

Case Study: CPA Firm Increases Close Rates by Continually Improving Its Business Development Skills

Wolf & Company, P.C. is a leading regional certified public accounting and business consulting firm founded in 1911. Today the company has 175 employees with offices in Boston and Springfield, Massachusetts, and Albany, New York. The firm provides clients with assurance, tax, and risk management services, business consulting, and WolfPAC Integrated Risk Management® software.

The firm's long history and specialized industry expertise helped it develop a deep understanding of its clients and their businesses. However, that same long history also meant the firm might not be prepared for a changing and increasingly competitive business environment.

The approach of the firm's 100-year anniversary had motivated the partners to take a hard look at the firm.

Wolf retained RAIN Group in a variety of areas to grow the firm, a major component of which was to strengthen business development.

Solution:

As a member of Wolf's executive committee, Jerry Gagne was responsible for the firm's marketing initiatives and business development strategy. Gagne was so pleased with RAIN Group's previous work with the firm that it was natural for him to tap the company to help Wolf improve its business development process.

Develop a Customized Business Development Curriculum

RAIN Group developed a learning and development program for Wolf that included [sales training](#), as well as individual [sales coaching](#) to equip the firm's seller-doers to bring in new business and cross-sell and up-sell existing clients.

The business development skills of senior professionals were assessed using the [Rainmaker Assessment](#). This helped pinpoint the areas where individuals and the organization needed improvement. Training and coaching programs were then customized to meet these specific needs.

RAIN Group delivered in-house training sessions to senior professionals to develop their baseline rainmaking skills in creating happy and loyal clients, relationship building, needs analysis, cross-selling, and up-selling.

Client: Wolf & Company

Industry: Certified Public Accounting

Services: Sales Training and Coaching

Challenges:

- Create a culture of business development in a traditional professional services environment
- Meet the varied skills needs of a range of professionals

Solutions:

- Conduct a Rainmaker Assessment to determine skills needs
- Develop a business development training curriculum to complement an in-house training program
- Deliver individual, personalized coaching

Results:

- Increased close rates
- Strengthened business development process
- Improved business development skills including pipeline management, relationship building, public speaking, and proposal writing

Deliver Targeted Individual Coaching for Best Results

In addition to these group training sessions, individuals received personal one-on-one coaching for a six-month period. The coaching was structured as a three-party relationship—between the coach, the individual, and their department head—and allowed the person being coached to identify the skills they wanted help with.

For example, one person's goals included writing better proposals, another person wanted help managing his pipeline and making calls, and another wanted to improve his ability to establish and foster close relationships.

Individuals were also coached on identifying, developing and executing public speaking opportunities.

"Knowing what to do isn't necessarily the hard part," says Gagne, "but having a coach is important to pushing you to actually do it."

Create a Cadre of Rainmakers

Using the results of the Rainmaker Assessment, Wolf prepared its professionals to become evangelists and technicians. The evangelists were trained for public speaking and webinar delivery; the technicians were trained for writing and communicating on technical topics.

Having a cadre of senior professionals with business development experience and expertise would allow Wolf to act on opportunities faster and deploy their staff to support the firm's position as a thought leader.

Results:

"What RAIN Group helped us do is focus on our core competencies," says Gagne. "They've done a really great job for us. We've worked with them over the past five years now to develop our business development training curriculum."

In addition to making a commitment to maintain an in-house learning and development program, Wolf brings in RAIN Group every year to deliver training and coaching to reinforce its culture of business development.

According to Gagne, the training and coaching has strengthened their business development process, prepared them to write better proposals, and raised their close rates. "Did it deliver a return? Absolutely," says Gagne. Creating a business development culture is "a journey," he says, "and [RAIN Group] is helping us along in that journey."

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.