

# BUILDING A COMPANY OF RAINMAKERS

TIM KLABUNDE, CPSM, FSMPS

GROWTH IMPACT PARTNERS, LLC

# Creating Rainmakers




**What is a Rainmaker**




**Creating Rainmakers**




**Rainmaking Culture**




**Your Rainmaker Action Plan**



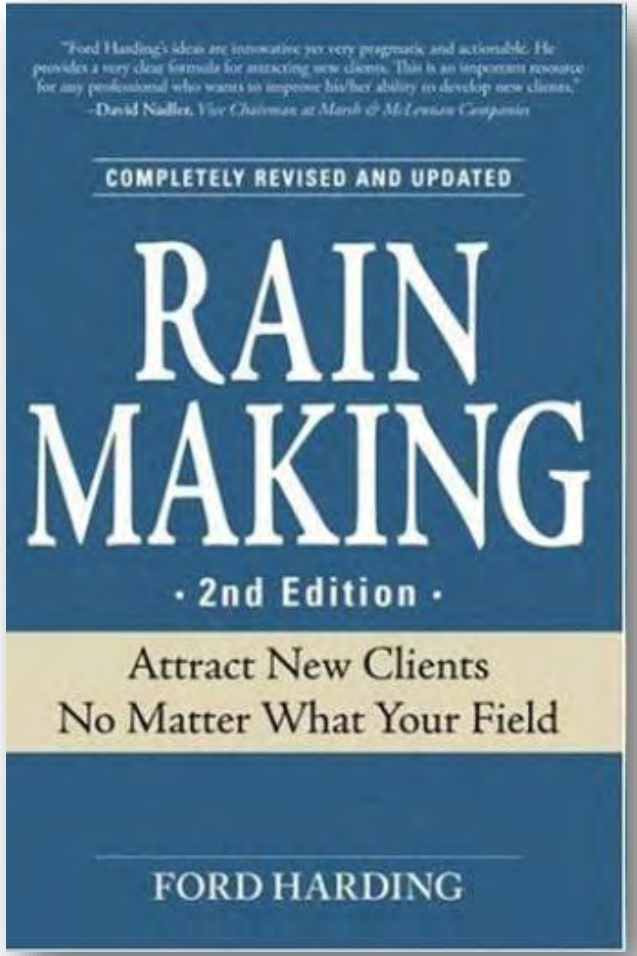
1

Creating Rainmakers

# The Rainmaker Defined

# The Rainmaker

- “Experts who master the skills of attracting clients, not just doing technical work”
- “The teammate who creates opportunity, not just responses to RFPs”
- “Professional who generates new business consistently”
- “Individual who builds strong networks and develops client relationships that last”
- A Seller-Doer



