



THE NEW ELLIS GROUP

Monday Monday

Connecting the Dots with Karen Kaplowitz



*Helping you create and reinforce the habits of successful career building,
gleaned from my work as a business development strategist, trainer and coach*

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Co-ed versus single sex marketing. Diversity is a well-entrenched marketing strategy. Gone are just the all male golf tournaments. Women entertain women clients at spas, cooking classes, and poker tournaments. Sidley Austin women invited women clients to assemble kits for homeless children for overnight camp, a great “feel good” event. Diverse lawyers have special purpose bar groups like Minority Corporate Counsel Association and the National Association of Women Lawyers. But once diverse lawyers create bonds with diverse clients and prospects, how well are firms’ supporting their marketing efforts? And do diverse lawyers reach out for help to other lawyers to go the homestretch? Great relationships are necessary but not sufficient for new business. Even if a woman partner has a great relationship with a woman general counsel, if the company needs expertise she does not have, either the woman partner teams up with other lawyers in her firm or she is out of luck.

If your firm is confused about why diverse lawyers with great relationships are not generating more work, consider the following:

- Is the firm providing training in marketing skills to diverse lawyers?
- Are diverse lawyers routinely included in pitches where they will get experience?
- Are diverse lawyers encouraged to bring in non-diverse lawyers to their pitches?
- Does the firm allow diverse lawyers who are new rainmakers the same flexibility on discounts and alternative fees that more seasoned rainmakers get?
- Is the firm offering support to diverse lawyers to leverage their relationships?

Example: By serving on a non-profit board, a woman associate got to know an in house lawyer of the same vintage. The in house lawyer was impressed with the associate’s work on the board: her good judgment; knowledge of the local courts; and leadership. The two often met before meetings for coffee or had dinner afterwards. When the associate finally asked whether she could be of help to her friend’s company, the in house lawyer said she had expected the question but was uncomfortable approaching her boss who had used the same law firm for years. She also said that even though she could vouch for her friend’s excellence, she did not think her boss would consider hiring an associate to do work for the company.

The associate continued their friendship but did not pursue business from the company. At her year end review, when asked about her business prospects, she told this story. The partners then suggested she team up with a partner who had clients in the same industry and then propose a four way meeting. That worked like a charm. The associate kicked herself afterwards that she had not done it earlier.

Are you so enamored of your diversity strategy that you fail to team up diverse and non-diverse lawyers when appropriate? If you are a diverse lawyer, are you cutting yourself off from opportunities by not including non-diverse lawyers when you need them?