



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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Evolution Not Revolution: Making Small Modifications to Your Marketing. You formulated an ambitious business plan at the beginning of the year but it has been sitting on your desk. Instead of waiting till you have lots of time to start executing your plan, consider committing to some immediate small steps. Can you tweak your schedule to allow for any of the following steps?

- You have a short list of your best prospects. Can you call one of them this week?
- When you receive an email inquiry for a lawyer referral can you refer it to someone who has referred work to you in the past to show your appreciation and stimulate more referrals?
- If one of your goals is to get active in a local business group, can you call someone you know who is active in the group to explore how to get involved in their programs?
- You plan to raise the subject of alternative fees with clients this year before they do. Can you bring up the subject with one of the clients you talk to this week?
- Can you ask someone in your firm to partner with you to keep each other accountable and on track in executing your business plans?

Is there one of these approaches to which you would commit yourself? If you wait till you have a lot of time to focus comprehensively on business development, you may end up with a lot of idle time.

Example: Last year, you went through a traumatic period when your principal contact at your largest client informed you that a new general counsel was overhauling the company's roster of law firms. The new general counsel planned to slash the number of firms in favor of a preferred provider list of firms which would make price concessions in exchange for guaranteed levels of work. You went through several months of re-engineering your major client relationship, negotiating first with your firm management over the terms of an alternative fee proposal. With the help of your client contact, you were able to structure a proposal that landed you among the small cadre of preferred providers at your client.

This year, you plan to meet with your principal contacts at each of your major clients to anticipate changes in the relationship before they are thrust on you. You have committed to yourself to tackle at least one client per month but you haven't gotten started yet. Instead of waiting to set up formal meetings to discuss the issue, you develop a set of questions about the pressures your clients are experiencing this year from their own managements. You raise the subject when you are on the phone or at meetings with clients in the ordinary course of your work. When your clients tell you that the subject of alternative fees is one they have been charged with exploring, you offer to meet with them to discuss the issue further, with a keen eye on how to make your contacts look good to their management for taking initiative on the subject. You also probe about other concerns like getting more consistent results in some areas of your work and addressing some new problems.

Are you willing to commit this week to take some small steps in furtherance of your business plan for 2011? If those steps work, will you be more confident about executing the rest of your plan?