



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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Passive versus Active Marketing. There are many professionals who chafe at the idea that they should become active marketers. “I didn’t go to law school to become a salesman” is still a common refrain. Professionals who are uncomfortable about selling their services but realistic about the necessity to generate business sometimes opt for more passive approaches to business development. They do a lot of public speaking and writing for example but steer clear of one-to-one marketing. They get great results for clients and wait for them to recommend them to others. If you tend toward a more passive approach to marketing, consider whether you can tweak your approach in some of these ways:

- Continue to emphasize public speaking but become an organizer of the programs so you can ask clients to speak alongside you. Clients may appreciate visibility too.
- Use public speaking engagements as occasions to invite clients and prospects to attend.
- Send copies of articles you publish with a personal note to relevant clients and prospects; do not just rely on your law firm’s mass distribution of your articles or on posting the article on your website or on social media.
- Make it easier to meet people in the audience. Make yourself available for questions after your presentation or offer the audience 3 x 5 cards to write down questions they would prefer not to ask publicly, with contact information, and offer to answer them privately later by phone.
- If your firm is hosting a program, a reception or a holiday event, instead of just attending, use the occasion to arrange an introduction between a specific client and another lawyer in the firm.
- If you are attending a conference, organize meetings/meals in advance even if you assume you will run into people in the ordinary course of the conference. Even if the people you invite to meet prefer to see you at a public event rather than one on one, you have shown interest and heightened the interaction.

Example: A young partner was fortunate in having a mentor who was a known leader in their field. The mentor had excelled by writing prolifically, speaking in prominent conferences, authoring a textbook on her specialty, and getting great results for clients. The mentor was also adept in attracting media when her matters were newsworthy. The mentor had become a major rainmaker even though she was introverted and shied away from engaging personally with clients and prospective clients. The mentor opened the door to many opportunities for the young partner. She arranged for the young partner to join key bar committees and to co-author many publications. Even though the mentor was generous in sharing origination credit with him, the young partner became frustrated when his efforts did not generate new clients. With guidance from another partner, he added more one-to-one marketing. He organized informal breakfasts at the firm for clients to discuss among themselves issues in their industry. He made a point of inviting his peers within client law departments to attend. He organized dinners and drinks for clients for himself, sometimes with his mentor, when they were at conferences. In addition to building a reputation as his mentor’s protégé, the young partner also worked hard at building relationships which led to new work.

Traditional marketing strategies do work but in a very competitive legal marketplace, relying on strictly passive tools like writing and speaking may not be sufficient. There are many ways even introverts can become more proactive and more successful.