



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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**Does Having a Strong Brand Matter?** Most lawyers know that building a solid reputation is critical to their success and therefore concentrate on doing quality work, achieving great results for clients, and sharing their successes through client alerts, blogs, website bios, and social media. Lawyers also work to get onto key lists which score their reputations like Chambers; BTI Client Service All-Stars; Super Lawyers; Best Lawyers, and the like. Some firms and lawyers are also investing in brand building to differentiate themselves and create strong name recognition for delivering certain types of services and user experiences. Having a great reputation is still the most essential element of building a strong career but as competition for shrinking legal budgets intensifies, consider these potential values of brand building:

- Having a strong brand will increase your likelihood of being invited to beauty contests
- When two firms are fairly equal in reputation, the stronger brand may edge out the competition
- A stronger brand may justify higher prices for your services
- A strong individual brand often enables lawyers to obtain more internal resources for their work
- A strong brand elicits more respect initially from clients, opponents and judges
- Clients with high risk matters often select the stronger law firm brand to insulate themselves in case of a bad result

In our super competitive legal market, the best positioned law firms and lawyers need to have a strong brand, to get the attention and get in the door to be considered, and they need a strong reputation, the real meat on the bones based upon actual relevant successes, to close the deal.

**Example:** A partner handled a lot of the work for a significant client of her firm. When she made a lateral move to another firm, she hoped to continue the relationship. She was able to take several matters she was handling to her new firm but ran into a roadblock in getting new matters. When she spoke to her key client contact, he was candid. He said that when she moved, the partner at her old firm who was close to his CEO had reasserted himself. Her contact also said that the old firm's "brand" was stronger which limited his ability to direct work to her at her new firm. The lateral partner developed a strategic plan to address the roadblock. She secured funding from her new firm to host a key industry conference. She knew what her old firm paid as a sponsor and persuaded the conference organizers to allow her new firm to be the lead sponsor by offering better terms. She then invited the CEO of her old client to be a keynote speaker at the conference. She also gave her key client contact ammunition on her superior experience on certain types of matters so he could advocate for her when new matters arose. Finally, she worked with her new firm's marketing team to insure more visibility for herself and the firm in Chambers and other listings in her specialty.

Are you losing business to lawyers and firms whose brands are stronger than yours even when your experience and reputation are equivalent or even better? 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 complimentary 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>.