



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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**The Importance of Multidisciplinary Teams.** The most complex and challenging matters often require multiple skill sets. Take a significant merger transaction. The corporate lawyers bring in a whole team of other specialists: litigators to assess litigation and potential liabilities; executive compensation and benefits lawyers to blend benefits programs; labor lawyers to deal with new and old employment or union contracts; IP lawyers to evaluate IP assets and liabilities; and so on. Litigation may also require multiple skill sets; an adversary proceeding in bankruptcy may involve a litigator and a bankruptcy lawyer; IP teams often include a litigator and a patent lawyer who does not specialize in litigation. If you have developed expertise in organizing and managing multidisciplinary teams, consider whether you are marketing that expertise effectively:

- Do you have a list of the most complex matters you have handled with multidisciplinary teams?
- Are they included in your representative matters in your bio on your website?
- Is the list contained in marketing materials available to you and others in the firm?
- Have you met with other people on the team with whom you regularly work to identify new opportunities for the team to pursue, inside your firm or with clients?
- Does the team do any speaking, writing, or programs together?
- Does the team meet regularly to discuss improving its effectiveness on future engagements?
- If you work frequently on teams with other practice groups, are you identified as a part of those groups? Should you be?
- Does the firm leadership recognize the value of your team?
- Do the recruiting people understand the dynamics of the team so they can introduce you to potential laterals who might fit on your team?

Having experience working on complex matters with great teams is a huge asset for lawyers and not always fully appreciated.

**Example:** A dispute between owners of a closely held company arose when the company's sales plummeted and the owners did not agree on the path forward. The corporate lawyer who had been working with the company saw that litigation was likely to erupt especially because one of the owners viewed himself as an oppressed minority shareholder. The corporate lawyer was concerned at many levels including the prospect that if litigation occurred, the firm might not represent either side. The corporate lawyer assembled a team of colleagues to brainstorm approaches to address the client's crisis. Included was a bankruptcy lawyer; a trusts and estates lawyer who did buy/sell agreements; a litigator who handled cases involving oppression of minority shareholders; and an IP lawyer who specialized in licensing agreements. The team recommended that they meet with the owners, and their separate counsel, and lay out the reality of war between them including possible bankruptcy of the company and harm to the company's brand. The owners agreed to meet with the team who laid out as neutrally as possible some of the adverse effects of war. As a result of the intervention, the owners decided after consulting with their own lawyers, to sell the company and retained the firm to hire an investment banker to assist in the process.

If you have not only mastered your own discipline but have also served on effective multidisciplinary teams in your firm, have you fully exploited the value of your multidisciplinary expertise in marketing yourself and your firm?

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