



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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Go Where the Clients Are: Trade Associations. Would you feel like a kid in a candy store if you were one of a handful of lawyers in a group of several hundred business owners in an industry in which you frequently work? If you haven't tapped trade associations as a rich source of access to potential clients, here is a process for evaluating whether a trade association strategy would be valuable for you:

- If you have clients who cluster in particular industry groups, do your clients belong to industry trade associations? Are any of them leaders of the groups?
- Can you talk to your clients about whether there is a mechanism for you to participate in their trade associations, such as a legal advisory board?
- How saturated is the trade association with lawyers?
- If a primary way to participate is through sponsorships, is the cost reasonable and within your budget?
- Can you attend a meeting of a local or state chapter of the trade association or better still, arrange to speak at a local or state chapter meeting?

Example: A significant client asked you if your firm would be willing to provide pro bono counsel to an industry trade association to which his company belongs. Your firm agreed to undertake a project for the trade association. As a result, you were required to make a presentation on the matter to the trade association's board of directors which was a valuable opportunity for your firm to gain exposure among key industry players. You then offered to make a presentation on the subject at the trade association's annual convention. The program had already been set for this year but you were invited to attend the convention as a guest of the trade association and you were invited to plan a presentation on your subject for the following year's convention.

You accepted the invitation to attend this year's convention and asked your client to help you take advantage of the opportunity. Your client advised you against becoming a sponsor of the meeting or hosting a booth. He said that having a booth would be more limiting than helpful for meeting people. Instead, your client invited you to join him at receptions at the convention and invited you to play golf with him. By starting your relationship with the trade association as an expert on a subject that is important to the industry, and by having the help of your client to meet key players, you got a great return on investment for your pro bono work and great introduction to industry leaders.

Are you investigating the trade associations in which your clients are active for opportunities to network more broadly in industries which interest you?

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