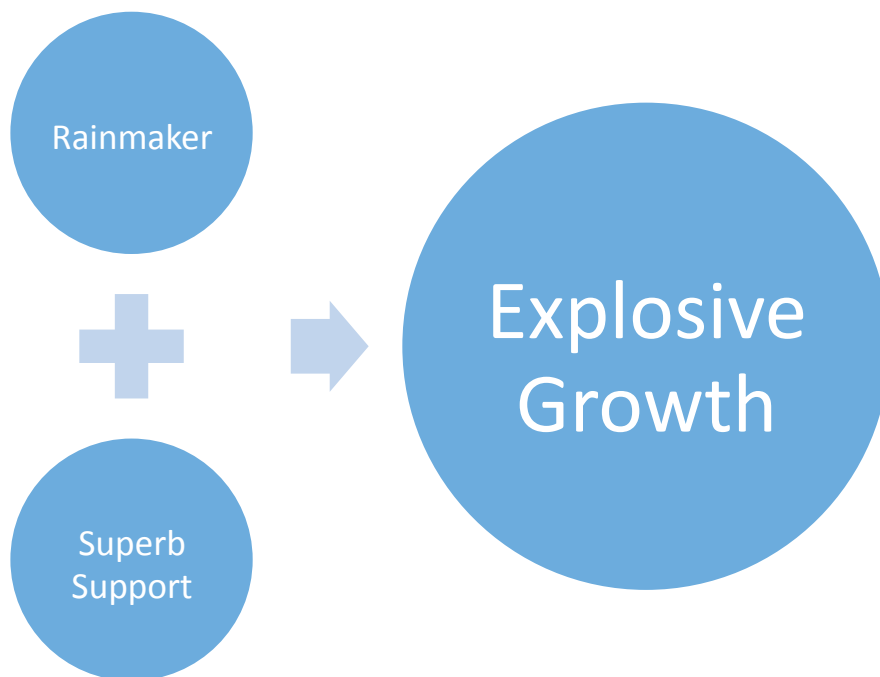
SPEED BUMP: Powerful emotions pull big sales through the door.

My dad grew up poor and didn't go to college. A genuine Horatio Alger character, even when he had become a successful insurance executive he was slow to spend money—except that every so often he'd come home with three new suits or a new car. This is not Death of a Salesman; he funded his own comfortable retirement. But the suits and cars were not the result of close analysis, even though his success was as a high-level insurance broker, crafting complex and detailed special policies for every major west coast lumber company you've ever heard of. His analytics won customers, but his emotions pulled him to his old friends in the suit and car businesses: the same two people provided him pleasure over many years.

SPEED BUMP: Rainmakers fail without superb execution behind them.

The Other Secret: Winning rainmakers have enviable machines behind them, executing on the orders that they bring in. That execution is vital for either a personal or product rainmaker. Without it, he quickly becomes the emperor with no clothes. The reverse isn't as powerful, of course: Superb execution without a rainmaker is whistling past the graveyard. Few notice, fewer buy.

Here's how it looks:



ACCELERANT: Unless your products are Apple-good, who can you tap to be your rainmaker?

For more information on how you can accelerate revenues and profits in your business, please call or email me.

(Notes about Apple from The New Yorker Magazine, 2/25/15).

For more information, visit www.grewco.com.

Jim Grew is an expert in CEO-level strategy and executive leadership whose clients refer to him as the Business Defogger and Accelerator. Jim helps leaders swiftly discover the hidden opportunities within their businesses and exploit them for dramatic results. Nearly three decades of success as a COO and CEO coupled with his experience running nine thriving businesses provide the foundation for his consulting work as president of the Grew Company. He presents regularly to industry groups, mentors business leaders, and shares insights on his blog, BizBursts.com: <http://bizbursts.com/>. He holds BA and MBA degrees from Stanford University.

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