



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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Are You a Candidate for an Exit Interview or a "Stay Interview"?

Law firm leaders are doing a lot of strategic planning to cope with the global pandemic as clients go out of business or cut back on services and delay payments. One common theme in the legal press has been law firm strategies to minimize layoffs. Less publicized is the work being done by firm leaders to identify key people and to allocate resources to insure they keep them. To assess your position, ask yourself how your firm's leaders will answer these questions about you when they are in a virtual room making decisions about who is essential to the firm:

- Which client relationships do you control or have a significant role in?
- How much revenue did those clients generate last year?
- How many other people do you keep busy?
- Are you in a practice which is in high demand?
- Who is in your client pipeline and what are you doing to generate new business and new clients?
- Is your pipeline visible to firm leaders?
- Are you in a practice which could provide more work to other practice groups?
- Do you have clients that are attractive to other practice groups?
- Do you work effectively from home?
- Are you perceived to have a long-term commitment to the firm and your career?
- Do you build, retain, and lead diverse teams of lawyers?
- What are you doing to sustain your professional development? Are you learning new skills? Do you have a sponsor, mentor, or coach?

Are you prepared to paint a vivid picture of your contributions to your firm if you are asked to do so? It is important to be laying the groundwork so that you will be perceived as one of the people the firm cannot afford to lose.

Example: When a practice group leader received a request from the management committee to rank members of the practice group by how essential they were, she rallied the lawyers in her group to help prepare a strategic plan to expand the practice group rather than reducing its size. She then submitted a plan to the management committee which laid out a growth strategy that included collaborating with two other practice groups to cross-sell to their clients and training underutilized lawyers from other groups on their high demand work. She laid out her practice group's client pipeline and asked for more support from the firm's business development staff including a business development coach dedicated to the group. As other practice group leaders were considering which of their members were expendable, she made a persuasive case that the firm should invest more in her practice group. The practice group leader did not expect to receive all the resources she asked for, but she did expect that she and the top rainmakers in the group would all make the managing partner's list of people with whom to meet for "stay interviews".

Even if your firm is not conducting formal "stay interviews", are you positioning yourself to be viewed as one of the essential people in your firm? Can you make the case that the firm should be providing you with additional resources to grow your practice?