



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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Sharing the Burden. Does your firm rely on a small number of major rainmakers? If you serve as a principal rainmaker in your firm and the burden of supporting a practice group or an office or even the whole firm is weighing you down, especially in this tough economy, consider whether you can share the burden:

- Do the lawyers who will lose the most if you cannot continue at the same pace realize how vulnerable they are?
- Have you been candid with other lawyers about the pressure on you?
- Does your firm have a “succession plan” in effect for key rainmakers?
- Can you take advantage now of some of the steps your succession plan requires in the event of the death or retirement of key rainmakers?
- Has your generation of rainmakers trained the next generation to handle client development to your satisfaction?
- Are the incentives in the firm aligned to encourage others to get involved?
- If you feel that other people are not carrying their fair share of the responsibility for generating work, have you helped them formulate a plan for doing so?

Example: A senior partner was distressed to learn that a new partner, who he had groomed for partnership, had agreed to talk to another firm when approached by a recruiter. When the senior lawyer asked the new partner how he could even consider such a move, the younger lawyer explained that he was feeling very vulnerable because the senior lawyer was responsible for all of his work and was obviously struggling to keep everyone busy. He said that he assumed that the senior lawyer was not interested in his help in client development because he did not include him in client lunches and had not encouraged him to get involved in business development. He explained that he had been approached by a firm whose lawyers he had gotten to know when they were on the other side of a matter and for whom he had great respect.

The senior partner confided that he was under tremendous pressure to keep the firm afloat and would really appreciate the new partner's help in maintaining certain key client relationships. He invited the new partner to team with him to nurture and expand clients with whom he had enjoyed success and to create a multigenerational approach to the client, using the younger lawyer's contacts with his contemporaries at the clients in the process. Both were relieved and excited to be collaborating and continuing their own relationship.

If you are concerned about your firm's reliance on a small cadre of rainmakers, can you lighten their load by creating more awareness on the part of the people who will be most affected if the rainmakers run out of business?