



# 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*

Volume 8, Issue 15

July 28, 2014

**Are Business Cards Still Necessary?** Social media has changed networking in powerful ways but has not made business cards obsolete. Business cards are still the most common currency among business people for exchanging contact information. When people are interested in new people they meet, they ask for a business card. If you meet someone interesting and ask for their card, if they don't have one, there are many ways to improvise:

- You can give them two of your cards and ask them to give one back, with their contact information. This is the simplest way to proceed but requires you to carry extra cards.
- You can take out your phone, ask for their email address or phone number and send them an email or text so you immediately exchange contact information and have them in your system.
- You can ask if they are on LinkedIn or Facebook, get the name under which they are listed and go immediately to the Internet to link or friend them.

Whatever you do, if you meet people of interest who don't have a business card, do not accept an offer to take your card and get in touch with you later. Even people who are well intentioned may lose your card, forget who you are or just not follow up. It is critical to get contact information to insure your own ability to follow up. It is also important to ask people to specify their preferred method of communication.

If you are in the reverse position, and you happen not to have any business cards when you are asked for one, you can improvise along the same lines:

- You can ask for two cards, keep one, write your information on the other one and return it.
- You can offer to send an email on the spot so they have your contact info.
- You can direct them to your LinkedIn page to link with you, on the spot.
- You can offer to take their card and follow up with a note to them later. If you go this route, be sure to write on the card what you have promised to do so you don't forget the next day.

If you want to be able to follow up with people of interest, get their contact information and always follow up promptly. It is also helpful to note on their cards, and in your data base afterwards, where you met and what you discussed. If you have an assistant, you can ask your assistant to remind you to turn over new business cards after every meeting you attend so your assistant can add them to your data base and relevant mailing lists.

**Example:** A client invited you to attend a charity event at which she was being honored and promised to introduce you to some other people from her company. You got to the event early so you had a few minutes to spend with your client before she was deluged with other well-wishers. While you were standing with her, several people from her company came over and she introduced you to them, explaining that you were one of the company's "go-to" lawyers. You continued the conversation with one company executive who ran a unit for which you had not done any legal work yet. When it was time to be seated, you said you had enjoyed the conversation and asked him for a business card. He said he did not have one but that you could reach him through your client. You replied: "Here are two cards of mine. Keep one and write your email address on the back of the other one." The next day you sent him a follow up note and cc'd your client, starting a new relationship.

Even with rampant social media use, business cards remain an important business tool. Don't leave home without them but if you get stuck without a business card, feel free to improvise.