



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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**Integrating High Profile Laterals.** Firms often compete fiercely for the privilege of bringing in high profile lawyers who are leaving government, the bench, or business even though they generally have no clients and no recent experience in marketing themselves or a law firm. Occasionally a general counsel or in-house lawyer has assurances of work from their former companies, but that is not the norm for high profile laterals. The fact that their salaries are newsworthy, as in Kirkland & Ellis's recent success recruiting a senior SEC prosecutor, makes the stakes—and the risks—higher for integrating high profile laterals. Even when high profile laterals have significant rolodexes, the firm cannot reasonably expect them to generate work from their networks in short order. It will take time for the laterals to reestablish relationships and in some cases, people with great networks do not know how to be effective in marketing their new firm to their contacts. Particularly for former regulators or judges, the most likely way for them to generate work quickly is with help from other lawyers in the firm. An effective integration plan is therefore critical to their early success. Here are some elements to consider in planning the integration of high profile laterals:

- Before the high profile lateral's start date, does the firm have someone assigned to create a list of partners who commit to introduce the new partner to specific clients?
- Does the list include partners in addition to ones who met the lateral during the recruiting process?
- Has each such partner been asked to check their calendars for the first 30-60 days after the lateral starts for suitable existing occasions to bring along the new lateral to meet clients?
- Is the firm providing support to the lateral in refreshing or learning business development skills?
- Has the firm worked out with the lateral how his or her services will be charged to clients? If the high profile lateral's fees will be different than standard billable hours, have other partners who will be introducing the lateral to their clients been prepared for the alternative fee approach?
- Does the firm have realistic expectations on when the high profile lateral's potential will be realized?

**Example:** A former high ranking government official generated a lot of enthusiasm among partners during the recruiting process. Before a final decision was made to extend an offer to her, the firm's recruiters met with the firm's business development team and mapped out an integration plan. The integration plan included all the partners who had identified clients who might be interested in her services. The plan also included several other partners whose clients seemed like good prospects for the recruit. Before the management committee met to vote, the managing partner polled each partner whose cooperation was deemed important to the successful integration of the recruit. He asked if they would commit to work with the recruit in her first 30 to 60 days. When several partners whose participation was considered critical to the lateral's ability to succeed did not commit to early involvement with the lateral, the managing partner recommended against proceeding with the candidate.

Especially for high profile laterals whose success depends on being utilized by firm clients, does your recruiting process include a component of insuring that the partners whose timely cooperation is essential are on board?