

# ***RAINMAKER!***

## ***Making the Leap from Salesperson to Sales Catalyst***

Carlos Quintero and Nancy Sutherland  
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Summary by Bob Littell, Chief NetWeaver

Quintero and Sutherland:

**“RAINMAKERS. Every profession wants them. Every sales organization needs them. Every salesperson aspires to be one. The question is...what do you have to do to become a RAINMAKER?”** For the many years we have been in the sales profession, there has always been curiosity and wonder around how one becomes a ‘Rainmaker.’ Salespeople recognize the impact that making *rain* could have on their careers and thousands have asked us what it takes to outperform others and be recognized as one of the most consistent producers in their industry. Everyone has the potential to become a Rainmaker. But not everyone has the drive, determination and commitment to ‘deliberate practice’ that it takes to be seen as a ‘difference-maker’ to their customers.”

The basis for the *Rainmaker!* book is to demystify what top producers do and provide the reader with a framework for building excellence in how to connect and provide value to their customers.

### **FOREWORD**

In the Foreword, **Bernie Marcus, co-founder of Home Depot** supports this theme while introducing a new term that trumps ‘**customer service**’. He calls it ‘**sales cultivation**’, and he not only describes the difference but goes on to say why the characters described in “**Rainmaker**” are the same breed of people they hired to ‘thrill’ their customers. But even more importantly, in line with the more B-2-B focus of “Rainmaker” where Home Depot was the ‘customer’, those were the same skills and talents Home Depot used in choosing which suppliers with whom they would do business.

Like *Who Moved My Cheese*, or *The One Minute Manager*, this book is written in an engaging story format, which makes it a particularly easy read. It also allows anyone who is or who has ever been in direct sales to identify with all the characters you meet along the way.

And because we are really ALL in ‘sales’ – selling our ‘ideas’. . .our ‘needs’ . . .our ‘passions’, everyone can benefit by reading this book.

As usual, this summary is meant to give you detailed glimpses of some of the meat in the book, but this is definitely one you will want in your library – hopefully with this summary tucked inside, both to refresh key ideas and concepts, as well as to reference you to key pages in the book from my summary.

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## CHAPTER 1-A CASE OF "AVERAGE"

In this chapter we meet our main character - **Ryan Gray** – a salesperson for **Summers, Inc.** As Ryan walks out of his most recent sales performance review with his manager, he feels dejected based upon what he feels is a "C" on his sales report card – *'performing as expected'*.

And yet the authors point out that Ryan had become a student of *'selling'*. He felt he had embraced *'rapport-building'* skills in order to build trusted relationships and he recognized that in B-2-B situations, *'consultative selling'* was necessary to take it to another level, requiring him to become a better listener and to learn to ask the right questions. He felt he was making progress but also realized he had a long way to go and something else seemed to be missing.

Ryan goes home early and his irritability shows through. Luckily, his wife Michelle, is not only very supportive, but someone who has the instincts to suggest that Ryan should ask for some help from some other salespeople at the company who are consistently at the top of the charts.

Although we don't meet them here, he mentions four top producers in the company who we will meet in the chapters to come:

**Gary**, from Atlanta who was always one of the top qualifiers for the Top Awards Meeting in Hawaii.

**Carmen**, in Chicago who has been a top producer for years.

**James**, in Dallas and **Luis**, who was on Ryan's team and who both were *"climbing the charts and both were blowing away their quotas this year."*

But being an *'independent'* kind of thinker (*I can do this on my own*), he didn't want to approach other members of his team – most whom he felt were also *'average'*. And he didn't feel it would do any good approaching his *'all-business'* manager since he suspected his manager would just reiterate what he'd said before, just *"Make more calls throughout the week"*.

And if you're in *'sales management'* or striving to be, you should buy and read the author's previous book, *"Catalyst<sup>5</sup> - Making the Leap from Sales Manager to Sales LEADER"* (not sales *production* leader, but the consummate *'team LEADER'*). After you read that book, you would understand why Ryan's boss wouldn't qualify as a Sales LEADER.

