



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*

Volume 4, Issue 21

October 18, 2010

Lateralize Yourself. Lateral partner moves, like second marriages, are enticing. Starting over, with heightened status and a clean slate, as a peer of a new group of successful lawyers, can be compelling. As in marriages, it is sometimes easier to adopt new approaches in the context of a new relationship. Former partners are often surprised at the new talents of their old colleagues. [“He never did that for us.”] But lateral moves also involve significant loss and great risk. Laterals cannot assume their new colleagues will have the same strengths as their old ones. Lateral partners who joined new firms in 2007 or 2008 faced the vulnerability of short-term relationships during the economic crisis. If you are itching for the thrill of a lateral move but remain risk averse, consider “lateralizing” yourself without changing firms by these moves:

- Organize a tour of new office locations your firm has acquired to meet the new people who practice in your field or have clients in industries you serve.
- Ask new colleagues to introduce you to clients who may need your services and be prepared to offer to reciprocate with introductions to your clients.
- Update your online bio.
- Do CLE inside your firm to familiarize other lawyers with your expertise.
- Take advantage of firm-wide or practice group retreats to meet new people and renew old relationships.

Even if you are not tempted to move, if your firm has grown with laterals or through mergers, you may need to make an effort to connect with your new “blended family” in any case.

Example: You are envious when your firm extends royal treatment to laterals with organized tours to meet firm rainmakers and clients to trump their wares. You decide to replicate as much of the process as possible. When your firm acquires a firm in a new region, you find an excuse to be in the area, preferably to meet with clients nearby or to vacation in the area. You alert the relevant lawyers ahead of time. If possible, you offer to introduce them to your clients in their region. In return you ask them to organize meetings for you to meet some of their clients and the lawyers in the group. If you are on vacation, actually or ostensibly, you arrange to stop by.

Either way when you meet, you explore what clients in your area they would like to meet and offer to be one of their hosts when they visit your office. By making yourself familiar to your new colleagues, you are positioning yourself to be a “go to lawyer” when they need help identifying lawyers in your area to do work on their matters, even if they have other formal procedures they can follow to find assistance.

If you are restless or need to extend your network of professional contacts, are you willing to consider “lateralizing” yourself without changing firms?

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