



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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Using Industry Specialization as a Business Development Strategy. If you have developed experience on behalf of clients that is relevant to others in the same industry, you have the opportunity to create an industry-based marketing strategy. Consider these steps:

- Soak up as much knowledge about the industry as possible in the course of your client work.
- Ask your clients about industry organizations to which they belong.
- Find opportunities to speak at industry functions and to write for industry publications.
- If industry organizations allow law firm memberships, join a group and take a leadership role either in the lawyers' committee or the group as a whole.
- If your clients are organizing industry support for litigation, lobbying, or public relations campaigns, take a role so you have exposure in the industry.
- If there are charities which are supported by the industry, support those charities.
- Join industry practice groups in your firm. Create one if what you need does not exist.
- Review your firm's website to confirm that you are listed as a professional in all the relevant industry groups and that your bio showcases your industry expertise.
- Ask your clients to introduce you to industry players who are experiencing similar problems.
- Be sensitive about business conflicts and confidentiality issues especially if you are asking clients for introductions to competitors.

Building a brand and a client base in a particular industry can be a very successful strategy.

Example: A partner had done a lot of work for one industry leader over a period of years. The client frequently asked the firm to participate in industry events. Every year, the partner insured that the firm's budget earmarked money for charities the industry supported. The partner also volunteered her team to provide CLE programs to industry trade associations to which the client belonged. Over time, the firm attracted other clients in the industry. When the industry faced a significant legal challenge in the Supreme Court to a longstanding legal doctrine that was protective of industry interests, the partner went into high gear. With its principal client's enthusiastic endorsement, the partner reached out to other industry leaders to join in an amicus brief to the Supreme Court. The leadership of a key industry group also helped the partner recruit support for the amicus brief from a wide array of companies affected by the legal challenge. The firm publicized its leadership and took a key role in informing the entire industry of developments in the Supreme Court case in client alerts, social media, press releases, and at industry conferences. The fact that the firm represented such a wide range of industry leaders in the amicus brief confirmed the firm's standing as one of the "go-to" firms for important issues for companies in the industry.

If you have acquired deep industry knowledge through representation of certain clients, have you put together a strategy to leverage that industry experience to attract more clients in the industry? Are you at risk of being displaced by other firms who have embedded themselves in the industry if you don't?