

Case Study: Sales Assessment and Training Helps Environmental Consulting Firm Build the Next Generation of Rainmakers

Founded in 1982 and serving clients throughout the U.S. and globally, HRP is an environmental consulting firm that offers compliance, hydrogeology, and civil engineering services from seven offices in the U.S. Unlike many of its competitors, HRP embraced business development early on—conducting training starting in 2001 to prepare its consultants for sales.

At that time the company worked with an independent sales trainer for several years, then took a training hiatus.

In 2010, executives realized their junior consultants were not prepared to bring new business into the company. They needed to ramp up sales training.

Because a large number of the technical staff—engineers, geologists, and environmental scientists—was not naturally inclined to sales, they had not been particularly keen on previous sales training programs. The earlier programs did not resonate with their technical consulting approach and style. “Everyone in our field faces this problem,” says Walt Gancarz, CEO. “Developing business was foreign to most of them and not something they enjoyed doing.”

At a time when at least half their competitors suffered a revenue loss, reduction in staff, or office closures, HRP had grown and added staff. But to continue that growth, it needed to build its sales pipeline.

Solution:

HRP retained RAIN Group to help its consultants overcome their hurdles to successful selling.

Evaluate Each Professional’s Selling Strengths and Potential

To start, the team members were assessed using the [Rainmaker Assessment](#). This tool was used to evaluate and analyze each individual’s selling strengths and potential. In addition to providing insight into the work styles and selling motivations of team members—which provided a platform for determining the skill development needs—the assessment also helped the consultants to better understand the needs of different buyer types to whom they sold.

Client: HRP Associates, Inc.

Industry: Environmental Consulting

Services: Sales Assessments, Sales Training

Challenges:

- Develop the selling skills of technical professionals skeptical of their sales abilities
- Prepare junior consultants to become the next generation of rainmakers
- Build a stronger sales pipeline to support continued growth

Solutions:

- Assess the selling skills of junior consultants and analyze prior assessments of senior consultants
- Deliver customized in-person sales training to meet the needs of all professionals: introduce junior staff to a business development process they can begin using immediately and grow into; and reinforce and expand the selling skills of senior consultants

Results:

- Professionals at all levels have embraced the RAIN SellingSM methodology and now weave it into their business conversations
- Within months, a significant deal was initiated and closed by a once sales-averse professional
- Revenue growth of 18% attributed in part to increased business development success

Train the Next Generation of Rainmakers

A customized two-day [RAIN SellingSM training program](#) was delivered to two cohorts. A series of three [live webinars](#) reinforced the learning and helped consultants to put what they learned into practice. To train the next generation of rainmakers, the training was opened to both junior- and senior- level consultants. It was important that as the younger professionals were promoted they had already started to develop their selling skills.

Adopt a Methodology that Works with Your Clients

HRP's public and private sector clients generate a high level of repeat business. The sales cycle for HRP's technical services is long, with buyers ranging from the U.S. Navy to financial institutions. For these reasons, equipping technical staff with selling skills that would work in a variety of settings, ranging from networking events to RFP proposal presentations, was critical and the training was customized to focus on these topics.

Results:

Gancarz was thrilled with the response to training. "It was a very positive change having RAIN Group and John [Doerr] here. People could relate better to the approach."

Prior programs at HRP had seen some success, but because those programs did not resonate with most of the consultants Gancarz reported seeing diminishing results from those efforts. "A lot of people were turned off by it, they felt it was too outgoing, too flashy," he says.

But, HRP's professionals embraced the RAIN SellingSM method and soon after began to see results, proactively developing business. "We got more people involved [in business development], asking the right questions or expanding projects that we had in hand," says Gancarz.

One long-time consultant went from not being at all involved in business development to initiating and closing a significant deal. Combine examples such as that one with the fact that revenue is projected to grow by nearly 18% (to \$18 million) this year alone and you'll understand why Gancarz says, "I've been very happy. The training RAIN Group did for us really helped our folks know more about the [sales] process and get them engaged earlier in their careers in the process."

RAIN Group Can Help You Improve Sales Results

Give us a call at 508-405-0438, send us an email at info@raingroup.com, or [fill out our contact form](#) to learn how we can help you improve the sales results of your team.