Luckily he remembered the person who had originally hired him at the company - **Valerie Monroe**. She had set sales records during her sales career, and was Ryan's sales manager for four months before she was promoted to Director in another region. Valerie was a real *"Sales LEADER"*, she did more to help Ryan get started in his first few months than either of the other two sales managers had since. She made many sales calls with him which gave him a strong start. She had terrific sales savvy and coaching ability, which far surpassed the skills of his recent managers. But when he

tried calling Valerie's number listed in the company's directory, she had left a recorded message indicating that she had recently retired.

Ryan was amused but not surprised by a typical section of her message which showed she was *'still selling'* even after leaving the company:

*"I've had a wonderful career at Summers and I believe our products, services, and people surpass the competition. So, just because I'm no longer 'officially' part of the team, know that I am still a firm supporter of what's happening at Summers. As always, thank you for your business."*

So Ryan decided to email her – hoping she would receive it, simply asking her to call him with something he wanted to discuss. Her returned call came very quickly.

Ryan explains his frustration over having been with the company long enough that he had expected to be at the top, and instead felt he was in the *middle of the pack*, and wanted to see if she might be willing to become his *'mentor'*:

*"Well, you seem to have had the 'magic pill' when you were in sales with Summers. You're still considered one of the top salespeople that ever worked at the company - and it's been years since you've been selling directly. I want to see whether, by any chance, you'd be willing to spend some time with me - helping me to figure out how to pull myself out of 'average' "*

*"Ah, said Valerie. It sounds to me like you want to become a Rainmaker."*

## CHAPTER 2 – A CHANGE IN MINDSET

While researching a dictionary definition of a *'rainmaker'*, the first definition he comes across describes the Indian's version of someone who can attract the wet stuff, while the 2<sup>nd</sup> definition applied perfectly:

*"Someone with the exceptional ability to attract and retain customers, bring in business, and increase sales and profits."*

In their first meeting, Valerie references the *'bell curve'* illustrating the spectrum of most company's sales force – at one end where some are failing or barely making it; the height of the bell curve – *'average'* where the majority fall - and the few at the opposite end who are top performers.

Valerie: *"What those people at the [far end] of the curve do differently is see themselves not as salespeople, but as sales catalysts. What do you think of when I say the word catalyst?"*

From memory of his chemistry class, Ryan suggests the definition of a *'catalyst'*:

*"a stimulus that causes a chemical reaction."*

Valerie summarizes the key elements of being a *'rainmaker'* and *'sales catalyst'*:

*"In sales, a catalyst can be thought of as someone who is 100% focused on being a difference maker or change agent. They incite change in many ways, but their motivation is less about money and more about always bringing value to the customers they serve."*

At that point, Valerie polishes off her definition by saying that's the role she is most comfortable playing with Ryan – being a catalyst in trying to change his mindset.

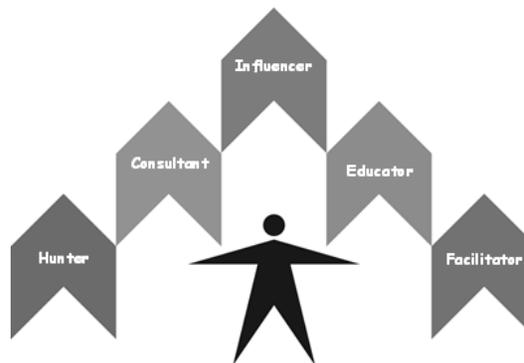
## CHAPTER 3 – RAINMAKER

In this chapter, as Ryan and Valerie hold their meeting walking and speaking on a trail, Valerie describes the characteristics and traits which she has found to be present in the most successful sales people she has studied:

*"I found that there seemed to be certain qualities that were part of the DNA of the salespeople who continually excel. And while I say these things are part of their DNA, I don't mean that they were born with these characteristics and traits; they just seem to be part of how they function on a regular basis."*

As part of her research Valerie had even formed a '**Sales Excellence Council**' within the company just prior to her retirement and they had submitted a summary which identified '**five core roles**' of those salespeople who became '**rainmakers**':

- **HUNTER**
- **CONSULTANT**
- **INFLUENCER**
- **EDUCATOR**
- **FACILITATOR**



And although Ryan thinks he has been serving successfully in the role of '**consultant**', Valerie suggests that he probably has been doing a little of all of them but not nearly as effectively as he could be doing:

