



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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On the Subject of Elevator Pitches. “Elevator pitches” are a customary marketing strategy for professionals to convey quickly, effectively, and memorably what they do, in thirty seconds or less. The most effective elevator pitches do not come across as canned short commercials but rather explain quickly who you help and the type of situations the people you help are facing. Your opportunity to deliver an elevator pitch often arises when people ask you “what do you do?” The best response to that question is not a technical response about the kind of work you do, but rather an engaging response that sends the message that you work with people like them (the person asking), who find themselves faced with significant challenges that you regularly handle. This shifts the focus from you and your discipline to the kinds of issues and situations that a prospective client would look to an attorney to help solve. Once you explain who you help and the types of problems you solve, the next step is to shift the conversation back to the other person, by asking the right questions. Your goal is to ask questions which will help you learn if they have the kinds of concerns which you usually tackle. Consider some of these questions:

- Do you encounter these kinds of issues in your role in the company?
- What has been your experience?
- How big a problem was it for your company? What did it cost?
- Do you expect to have these kinds of issues this year?
- What will happen if you have that problem again? Do you feel well prepared?
- What will happen if you cannot solve the problem?
- All of these actions have a common core: how to achieve your business development goals by being thoughtful and strategic without adding to your already heavy time commitments.

Being ready to meet people involves being prepared with an elevator pitch followed by “elevator questions”, being prepared to jump in with questions that help you and the people you meet learn whether they are the kind of people you can help.

Example: A lawyer went to a reception with his coach’s guidance in mind to get people to talk about themselves and not launch into a pitch every time he met someone. He was prepared to introduce himself and ask people questions to get them talking like “Why are you here?” However, the first person he encountered immediately asked “What do you do?” He explained that he was a former prosecutor who typically worked with corporate law departments to prevent and defend government fraud investigations. He said that his clients were usually concerned about how to fend off zealous regulators and reassured that he had been a zealous regulator himself. The other person then identified herself as an in-house lawyer at a company which had been fortunate not to be the subject of any recent government investigations. The lawyer then asked if the company liked to keep up with the most recent developments and offered to invite the in-house lawyer to a program his firm was hosting. The in-house lawyer enthusiastically handed over her card.

Are you as well prepared with your “elevator questions” as you are with your “elevator pitches”? Are you quick to move away from talking about yourself to questions designed to show your interest and expertise in areas that might matter to the people you meet?

If this topic is of interest, you are welcome to register for an ABA Section of Litigation Roundtable “Legal Marketing Toolkit: Taking Your Personal Brand to the Next Level,” a free program which is being presented by the Business Torts & Unfair Competition Committee on May 25, 2016 at 1 pm Eastern. The registration link is: <https://form.jotform.com/60344297944968>.