



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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The Right Question for Labor Day Circa 2018

A version of this piece was first published in 2015 but the message is important enough to repeat. The question to ask as Labor Day approaches is are you prepared for the end of the year? With summer ending, it is a good time to take stock of how your year has shaped up and what you can do to conclude the year strongly. Here are some actions to consider this week:

- Review your 2017 year-end self-evaluation, especially your commitments for this year.
- For plans you have not completed, assess whether they are still feasible and consider how you will account for them at the end of this year.
- If you have fallen behind and have a lot of unfinished initiatives, don't give up. Prioritize the most important ones and tackle them.
- For each item on which you must report to your firm's management at year end, are you prepared? Have you done your share of pro bono work? Are you on track to bill sufficient hours? If your firm tracks collaboration, have you provided support to other colleagues? Have you fulfilled promises to introduce clients you control to new lawyers or practice groups?
- Will you be able to collect fees that have already been billed or that you expect to bill? Do you need to discuss collections with any key clients? Do you need to discuss modifications to fee arrangements for certain clients with your firm's management so the firm is prepared for problem accounts?
- How do you plan to mark the holidays with clients? Do you need to organize special cards or gifts? Do you have on your calendar the timing for ordering gifts/cards so they get out in a timely way?

Pay special attention to collections. You won't be a hero as a rainmaker if the work you generated is on the firm's books as unpaid receivables.

Example: One of your main goals for 2018 was to expand the scope of work from an existing client to another practice group and other offices of the firm. You committed to try to take advantage of new capabilities resulting from several key lateral hires in another office. So far, you have spent time with the new laterals at firm meetings and you have obtained materials on their experience, so you can personally vouch for them to your client. You have also investigated the client's needs in their practice area including which firms currently do the work and how their rates compare to yours. You have not made any introductions, but you are ready to coordinate with the laterals. You get a list of their clients and make note of the ones whose headquarters or facilities are in your area. You call one of the laterals and ask if and when they will be visiting those clients in your area. You then compare those dates to your schedule of meetings with your clients. You are then in position to offer your clients the opportunity to meet the new laterals at times that are convenient for both your clients and the laterals. If the first time you attempt to coordinate some meetings does not work out, you still have time before the end of the year to make something happen.

Can you give yourself a good runway to fulfill your year-end plans and obligations by starting the end of the year planning now? And can you demonstrate to your partners that you are serious about fulfilling your commitments?