



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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## Looking Inward

The new year prompts a lot of planning on the business development front. Most of the focus is external: expanding work from existing clients and converting prospective clients into new clients. This year consider enhancing your strategy by looking inward for new opportunities. Here are some questions to help you spot internal opportunities:

- Have you been working with lawyers who are likely to retire in the next year or two?
- Are any of the lawyers in your group likely to take a family or medical leave or a sabbatical?
- Are there lawyers who may need to relocate because of a client or family situation?
- Are there partners who are so busy that they have not devoted attention to certain clients?
- Are you working with lawyers who you sense are dissatisfied with your current firm and may be considering a lateral move?
- Are there clients who need skills that their current lawyers don't have that you can provide? For example, greater facility with technology, social media or project management?
- Are there clients who require diversity that their current lawyers do not offer?
- Are there lawyers with clients who are so demanding that the lawyers would welcome your shouldering some of the responsibility?

If any of these examples apply to you, then you may have extremely valuable internal opportunities to become a key client relationship lawyer. Since these situations all involve other lawyers who currently control the client relationships, it is critical that you approach each opportunity with sensitivity. The keys to being able to take advantage of these kinds of circumstances are collaboration and not overreaching.

**Example:** A senior associate was confident that she had a good shot at being made a partner in her firm. She knew that her work was well-regarded and that she had several powerful partners who were likely to champion her elevation. But she knew that as a partner she would be expected to generate business and did not feel confident that she was well-prepared to do so. She approached the partners with whom she worked most closely and asked them to start including her in more of their high-level discussions with clients. She also asked to be included in any pitches they were doing so she would get that experience. One of the partners had recently remarried and his wife had had a baby. In his case, she offered to do more of the traveling that was required for one of their clients to give him more time with his new family. He was very appreciative. When he observed her success with that client, he asked her to shoulder more of the burden with another very demanding client. By the time she was under consideration for partner, she had created a strong track record with respect to client relationship management, and her mentors recommended her highly for partnership. She had also established key relationships with several significant clients. When they had new matters, they called her directly and she shared in the client origination credit.

As you plan your strategy for the new year, are you being sufficiently mindful of internal opportunities?

Thanks to Phyllis Weiss Haserot for the inspiration for this piece from her [article on succession planning](#).