
Section One

THE BRAND-FOCUSED
RAINMAKING MARKETER

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ROE # 1

BEGIN AT THE END

The best advice I ever got in my career was that I needed to begin at the end. I needed to visualize my legacy. Most people associate a legacy with the transfer of worldly possessions from one generation to the next. So it's not a great leap to realize that each of us also create professional legacies that we leave to the next-generation marketers and rainmakers of our company, brand, or product line. The key is to define that legacy—determine exactly what it is that you want to accomplish, and then focus all your time and energy on making it a reality.

This concept of a visualized legacy is focused on defining and achieving goals. And it gets at the heart of what successful marketing is all about. In today's business world, every marketing dollar needs to be accounted for and needs to provide a clear return on its investment. Every single marketing program—whether advertising, public relations, client seminars, promotional mailings—needs to be goal-oriented. Marketing needs to have a payoff. If it doesn't create additional revenue,

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boost profits, reduce costs of acquisition, or enhance customer loyalty—in other words, if it doesn't motivate people to take actions that will directly contribute to growing your business—then it's simply not worth doing. Your job is to visualize precisely what action you want people to take.

Visualization is usually associated with athletes—particularly peak performers. Baseball players picture themselves hitting a home run, sprinters see themselves bursting over the finish line ahead of the pack, and gymnasts see themselves performing a perfect routine and sticking the landing to a standing ovation. The process works the same for rainmakers and marketers. Architects visualize their design, fully constructed, with people walking through the doors and gliding up the escalators. Attorneys see themselves in the courtroom with the judge and jury hanging on their every word. And marketers of every stripe see their efforts ringing the cash register.

Like all things, visualization does not come easy. It requires practice. Visualization is far different than simply saying “I think I can, I think I can.” It involves images rather than words and narration. And the more vivid the image—the more detailed and nuanced—the more impact it will have on the skills that you're trying to sharpen.

A LESSON FROM THE GREATEST RAINMAKER OF ALL-TIME

Thomas Watson, Sr. became general manager of the Computing Tabulating Recording Corporation (CTR) in 1914. At the time, CTR was a manufacturer of automatic meat slicers, weighing scales, and punched card equipment. The company had fewer than 400 employees, but Watson had big plans for the small company and, in 1924, he renamed it International Business Machines.

Watson's description of his thought processes and game plan for the company is far too powerful to paraphrase. So here, in Watson's own words, is the secret of his personal and professional success:

IBM is what it is today for three special reasons. The first reason is that, at the very beginning, I had a very clear picture of what the company would look like when it was finally done. You might say I had a model in my mind of what it would look like when the dream—my vision—was in place.

The second reason was that once I had that picture, I then asked myself how a company which looked like that would have to act. I then created a picture of how IBM would act when it was finally done.

The third reason IBM has been so successful was that once I had a picture of how IBM would look like when the dream was in place and how such a company would have to act, I then realized that, unless we began to act that way from the very beginning, we would never get there.

In other words, I realized that for IBM to become a great company it would have to act like a great company long before it ever became one.

From the very outset, IBM was fashioned after the template of my vision. And each and every day we attempted to model the company after that template. At the end of each day, we asked ourselves how well we did, and discovered the disparity between where we were and where we had committed ourselves to be, and, at the start of the following day, set out to make up for the difference.

Every day at IBM was a day devoted to business development, not doing business.

We didn't do business at IBM, we built one.

Thomas Watson, Sr. didn't invent the concept of visualization but he embraced it with a fervor that should be an inspiration to us all. Interestingly, it would be very easy to reword Watson's

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quote and replace “IBM” with your own name or the name of your company. To wit:

Thirty years from now, I will have achieved all that I am capable of for three special reasons. The first reason is that, starting today, I have a very clear picture of what a successful career will look and feel like when I retire.

The second reason is that now that I have that picture, I can ask myself how a successful career like that would have to be built. I can then create a picture of how I would have to act and interact to achieve that goal.

The third reason I will have been so successful is that once I had a picture of what my career would look like when the dream was in place and how I would have to act, I realized that, unless I began to act that way from this day forward, I would never get there.

In other words, I realize today that for me to become a great rainmaker I would have to act like a great rainmaker long before I ever became one.

From the very outset, my career was fashioned after the template of my vision. And each and every day I attempted to model myself after that template. At the end of each day, I would ask myself how well I had done, and discovered the disparity between where I was and where I had committed myself to be, and, at the start of the following day, I set out to make up for the difference.

A COROLLARY LESSON FROM SOMEONE WHO WOULDN'T QUALIFY TO HOLD TOM WATSON'S MEMORY STICK

Several years ago, I headed marketing for a mid-size investment company that had aspirations of growing substantially larger. In establishing our marketing strategy, we focused on the

corporate vision of being a top-tier investment company. We started by considering what our larger brethren looked like. Using that approach, we made four generalizations about these firms:

1. They were well known
2. They had positive reputations
3. They had several “category killer” products and/or specialties
4. They were sold through a vast army of financial advisors

The next step was to translate these four attributes of top-tier companies into the primary strategies that the marketing group would pursue to support the corporate goal. Specifically:

- Increase Awareness – articulate the corporate story in a way that is engaging and compelling
- Focus on Education – Become the go-to resource for financial advisors and individual investors to learn about alternative investment strategies
- Seize Opportunities – Capitalize on the increasing interest in alternative investments by focusing on our industry-leading suite of synthetic hedge fund products
- Drive Activity – Attract new advisors, encourage existing producers to place additional assets with us, and develop an easy-to-implement referral program

A good exercise would be to follow this same structure and assess what your own aspirational role models look like. Extrapolating from them, you can then outline specific steps you can take today to move you closer to your goal.

**A COROLLARY LESSON FROM
MY INNER “DR. PHIL”**

Life is short—which is why we should always kiss our spouses goodbye, tell our kids we love them at every opportunity, and make sure our friends know how important they are to us.

Our professional lives are equally short. So focus on what’s most important. Do the right thing at the right time. And always keep the end in sight—it’s nearer than any of us ever wants to admit.