*"The difference is that Rainmakers focus more deliberately – more purposefully – than you have likely been doing."*

The chapter concludes by Valerie affirming the potential and power of the sales profession. She says:

*"It's an exciting time to be in sales, said Valerie. Companies are viewing sales with even more significance than ever. And there are all kinds of innovative developments that can help us – things like social networking and new technologies we can put to use. I don't think most people have fully figured out how to blend the tried and true sales principles with the latest and greatest technologies. I'm trying to keep fresh on all of it – that's the catalyst in me."*

## CHAPTER 4 – THE FIVE ROLES

In this chapter, we learn that the best salespeople tend to perform in all 5 of the roles but there are usually one or two at which they tend to excel. Valerie admits that she started out excelling as a "**Facilitator**" – mainly because she enjoys "*solving customers' problems and offering ideas to help them grow their business*", as well as "*overseeing product implementations and making sure all my customers' requirements were met.*"

Valerie also helps us understand how salespeople often develop the roles as a "**continuum**", starting as a "**Hunter**" primarily "*pursuing new business*", with the

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**“Facilitator”** role at the other end – *“ensuring that customers are completely satisfied and that the company delivers on all commitments made.”*

The roles in between which include *“vital **Consultant”**. . .“powerful **Influencer”** and **“expert Educator”**”, are performed according to what is *“most required at the time.”**

At this point, Valerie raises what she considers to be a sensitive, yet very important issue with Ryan by introducing the term *“**intrinsic motivators”**”*.

She makes it clear that to become a Rainmaker, you must sometimes be willing to move outside your comfort zone. In Ryan’s case, Valerie has heard him consistently state that his **primary motivators** included: *‘being at the top of the list . . . making the trip. . .getting a bigger bonus, etc.’*

Using Ryan’s wife - Michelle - a high school counselor - as an example, Valerie asks Ryan if her **‘intrinsic motivator’** is ‘money’:

*“No, she’s definitely motivated by helping her students get through their problems and helping them to succeed at the next level.”*

In extending the analogy with Ryan’s wife, Valerie observes:

*“Isn’t it interesting? In her world, that’s what defines success. Somehow we’ve got to grab on to that idea in the world of sales – instead, so many salespeople are motivated primarily for their own benefits. They’re so focused on making more money or getting glory for themselves that they have forgotten a few of the core principles of sales – customers buy from people they like, know and trust. They want to work with people who bring real value to them and their companies, people who care about them and want to help them reach their personal and professional goals.”*

One more important point Valerie makes toward the end of the chapter:

*“Rainmakers are more than the men and women at the top of the sales lists. They are the people that make things happen. They are difference makers. They bring about change. They’re not just ‘going through motions’ in their interactions with customers. These people maintain a frame of mind that I believe you can adopt.”*

At the top of page 36, the authors provide a great point-by-point list describing what it takes to be a great Rainmaker. Post this list up on your wall and consistently ask yourself where you score with each point?

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For the remainder of the book summary, I will only touch upon a few key points from each chapter. One of the things I like most about the book, is the way each of the previously mentioned sales leaders with Summers, Inc. are used as a role model for each of the 5 hats a skilled rainmaker wears.

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## **CHAPTER 5 – EVOLUTION OF A SALESPERSON**

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In this Chapter, we meet **Luis**, who is a fast-climber on Ryan's same team. One interesting fact about Luis is that he had previously worked in a call center – first with a competitor, and then with Summers.

What Ryan learns from Luis as keys to his meteoric rise:

- **Go after bigger deals** – go after companies with larger opportunities
- **Become a 'mole'** – keep working through the layers until you've met people in most of the divisions
- **After the sale** -review and continually monitor the implementation plan from top to bottom – to be completely certain that everything goes as planned

Another great section of this chapter for you to read after you purchase the book comes from a slide which Valerie pulled from her files which she has accumulated over time in her quest to always stay in a '**constant learning**' mode. The slide illustrates the 5 stages which most salespeople go through over their career. She labels these: **1) Visitor; 2) Product Seller; 3) Needs Satisfier; 4) Problem Solver; 5) Trusted Advisor**. On a horizontal baseline below the 5 stages the career evolution moves from "**Activity-Focused Behaviors**" to "**Strategic-Focused Rainmaker Behaviors**".