# What salespeople have taught us



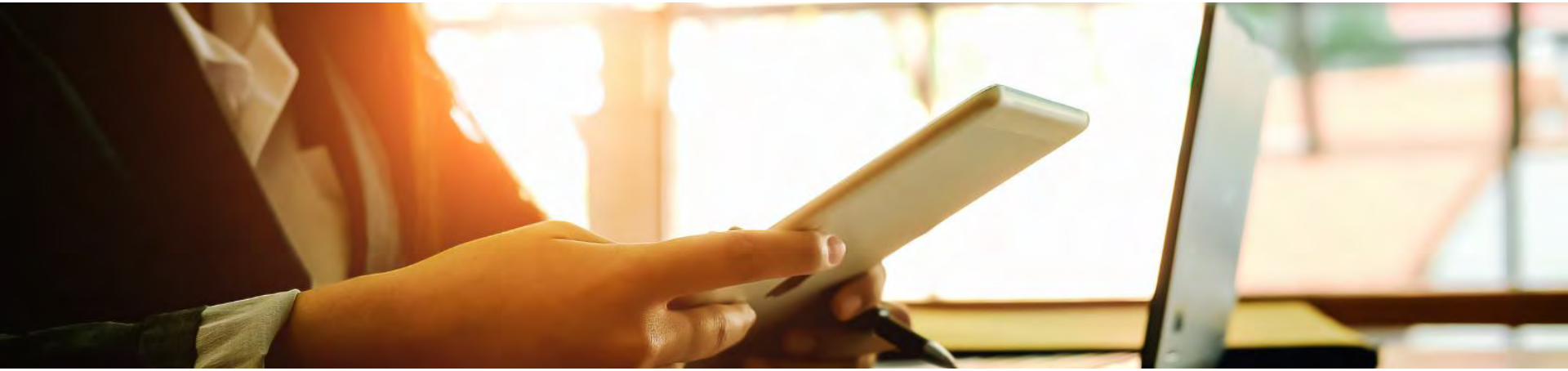

Asking people for business

Going to association events

Using your friends to get business

Social Media connections

# Rainmaking is different



### Building Relationships

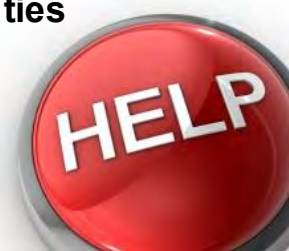
The Relationship process

### Helping Other People

It's about them not you

### Creating Opportunities

"What can I do to help this person?"



# Where does Rainmaking happen?

During meetings or at **soccer practice**



During phone calls or after **project meetings**



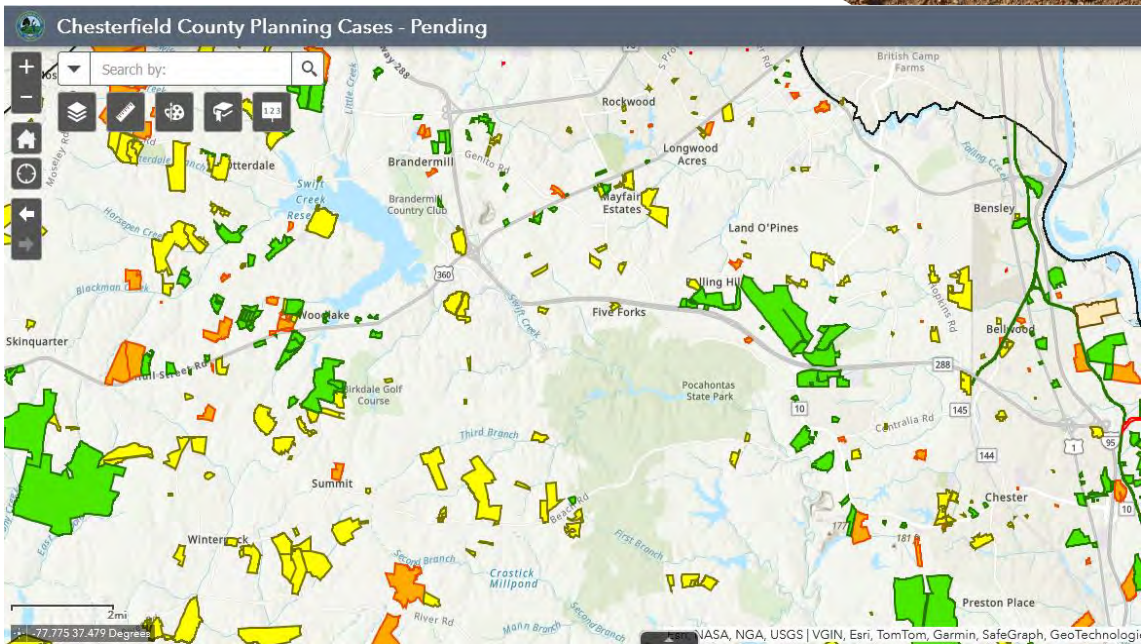
At industry events **like this**



# What “help” looks like

- Timely information
- Introductions
- Ideas
- Advice
- Referrals
- Follow through

