



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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When Clients Are Up for Grabs. If you have sensibly given up active pursuit of [fruitless prospects](#) that does not mean you should completely stop paying attention to them. There are many changes which may occur which may make them promising prospects again. Even if you have removed a prospect from your active, priority list, you still want to be on the alert for these kinds of changed circumstances:

- Your prospect's company has been acquired
- Your prospect has changed companies
- One of your prospect's principal outside lawyers has made a move to a new firm
- One of your prospect's main outside firms has merged
- An outside lawyer for your prospect has retired or died
- Something goes seriously wrong in one of the prospect's company's matters
- One of its regular outside firms asks for a waiver of a conflict so the firm can be adverse to the prospect

Each of these situations may impact your prospects' relationships with their outside counsel and cause them to reconsider the relationships. You need to have a plan to stay in touch with your secondary prospects and to be on the alert for these kinds of changes so you can take appropriate action if you see an opportunity. If you haven't stayed in touch, you run the risk of looking like a vulture swooping in.

Example: The associate general counsel of a company is a law school classmate with whom you served on Law Review. You have had a close, respectful relationship since law school but your classmate has been candid that her general counsel is not interested in expanding the list of approved law firms and there is no way she can hire your firm. You have accepted that fact but have stayed in touch. When you read in *American Lawyer* that one of the company's main outside lawyers has made a move, you gently inquire whether that is a problem. Your classmate says the transition was handled smoothly and there is no problem even though there were slightly higher rates at the new firm. When you read a few years later that the same outside lawyer has made another move, you again gently inquire and again your classmate says she assumes that the general counsel's relationship with the outside lawyer is still intact. When you see your classmate at an alumni event a few months later, you are pleasantly surprised to hear that she has a greenlight to invite you to meet the general counsel. When you ask what happened, your classmate explains that the general counsel got upset when his latest law firm refused to accept the outside lawyer's recommendation that the firm write down fees after they got a mixed result in a matter.

It pays to stay alert to changes of circumstance which may cause prospective clients to reevaluate their loyalty to existing outside counsel. If you have your antenna out for such opportunities, you can be ready to jump in and take advantage of new opportunities.