For a detailed explanation of the 5 stages and how they shift to becoming more 'strategic' as your career enhanced by 'continuous learning' progresses, read pages 45 – 49.

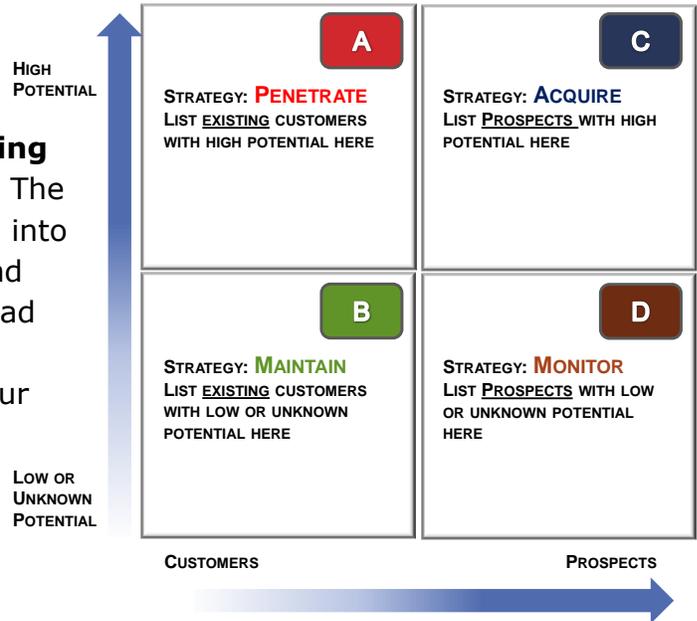
## **CHAPTER 6 – HUNTER**

Valerie suggests that "**Hunters**" and "**Farmers**" are not contrary roles but actually she is bothered by this simple explanation, as she feels that the word 'farmer' is too simplistic for the many other activities that the best Rainmakers do.

The qualities the authors expand upon in this chapter in describing the skill sets of a Hunter include:

- *Being a self-starter*
- *Seeking out problems and opportunities*
- *Displaying intense curiosity*
- *Using a 'system' to keep the pipeline full*
- *Actively qualifying for potential and resources*
- *Connecting and networking with all influencers*

For a more detailed explanation of these points as well as some interesting concepts the authors call, **'scoping out white spaces'** and **'consistently updating your ABCD Grid'** which I especially like. The **'grid'** is composed of 4 quadrants divided into **'existing customers'** vs. **'prospects'** and **'high potential'** vs. **'low potential'**. Read pages 64 – 68 for some key supporting information for a great way to analyze your 'sales system'.



## CHAPTER 7 – CONSULTANT

Valerie begins the chapter with a compliment to Ryan:

*"You have a trait that is held by most Rainmakers." – "A spirit of genuine caring. As I said earlier, people tend to buy from someone they like, know, and trust, and customers can tell if someone is not authentic. Your thoughtful attentiveness will take you a long way with customers. You can learn **skills** from others but **attitudes** must be cultivated from within."*

I really like the further clarifying points which the authors make on page 73 about the 5 roles:

- *Hunting* identifies opportunities
- *Consulting, Influencing and Educating* turn the opportunities into business
- *And Facilitating* ensures we deliver on our commitments in order to build customer loyalty

In this chapter, you'll learn "**90/10 rule**" on page 24 and on page 25, and you will learn a new definition and version of **'due diligence'** totally outside the legal field.

Also on pages 78 and 79, learn not only the concept of a **'database of questions'** . . . **'why. . .why. . .why'**. . .but also why the **'depth'** of questions takes this to the next level.

And if you want to learn how to go deeper and get to the **'root of the problem or need a company may have'**, you should carefully study the **'fishbone analysis'** on page 82.

Then on page 84, you get the summary of the points it takes to excel in the role of a **Consultant**:

- *Acts as a 'change agent' to the customer*
- *Thinks analytically and anticipates trends*

- *Able to see the BIG picture*
- *Thinks like an owner – helps the customer see how they can grow their business*
- *Seen as a problem solver*
- *Always uses sound judgment*
- *Keeps aware of industry direction*

Another point the authors make through Valerie is the recognition that being a **'Consultant'** involves more than just the ability to 'ask good questions':

*"Exactly. Rainmakers can actually help set a customer's direction and even help them turn around if they're going in the wrong direction. They know what's happening in the industry and customers value and look forward to working with them."*

## **CHAPTER 8 – INFLUENCER**

This chapter is one of my favorites because this is the role which, in my opinion separates the **'good'** from the **'truly great'**.