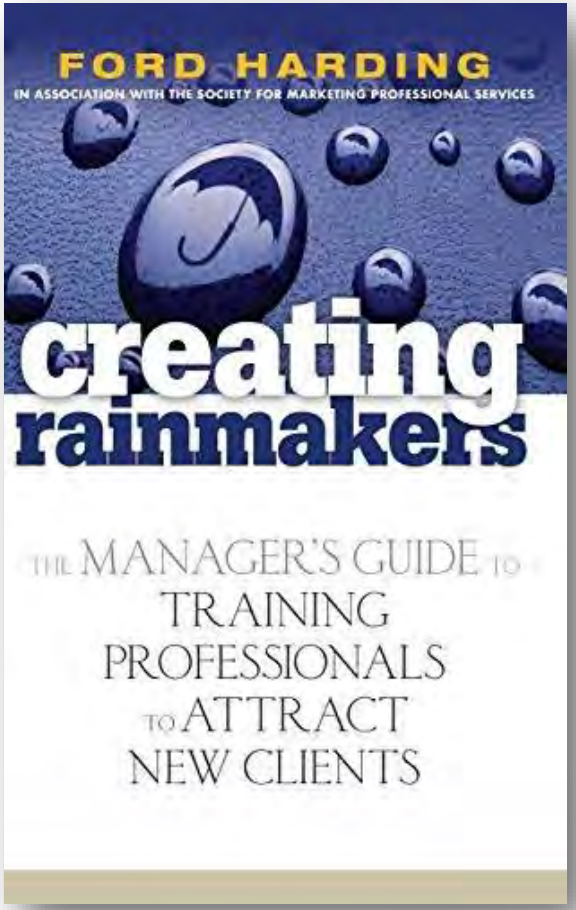




# The Myth of the Born Rainmaker

- John, an introvert who brought in more work than anyone else at his firm
- Rainmakers are built through small, repeatable behaviors
- Anyone can learn to be a Rainmaker if the system is simple and the culture is supportive

*Reminder: Charisma isn't Scalable*



# Why this matters Now

- 2007–2009: Great Recession, 18 months
- 2001: Dot-Com Recession, 8 months
- 1990–1991: Recession, 8 months
- 1981–1982: Recession, 16 months

For AEC Firms:

- Rainmaking is concentrated in too few people, slowing growth
- Most Rainmakers are long-tenured professionals
- Rainmaking isn’t a talent problem - it’s a development opportunity



2

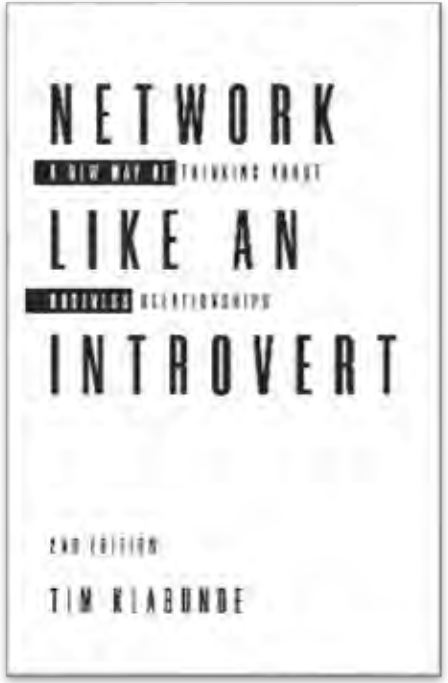
The Rainmaker

# CREATING RAINMAKERS

# The Key to Rainmaking is Relationships

- Relationships are the foundation of rainmaking
- Everyone is wired to develop relationships
  - Most people find networking to be difficult
  - Most people haven't experienced success
- Most people think you must be an extrovert to network
- The system most people use is flawed

