

COMPETITIVE EDGE: CORPORATE RAIN, INC.



Timothy Askew, founder of Corporate Rain Inc. in New Rochelle, helps clients win major sales contracts.

Former actor brings on the rain

By DAVID J. GLENN

Timothy Askew's New Rochelle-based company promises to make it rain.

He's not doing any dances or seeding any clouds. He works to make the kind of rain that flows green for corporations.

Askew founded Corporate Rain, Inc. eight years ago to help clients win major sales contracts.

"Particularly in a down economy, companies don't want to commit to long-term hiring of high-level executives (for a particular sales push). We do all the preliminary work" to prepare for a major potential sale, Askew said.

Corporate Rain now has about 50 clients, Askew said, including AIG, AT&T, Deloitte & Touche, Con Edison and Street.com.

"We were one of his first clients," Kenneth Makovsky, president of Makovsky & Co. corporate public relations, told the Business Journal. "They did a great job for us. I think very highly of Tim as a sales leader."

Makovsky said that about 5 percent of the leads generated by Corporate Rain over the four years of their business relationship resulted in sales closings, bringing in about \$200,000 a year in revenue to Makovsky & Co. in New York City.

Askew was an unlikely corporate rainmaker. He has degrees in philosophy and education, and has been a teacher, social worker and a minister. He even had an acting stint – playing "Steve," a tennis pro, on the soap opera "Another World" from 1980 to 1981.

More recently, he was a Broadway producer. Although he wasn't very successful at that – "I spent a lot of money not getting plays on," he said – he came into contact with many chief executive officers and found that he was adept at high-level sales.

When he realized the producer gig was not working out, he decided he didn't want to return to acting and started a new company to help clients with executive-level sales.

His own sales haven't been shabby. In the startup year, the company had revenues of only \$60,000, but then doubled every year until it reached about \$2 million last year, Askew said. Such figures generally don't double when they reach six digits, but increases are projected, he said.

Askew stresses that he and the roughly 40 associates who work for him are truthful when they work to set up the sale.

"To be successful in business, it's more than having a good product – you have to tell the truth," he said. "We emphasize ethics above success."

Askew, his wife, Patti, and their 19-month-old, Truitt Rose, live in New Rochelle.

Although he's the founder and chief executive officer of Corporate Rain, Askew describes it as a "company of equals." His associates work from different locations and have a fair amount of independence.

"I try not to hire anyone who isn't better than me," he said.