It involves so much more than being that 'high-pressure' salesperson who has some ability to wear people down until they finally agree to 'buy' or to 'give-in' to whatever it is you're trying to get them to do.

That's almost the reverse of how an 'influencer' would perform.

Valerie shares the name of a book with Ryan which had a significant impact on her early in her sales career, written by an author she highly respects. The book is "*The Psychology of Persuasion*", and the author is Robert Cialdini, who is known for *defining and articulating the psychology of influence*, highlighting six principles of persuasion:

- *Reciprocity*
- *Scarcity*
- *Liking*
- *Authority*
- *Social Proof*
- *Commitment*

Valerie helps Ryan learn that understanding and applying these principles will help him become a better Influencer. Read page 93 to learn about "Social Proof" which explains why testimonials are so important.

Do you as salesperson know what a **'library of testimonials'** would look like? And how about the other qualities listed on page 96?

- *Builds a library of testimonials to inspire customers to take action*
- *Understands how to demonstrate the financial benefits of their solution*

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- *Uses stories to make ideas come to life*
- *Creates a 'compelling reason to act'*
- *Persuades from the customer's perspective*
- *Negotiates successful outcomes*

On page 99, how does Valerie describe "a compelling reason to act"?

And on page 100, learn more about something everyone is talking about these days as another powerful club in the bag of successful salespersons is '**storytelling**'. Read pages 100 – 106 to give you further proof for the power of this sales weapon.

## **CHAPTER 9 – EDUCATOR**

What I like best about this chapter is the way the authors go far beyond what most salespeople think when they would hear that one of their key roles is that of an 'educator'. For most, and at the beginning, Ryan would fall into this category, believe it's just about having a thorough knowledge of the '**features**' of your product or service, as well as the '**benefits**'.

Page 112 lists the roles at which a true 'sales catalyst' excels:

- *Product and applications expert*
- *Thought leader*
- *Uses creativity to demonstrate offerings to customers*
- *Coaches and trains – partnering with others*
- *Acts as a source of ideas for customers*
- *Continuous learner*

Valerie also makes it clear to Ryan that being an expert on your product and applying the features to accentuate the benefits is often not enough. We tend to OVER-estimate the degree of understanding that the customer has – especially someone hearing the product explanation or seeing a demo for the first time, and so in Valerie's words:

*" . . .I'm always amazed when I hear salespeople stating a product's features and thinking the customer automatically connects the benefits and value they will receive. They don't. **I can't overstate it – we must be blatant about tying features to benefits and the value for our customers.**"*

*"Even more, they [Sales Catalyst 'educators'] have the ability to make the application of their products and services **come alive** for the customer. They use demonstration to show specifically how the customer can use the product or service to create value and differentiate themselves."*

Of the other bullet points listed above, being a "**Thought Leader**" is one which I believe the best-of-the-best adopt and Valerie explains it this way:

*"A thought leader is a person that is recognized by others as someone who deeply understands the business. They fully research the industry, the trends that are occurring, the directions customers are headed, and the entire broad marketplace beyond their own company."*

The balance of the chapter covers examples and ways to apply the other bullet points which you will find valuable as well.

## **CHAPTER 10 – THE RAINMAKER BLUES**

At this point in the summary and in the book, if you're in sales, you might identify with some of the same feelings Ryan expresses to his wife Michelle as he reviews his extensive notes from his meetings with Valerie:

*"There's so much and I feel like I can't do it all". . ."And these are just some of the ideas. . .it doesn't even account for all the things that go into making each one of them actually happen."*

Clearly, Ryan is challenged by all that it takes.