*Unlocking the power of networking and relationships create Rainmakers*





Relationships

# 7 PRINCIPLES

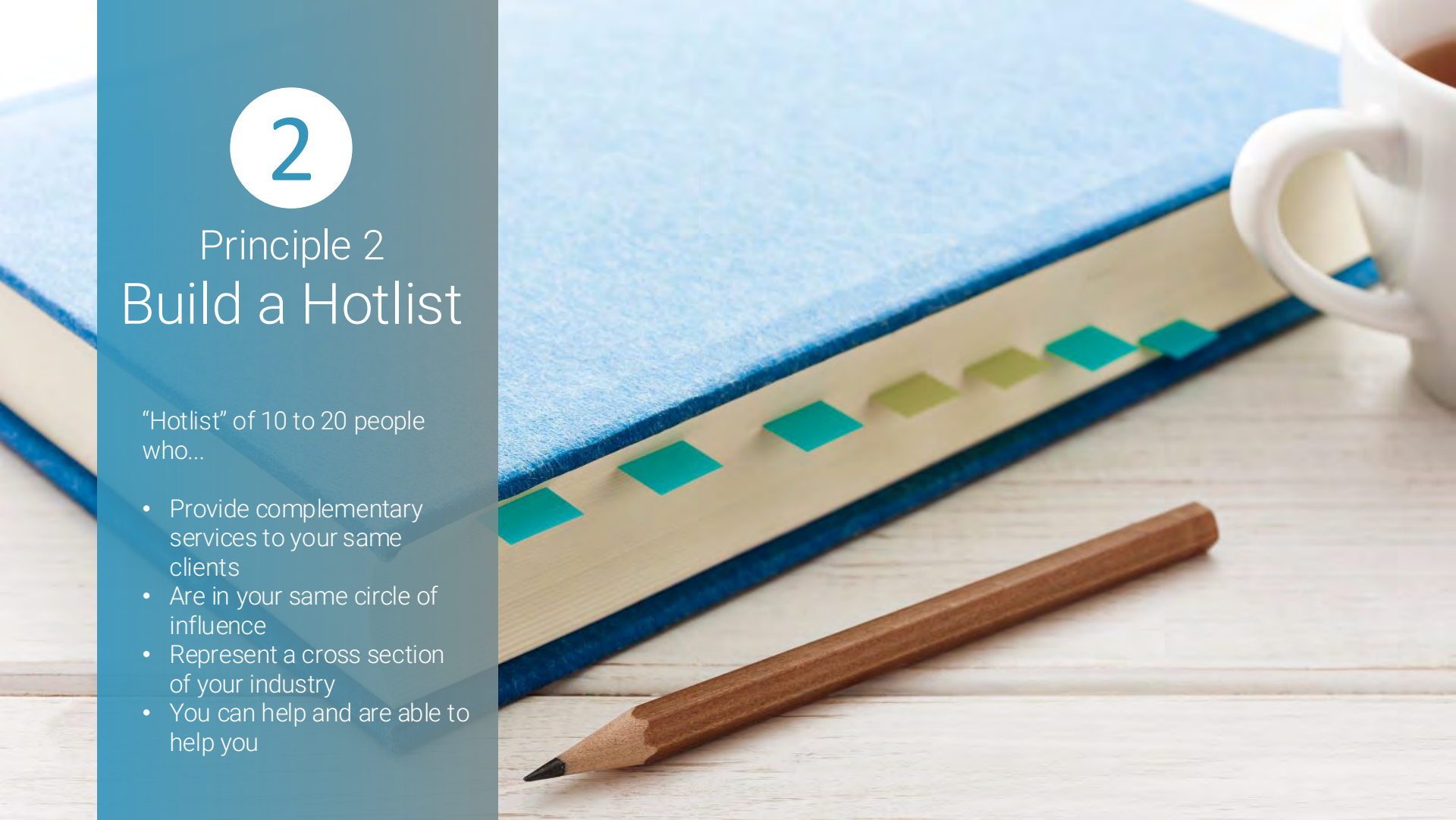
GROWTH IMPACT
PARTNERS, LLC

1

# Principle 1
# Consistency

- Helping one person once doesn't get the job done
- Don't expect instant results
- Consistency develops strong, mutually beneficial relationships





2

## Principle 2
# Build a Hotlist

"Hotlist" of 10 to 20 people who...

