



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*

Volume 9, Issue 7

April 6, 2015

So You Made Partner. What's Next? In some cases, becoming a partner is like being a new swimmer who is thrown in the deep end of the pool without a life vest. If you find you cannot rely as a new partner on other partners for work, and you haven't developed new sources of your own from outside the firm, here are some short term and long term strategies to consider:

- Ask the firm to freeze your rates at your pre-partnership level for ongoing clients/matters so the client relationship partners are not dissuaded from continuing to use you.
- Update your mailing list and share the news broadly about your making partner.
- Encourage the firm to host a reception to congratulate you and other new partners.
- If the firm asks you to invite clients and prospects to a reception, do not pass up the chance.
- Thank each client and partner whose support helped you become a partner.
- Develop a game plan to reach out to key prospects: existing clients whose work can be expanded; former clients who have joined new organizations; and others who can refer work.
- Review your game plan with firm practice group leaders and marketing professionals. Invite them to recommend additional people you should meet and to make introductions.
- Take on a leadership role inside the firm and in at least one outside organization which will build your profile in the firm and in the legal or business community.
- Create a support system among peers and mentors in your firm to help you learn the skills you need to be successful in business development. Consider investing in a personal coach who can help you accelerate your growth to a successful partner.

If your old sources of assignments in the firm dried up when you became partner, do not delay in making known your need for more work. Especially if you are a non-equity partner who still has to prove yourself, making partner is no time to rest on your laurels.

Example: A new partner found himself with very little work to do when a major matter ended. When he spoke to several partners who had used him extensively as an associate, they explained that his rates were now too high and not suitable for new client assignments. He suggested that the firm freeze his rates at pre-partnership levels for clients with whom he had worked to create a transition period so he would be productive while looking for new sources of work at partnership rates. He also asked the two partners with whom he had worked most closely to help him to develop a business plan. He asked them to recommend a business or professional organization where he could meet new people and get good exposure and where they could help him get access to a leadership role. His plan concentrated on a few former clients who were at new companies which were not firm clients. He had stayed in touch with most of them and invited them to a reception in honor of the new partners. When some declined, he proposed other meetings. By the time his first year as a partner ended, he started feeling like a partner, responsible for finding his own work. He then recommended to the firm management that the firm offer every new partner support along the lines he had organized for himself. He also recommended to associates who were coming up for partnership that they bulk up on work to avoid the slowdown he experienced as a first-year partner.

Are you ready to be responsible for finding work when you become a partner? If your firm does not have a formal program to help new partners transition, can you create your own support group or invest in a personal coach to support you?