Valerie then lines up a meeting with James, whom you will recall from the beginning, is a rising star. Part of the solution to Ryan's sense of being overwhelmed is answered on pages 130 and 131 as James shares his approach to '**time thieves**' and how to avoid them. Valerie had previously stressed that Rainmakers use a **system** and "**protect their selling time.**"

On pages 131 and 132, the authors share their approach to what James terms "**. . . the most important ways I know of to help bring in a continuous stream of new business. That's networking.**"

There's no question that the authors and I share a very similar approach to 'networking' - shifting the emphasis from how Ryan describes it: "**. . .finding opportunities to meet people and sharing what I do in hopes of finding potential new customers**". . .to their definition given by James:

*". . .building relationships with other people - relationships where I can provide something of value and not expect anything in return." James paused. "Let me repeat that. I believe networking should involve getting to know people - and them getting to know you - with no strings attached. I never approach networking as a way to create sales. The whole goal, in my mind, is to have other people think of me as a valuable resource in their network. I am intentional in getting to know them - to treat them not as prospects but as people I want to learn more about - and to help in whatever way I can."*

Read the balance of this chapter to learn other ways the authors suggest to build these 'trusted relationships' and 'especially on page 134 - "**the spirit of reciprocity**" - "**I give, you give, we all win**".

The authors, through Valerie and James offer another antidote for the time constraints we all face.

Valerie first suggests a very straightforward way to view the five roles so they don't seem so overwhelming:

- **Hunters *identify opportunities***
- **Consultants, Influencers, and Educators *turn the opportunities into business***
- **And Facilitators *ensure we deliver on our commitments in order to build customer loyalty.***

Valerie precedes these with this statement:

*"While most Rainmakers do well in all five of the roles, almost all of them have one or two roles where they especially excel and they place more of their emphasis there."*

James adds that he is not as strong in some roles and as others, and in that case, he may call someone else in:

*"Well, if I have a large opportunity, for example, I might ask someone on our service team to accompany me."*

And two final points helps Ryan understand: 1) he doesn't have to be exceptional in all five roles; 2) "Persistence" and "Resilience" are essential qualities of a "Rainmaker". For more info on these two terms, check out pages 137 and 138.

## **CHAPTER 11 – FACILITATOR**

If you recall, Luis had worked at the call center of a competitor company, as well as at Summers prior to going into sales, and Valerie invited him to join their final meeting saying, *"I asked Luis to join us today because, in my mind, he is one of the best Facilitators I've ever met"*.

You can probably recognize how someone with Luis's background might excel in the Facilitator role as you review the qualities and the motivators which the authors list:

- *Champions customer needs*
- *Orchestrates resources*
- *Builds internal alliances*
- *Able to put all the pieces together to bring about change*
- *Oversees or leads implementation*
- *Always gives a little bit more*

But 100% service satisfaction can seldom be achieved.

Page 145 contains a great "**Top 5 Step for Service Recovery**" list which should be pasted up on the wall of every Call Center and Customer Service Center.

At the end of this chapter, you'll learn why Ryan and Valerie's last meeting on the 5 roles, is not going to be their last meeting.

Another reason why you will want to own an actual copy of the book is that at the end of the book, there is a set of "**Tools and Resources**" which can be used by a Rainmaker in each of the five roles.

I hope you enjoyed reading my summary and hopefully the entire book, as much as I did reading and summarizing it.

On the page opposite the "**Author's Comments**" on pages 155-156, there's a quote by Geoffrey Colvin that you may also want to print out and put up on your wall:

*"It's nice to believe that if you find the field where you're naturally gifted, you'll be great from day one, but it doesn't happen. There's no evidence of high level performance without experience or practice.*

*You will achieve greatness only through an enormous amount of hard work over many years. The best people in any field are those who devote the most hours to what the researchers call '**deliberate practice.**' "*

In the authors' closing comments, they give this advice, some of which appeared in the very first paragraph of this summary:

*"**Everyone** has the potential to become a Rainmaker. But not everyone has the drive, determination and commitment to "deliberate practice" that it takes to be seen as a 'difference-maker' to their customers. If becoming a Rainmaker is your goal, by following the guidelines developed in this book, you can pursue the habits of great sales professionals, and in so doing, create **lift** for yourself and your organization. We believe that **making rain**, above anything else, is an attitude. . . a disposition towards professional excellence. . . a commitment to help and provide value in every customer interaction."*

**Some additional thoughts:**

This framework of the behaviors of top sales professionals is powerful. It can provide a foundation on how to improve and where to focus.

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