

EPISODE SUMMARY:

In this episode of the Rainmaker Podcast, host Gui Costin sits down with Christopher Zook, founder and chairman of CAZ Investments, for an in-depth conversation on building a capital formation powerhouse rooted in intentional language, disciplined processes, and unwavering alignment. With over 30 years of investing experience, Zook shares his journey from brokerage beginnings at PaineWebber and Lehman Brothers to launching CAZ Investments—driven by a goal he set in 1991 to start his own firm within a decade, a promise he fulfilled nearly to the day.

At CAZ, everything begins with personal capital. The firm identifies thematic opportunities, invests their own capital, and invites others to join alongside them—creating a culture of alignment captured in their mantra, “lead with alignment.” CAZ now manages over \$9 billion in assets, up from \$350 million in 2013, through 100% organic growth.

A major theme of the episode is language and positioning. Zook emphasizes the importance of words in shaping perception. His team doesn’t “pitch” or share “decks”—they educate, advise, and present thoughtfully crafted materials. Their business development team is known as “Capital Formation,” reflecting the consultative, relationship-based approach they bring to investors.

Zook shares how he built a capital formation team modeled on his own early sales experience, hiring in waves and fostering peer cohorts to build camaraderie and consistency. Their process includes detailed metrics—outreach volume, presentation count, conversion rates, and line depth with investors. Zook stresses the value of cultivating multiple lines with clients, which statistically improves retention and referrals.

The team operates under a three-pillar framework: find new investors, deepen relationships with existing ones, and turn clients into raving fans. Zook underscores the power of consistent communication, proactive outreach during market volatility, and delivering standout service when most others retreat.

CAZ has long embraced CRM, becoming an early adopter of Salesforce in 2005. Zook believes that the right CRM setup—customized for usability and leveraged for reporting—can drive a competitive, transparent, and merit-based sales culture. Dashboards, stack rankings, and responsiveness metrics keep the team focused and accountable.

Zook also shares the story of co-authoring *The Holy Grail of Investing* with Tony Robbins and closes with timeless advice: success is built on hard work and attention to detail. For young professionals and leaders alike, this episode is a masterclass in building a high-integrity, high-performing investment firm from the ground up.