- Provide complementary services to your same clients
- Are in your same circle of influence
- Represent a cross section of your industry
- You can help and are able to help you



3

## Principle 3
# Be Inclusive

- Your “Hotlist” should be small, your network should be broad
- Network with everyone everyday just by helping others

*Result: Opens new doors, creates relationships, and establishes your reputation*

4

## Principle 4
# Be Genuine

- Help because you want to, not because you want something
- “What have you done for me lately?”






5

## Principle 5
# Be Heard

- When you refer, make certain you are heard!
- Call, email, text or message



6

# Principle 6
# Say “Thank You”

- Simple “thanks” goes a long way
- A bottle of wine, champagne, or a card
- The “thank you” lunch



7

Principle 1

# Consistency (again)

- The “Snowball” Theory of Rainmaking
- Starting is not easy but it “snowballs” if you *consistently* apply yourself



# Creating Rainmakers

- **Start early** - Don't wait until professionals become senior leaders, habits begin early in a career.
- **Developed optimism -** The ability to persist despite rejection and setbacks.
- **Build repeatable systems -** Rainmakers don't rely on charisma or luck. They consistently develop routines for networking, prospecting, relationship management, and follow-up.
- **Trusted advisor** - Rainmakers learn to understand broader client business issues rather than staying narrowly focused on technical expertise.

# One-Off Training Doesn't Work

**One class doesn't change behavior, coaching does.**

- BD workshops feel efficient, but the impact rarely sticks
- Rainmaking is **behavior change**, not just information transfer
- Technical staff need **time and psychological safety** to try, fail, adjust, and try again

**Rainmakers aren't built in a classroom. They're built through consistency and encouragement.**

# Rainmaker Cohorts

**Successful Rainmaking Programs**

- Cohorts of 6 to 8 Future Rainmakers
- 6-9 Months
- Equip for Success
  - Tools, Resources, & Knowledge
- Coaching
- Accountability that Supports
- Celebrate Successes

*Culture Change starts by being Selective*



# Identifying Hidden Rainmaking Potential

Characteristics that predict Rainmaker success:

- Hungry and optimistic
- Willing to help and be helped
- Committed
- Client-facing technical professionals
- Volunteers



The Winning Kickball Team

# Why Cohort Coaching Works

**Cohort coaching creates transformation**

- Provides a **safe environment** to learn BD without fear or pressure
- Builds **comfort, confidence, and identity** around outreach
- Creates accountability in a **structured** environment
- Works best when guided by **someone who isn't their boss**
- Turns individual growth into **cultural momentum**

**The most successful firms build Rainmakers through sustained, supported coaching over time**



3

The Rainmaker

# CREATING YOUR CULTURE

# Four (4) Steps to Changing Corporate Culture

1. Educate and Encourage
2. Define Expectations
3. Acknowledge and Celebrate Success
4. Reward Success



# 1

## EDUCATE AND ENCOURAGE



*"Without the knowledge of how to succeed in a new culture it is impossible for individuals to embrace the new culture."*

- Training that focuses on the basics
- Focus on the development of relationships
- Train everyone to create a culture change
- Identify your future rainmakers and focus with one-on-one attention



# 2

## DEFINE EXPECTATIONS

- Identify expectations, everyone plays a role
- Expectations vary based on position
- Corporate culture changes one person at a time
- Remember the “Hawthorne Effect”

# Hawthorne Effect



**Measure by:**
**Client Manager**

- New Business*
- Repeat Clientele*
- Net Promoter Score
- Cross Selling*

HINT: Revenue by client past 3 years

*Note that these do not require active use of CRM



3

# ACKNOWLEDGE AND CELEBRATE SUCCESS

- The most important step in changing culture
- Most common reason for failure of a new culture

- **Acknowledgement:** Individual recognition
- **Celebrate Success:** Group celebration and recognition



# 4

## REWARD SUCCESS

- Title changes, bonuses, raises, and office locations linked to culture change successes
- 6 months minimum
- Identifies the individuals that cultural shift is being built on

