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Rainmaker Q&A: Kaufman Legal Group's Gary Winuk

Law360, New York (August 29, 2016, 4:11 PM ET) -- Gary S. Winuk, managing attorney of Kaufman Legal Group's Sacramento, California, office is focused on providing campaign and governmental ethics advice to candidates, elected officials, ballot measure campaigns and other political entities.

He is a recognized expert in the field and gives frequent lectures and media commentary on these issues, in addition to servicing as an adjunct professor on campaign and ethics issues at McGeorge School of Law.

Before entering private law practice, Winuk was the chief of the Enforcement Division at the Fair Political Practices Commission from 2009 to 2015. He prosecuted numerous major cases at the FPPC and was named one of the California Lawyer Attorneys of the Year by California Lawyer Magazine in 2013.



Gary S. Winuk

Additionally, he was previously appointed by former California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger as the chief deputy director and general counsel of the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and also previously served as special assistant to the cabinet secretary for homeland security issues in the office of former California Governor Gray Davis.

Q: What skill was most important for you in becoming a rainmaker?

A: Developing an outstanding professional reputation is a key to gaining clients. People want to hire someone who is viewed as one of the best in their field and there is no substitute for substance and results. Coupled with good networking and being active in the practice area, this is sure to bring positive results.

Q: How do you prepare a pitch for a potential new client?

A: It is very important to learn about the potential client's business and legal needs as much as possible before you meet with them. Utilizing the internet and other contacts that are familiar with the potential new client are key to obtaining the information you need to prepare. Also, discussing your meeting strategy with colleagues and peers is always a good professional habit.

Q: Share an example of a time when landing a client was especially difficult, and how you handled it.

A: Rejection is always difficult for anyone to take. But it is inevitable for almost anyone who is in private practice. The key is to always handle rejection with grace and maintain lines of communication. I did this with a potential client who went another direction at first and, down the line when circumstances changed, they circled back to me and I earned their business. Always keep a long-term view of your relationships with potential clients.

Q: What should aspiring rainmakers focus on when beginning their law careers?

A: There are two keys to becoming a rainmaker. First is networking. This is not just meeting people but staying in contact and maintaining a relationship. This could be sending them an email to update them on a new law in which they may be interested or including them in trainings you perform and articles you write.

Second is developing a top-notch professional reputation by putting in the time and effort to become an accomplished attorney in your area of law. This takes time and there are no shortcuts. And also remember that how you conduct yourself with your peers and opposing counsel will play a big role in how your reputation develops.

Q: What's the most challenging aspect of remaining a rainmaker?

A: Being a rainmaker requires constant time and effort. All attorneys are very busy with caseloads, maintaining continuing education requirements, and administrative tasks. Sometimes we even have personal lives. So being disciplined and making the time to develop and maintain relationships can be challenging. But it is crucial to continuing to be able to bring in new business.

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