



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 10, Issue 7

March 28, 2016

Seeking the Right Coach. If your income is flat this year because you did not meet your business development goals last year and you are considering getting help, you might start the process with two questions. First, have you identified what is holding you back? Secondly, have you looked inside your firm for people who can help you? To pinpoint what is holding you back, here are some questions:

- Are you having trouble getting in front of enough good prospective clients?
- Do you feel that you lack the communication skills to initiate discussions about business with potential clients?
- Are you having difficulty obtaining sufficient support for business development from your firm?
- Are you running into roadblocks from conflicts posed by other firm clients?
- Is it hard to make time for business development in your schedule?
- Do you have an effective behavior plan with the commitment and discipline to follow through and track how you're doing against your plans?
- Do you feel a lack of confidence is holding you back?

When you have identified the most persistent and vexing issues you face, you will be better prepared to seek out someone to support you. Before you look outside your firm, consider whether you are walking past someone in your firm everyday who would be a good resource.

- Do you have a practice group leader who is able and willing to help you tackle these issues?
- Are there successful rainmakers in the firm who have offered to mentor other lawyers?
- Is there business development staff with time to work regularly with you individually?
- Are there other lawyers in the same predicament with whom you could band together?
- Are there associates with social media skills who would jump at the chance to support you?
- Could your secretary play an expanded role in supporting your efforts?

If you don't find what you need inside your firm or if there is a reason you would prefer to get help elsewhere, for privacy reasons for example, you can then undertake a broader search outside the firm.

Example: At the beginning of last year, an energetic partner prepared a business plan and asked the CMO of his firm to review it with him. The CMO spent an hour with him and gave him very constructive advice. In the course of the year, the partner made good progress on the business plan although he did not bring in any major new matters. When he met to review last year's performance and hear compensation for this year, his partners were complimentary but said that his business generation did not yet warrant a bump up in his points. Since other people did move up, his points were in effect diluted. He decided more drastic measures were called for. He asked a very successful partner who was winding down his practice and planning to retire in one to two years to help him. The senior partner not only agreed to help him but created a small group of partners to meet regularly to discuss business development. The senior partner himself became more engaged in planning his own retirement including strategies for client succession. When the senior partner retired, the group went to firm management and cited their success in retaining significant clients. The group then asked the firm to hire an outside business development coach to work with the group and the firm agreed.

If you have decided you would benefit in your business development efforts from support from a "coach", do not overlook the people you see every day in your firm who may be resources.