



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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**Using the Whole Team, Not Just the Stars, Even In a Clutch.** The Giants' final winning rally of Super Bowl 2012 was thrilling and inspirational. Quarterback Eli Manning chose Mario Manningham, the third most celebrated receiver on the team, not one of the top two receivers, Hakeem Nicks and Victor Cruz, to receive a critical pass with just a few minutes to go when the team was behind, 17-15. The Giants took advantage of less coverage of Manningham and the run was successful. How many times have you reverted to old strategies of using the star players on your team in critical situations, like a major pitch to a new client or cross-examination of a key witness? The next time you are staffing your team for important tasks, ask yourself these questions:

- Are there junior people on the team who have the talent to do the job?
- Are there benefits, like diversity or the element of surprise, from using team members other than the stars?
- Are you sufficiently confident to take a chance on someone other than the acknowledged stars?
- Are junior people getting enough critical experience to build the team's bench strength and to create the next generation of rainmakers?

It is often hard for the stars, whether they are the rainmakers in the firm or the winning trial lawyers, to make room for other players on the team to shine, especially when the stakes are very high. Is there a quarterback on your team who can make the tough calls on how to staff critical tasks?

**Example:** After a firm spent several years cultivating a relationship with a major prospective client, the company's general counsel invited the firm to bid on a major matter. The relationship partner had to assemble a pitch team. In considering who to include, the relationship partner wanted to present a group that had experience working together, to show cohesiveness. The relationship partner also wanted a group that could demonstrate a lot of success and prominence. He went to a group of lawyers who had worked on the last several similar matters and invited them to participate. He considered the proposed group his "first team." When he realized that the group was not diverse, he invited a lone woman lawyer in the practice group who had not been on any of the prior teams to attend the pitch. He did not initially give her any role in the pitch. During one of the prep meetings for the pitch, the woman on the team disclosed that she knew several lawyers from the company who would be at the meeting and offered to handle one part of the pitch. She also asked if the team was concerned that if she did not play an active role she would look like "window dressing." The team leader knew he made the right decision to give his female colleague a role when the pitch team arrived at the client's offices and one of the in-house lawyers welcomed the woman on the team with a big hug.

Are you confident enough, even in clutch situations, to take advantage of the full range of your team members so you can benefit from their diversity of experience and build a strong bench?

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