



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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The Rainmaker Diet. You are what you “eat” applies to rainmaking success as well as to diets. Nature provides a good example in queen bees. Scientists reported this year that queen bees are made, not born. All honeybees eat royal jelly for a few days after birth but only bees that are fed royal jelly continuously become queen bees. If you are a lawyer who aspires to becoming a rainmaker, try to create a diet rich in the “royal jelly” of business opportunities:

- Show your enthusiasm for business development activities early in your career.
- Volunteer to organize and present CLE and become active in organizations in which the most successful lawyers in your firm are active.
- Ask senior lawyers who are active in organizations to sponsor you there so your ascent through committee or officer ranks is assured and accelerated.
- Pay attention to where business comes from. Understand who in your firm has key client relationships, how they built them and how they nurture them.
- Encourage successful rainmakers to let you see them in action.

If you are a firm leader who wants to create new rainmakers, consider nurturing young lawyers.

- Encourage early interest in business development.
- Encourage senior lawyers to mentor junior lawyers and to include them in client relationships.
- Reward senior lawyers who mentor junior lawyers with at least recognition for their efforts or even better, appropriate bonuses.
- Consider special business development training and support for the most promising lawyers.

Example: When a major rainmaker departed for greener pastures at another law firm, his old firm’s leadership quickly mobilized to try to retain some of his clients. The firm’s leaders soon discovered that the star had controlled key client relationships so tightly that there were few remaining lawyers who could reach out to the clients. The leaders learned that even when the star had brought in lawyers in other offices to work on matters for his clients, that he had used them in a limited way, as “local counsel” rather than handing over real responsibility so they could cultivate their own relationships with clients.

In response to this loss, the firm’s leadership encouraged each client relationship partner to bring in other promising lawyers to manage significant relationships. The firm strengthened its existing succession planning for key clients by requiring each relationship manager to identify and evaluate other lawyers involved in managing client relationships.

Is your firm providing the “royal jelly” young lawyers need to be nurtured as the next generation of rainmakers and safeguarding against too much concentration of control of client relationships at the same time?