



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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Maximizing the Value of Post-Merger Partner Retreats. Even though many partner retreats have become casualties of the recession, firm mergers tend to be one circumstance in which firms are still willing to invest in a retreat. If your firm has recently merged and you are invited to a retreat, it is critical to have a strategy to take maximum advantage of the event. Prepare beforehand, by answering some of these questions, so you can use the retreat to initiate concrete new business opportunities:

- What new capabilities do new partners bring to your firm? Which ones have potential value to clients whose work you control in the firm?
- For new partners who interest you, can you learn what clients they represent and what types of successes they have had?
- If someone new stands out as a potential resource for a client you control, can you find out who the client uses now so you can ask your new partner about the competition?
- For new partners from whom you would like introductions to their clients, do you have clients to whom you could introduce them in exchange?

Once you obtain information about your new partners, you can prioritize the ones who appear to have the most potential to you. For priority people, reach out to them before the retreat to say you are looking forward to meeting them and why. For the highest priority people, consider having a telephone conversation in advance and planning a specific time to meet privately at the retreat.

In a merger situation, try to find at least one person from the new wing of the firm who can introduce you to other new people. Also encourage other people in your practice group and office to do similar advance preparation.

Example: For an upcoming post-merger partner retreat, the firm planned sessions for each practice group and sessions on matters of general interest like the firm's performance, liabilities and growth plans. Everyone was encouraged to be sociable and meet as many new people as possible. You went further. You suggested that your practice group circulate a list in advance of its top 20 clients, including clients derived from the merger, with the amount of billings and the relationship partner or partners. From that list, you identified several new clients who did not use the firm in your region. You then got information about the new partners who controlled each of these clients, including their specialties. You then picked clients you control that you could offer to introduce to them. You approached each relationship partner in advance of the retreat to express your interest in meeting them for the purpose of introducing them to your clients. For the most receptive of your new partners, you made plans to meet at the retreat; in one instance you agreed to arrive a few hours early; for another you agreed to sit with them at a particular dinner.

As a result of your advance planning, you were able to initiate discussions at the retreat about several specific client opportunities.

Are you taking the necessary steps in advance of partner retreats to accelerate the pace at which you get to know new partners who have joined your firm through mergers or lateral moves?