



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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What's In It for ...Them. How many times have you met with someone who was very enthusiastic about introducing you to a potential client who just never followed through? How often were the people who disappointed you people you assumed were already on the same team, like partners in your firm? When people offer to make introductions on your behalf, don't take for granted that they will follow through. Several factors are good measures of the strength of the commitment: the quality of your relationships with your sources and what's in it for them. As you size up the people from whom you hope to get business ask yourself these questions:

- Have you devoted as much attention to what they might need from you as you have to what you expect from them?
- Do you know what they need, in business or in their personal lives?
- Do you have a process in place to discover what they need?
- Have they given you any indication that their needs are not being met?
- Are you in a position directly or through others to help them meet their needs?
- How could you help them in ways that are easy and useful to you?

Before approaching any priority sources, be sure to consider each of these issues.

Example: The practice group leader arranged a great tour of the firm's offices for the new lateral partner, selecting partners who had clients who might need her help. After the tour, everyone exchanged enthusiastic emails about the meetings. Based on her new partners' apparent willingness to introduce her to their clients, the new lateral had great expectations. Then nothing happened; no assignments and no meetings with clients. The lateral partner did not think much of it until she concluded a major matter and realized her pipeline was dry. When she looked at her list of priority targets, many were firm clients controlled by the partners she met on her tour.

Before going back to them, the new lateral reviewed what she learned about the partners she met and tried to identify opportunities she could create for them. She created a matrix with clients she brought with her, listing where they had facilities in states where her new firm had offices. She also took into account her existing clients' needs in other practice areas. Then she planned a second tour, based on her introducing her new partners to her clients. When she invited her new partners to meet her clients and contacts in their areas, she also asked them if it made sense for them to do the same while she was there. This time she got action, especially from the lawyers who needed work themselves who were grateful to meet her clients and happy to have meeting her as an excuse to arrange meetings with their clients. The people who helped the most were the lawyers in the same boat she was, not the biggest rainmakers in the firm who could have helped her but had less incentive to do so.

Are you creating enough incentives for people to engage with you? Are you planning every interaction with the people who could help you with an eye to how you can help them and devoting as much time to exploring what you have to give as what you have to get?