# Four (4) Steps to Changing Corporate Culture

1. Educate and Encourage
2. Define Expectations
3. Acknowledge and Celebrate Success
4. Reward Success

Bonus Step: Create Multipliers

*Rainmakers create the Next Generation of Rainmakers*



## Rainmakers Elevate Future Rainmakers

- They bring colleagues into conversations, elevate younger staff, and share what they know
- They build confidence in Future Rainmakers
- **Rainmakers Create More Rainmakers**



4

Building a Company of Rainmakers

# Your Next Steps

# Build Your Company of Rainmakers

- Rainmakers are developed, not born
- Rainmaking is relationship building, not selling
- Building relationships begins with helping others
- Future rainmakers need client exposure, coaching, and encouragement
- Cohorts and coaching create rainmakers

# Build Your Company of Rainmakers

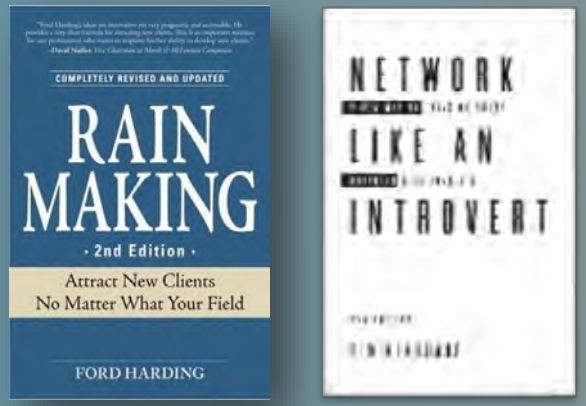
This Week:

- Identify six future rainmakers
- Ensure they have client exposure
- Pair them with mentors
- Commit to Building a Company of Rainmakers



**1.** Educate and Encourage **2.** Define Expectations
**3.** Acknowledge and Celebrate Success **4.** Reward Success

# Stay Connected




**Tim Klabunde, CPSM, FSMPS**
*Principal*

**Growth Impact Partners, LLC**
www.GrowthImpactPartners.com

Office: (804) 420-8056
Mobile: (804) 382-9561

# [Copyright Materials]

This presentation is protected by US
and International Copyright laws.
Reproduction, distribution, display and use
of the presentation without written permission
of the speaker is prohibited.

© Growth Impact Partners 2026

# ROG+ Partners

40119227

## Building a Company of Rainmakers

GOSCONF26-105

Tim Klabunde, CPSM, FSMPS

11/5/2026

Credit(s) earned on completion of this course will be reported to AIA CES for AIA members. Certificates of Completion for both AIA members and non-AIA members are available upon request.

This course is registered with AIA CES for continuing professional education. As such, it does not include content that may be deemed or construed to be an approval or endorsement by the AIA of any material of construction or any method or manner of handling, using, distributing, or dealing in any material or product.

Questions related to specific materials, methods, and services will be addressed at the conclusion of this presentation.

# Course Description

Technical excellence may win projects, but a culture of rainmaking sustains growth. In today's competitive AEC environment, firms can no longer rely on a select few to drive business development. This session equips senior architects and engineers with a practical four-step framework to build a companywide culture that embraces networking, relationship development, and opportunity creation. You'll learn how to break down the cultural and behavioral barriers that limit seller-doer success, implement training that builds confidence across your firm, and establish recognition systems that reinforce revenue-generating behaviors. If you're ready to transform business development from an individual skill into an organizational strength, this session provides the roadmap.

# Learning Objectives

At the end of this course, participants will be able to:

1. Understand the four-step framework to lead cultural change one person at a time.

2. Learn how to implement a companywide training program that will build a corporate culture that embraces networking and business development.

3. Understand the cultural and behavioral barriers to rainmaking within professional services firms.

4. Establish recognition systems that celebrate and reinforce rainmaking behaviors.

This concludes The American Institute of Architects
Continuing Education Systems Course




Tim Klabunde, CPSM, FSMPS
Principal
Growth Impact Partners, LLC
www.GrowthImpactPartners.com