



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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Right Time. Right Place. Right Group. Is it challenging to sort out which organizations to join, which invitations to accept, and generally how to spend your time and money to get the most marketing bang for the buck? Does your firm expect a detailed justification and short term ROI for every marketing dollar you request? In evaluating your priorities, here are some factors to take into account:

- Are your clients already involved in the organization or the event?
- Could you engage your clients to participate?
- Are you likely to meet prospective clients?
- Do you care if your competitors are also involved?
- Does the organization present speaking, writing and leadership opportunities?
- Do you have a colleague or contact that can help you advance in the organization?
- What does the opportunity cost in time or money relative to other similar things?

If significant clients encourage you to be involved in a group, it is a no brainer, especially if you will get access to new people in your client's law department. If there are no clients involved but the organization provides access to the kinds of clients you represent, it may also be worthwhile. But if a group is saturated with competitors, unless a client urged your involvement, you may do better elsewhere.

Example: You have done work in your niche for a client for many years and have a great relationship with the in house lawyers who manage your work. The work flow is modest but steady. But you have not found ways to expand the client relationship to other practice areas; your liaison has not helped you meet other in house lawyers or helped your firm get invited to respond to an RFP in another practice.

When you receive an invitation to attend an event honoring the client's general counsel, your first inclination is just to send a small contribution and not attend. You don't want to hassle with your firm's management to try to extract marketing dollars given that the client is a small firm client and you can't imagine meeting anyone useful anyway.

But when your client presses you to support the event, you reconsider. You invite another practice group which you know has targeted the client as a prospect to contribute to the cost of a sponsorship. They agree and offer to help plan a strategy. You invite lawyers and business people from the client to attend as your guests. You arrange to visit your client at the company headquarters either before or after the event. You specifically ask your client for the names of attendees and ask her to introduce you. Beforehand, you research the backgrounds of each person you expect to meet. You get to the event early so can meet the general counsel and others before they are swarmed by other lawyers.

Are you moving quickly to respond to client invitations which present opportunities for you to expand relationships outside the narrow circle in which you have been working? With good planning, you can turn "obligatory" events into great marketing opportunities.