



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*

Volume 15, Issue 1

January 4, 2021

The Key Move: Ability to Pivot in 2020 and in 2021

In basketball, pivoting is a crucial skill for defense and offense: taking a step with one foot when in possession of the ball while keeping the other foot firmly planted on the ground. The lawyers and firms who got through 2020 successfully did a lot of pivoting, keeping possession of the ball while staying grounded and adjusting to the demands of working virtually. For many of us, the experience starting in March was literally like “turning on a dime”. We have learned a lot about being flexible, nimble, and creative. While we have lost some of the ease and intimacy of personal interaction, we have gained greater efficiency and access to many more people. As we launch 2021, here are some questions to consider:

- What were the most successful pivots you made in 2020?
- Have you surveyed your clients to determine which changes they appreciated most?
- Were you forced to – and able to – change your business model or develop new products or services to fit the new, evolving demand?
- Have you surveyed your co-workers on which changes worked for them?
- Do you have a process to decide which changes will become permanent, in whole or part?
- If your business is hurting, are there additional pivots to consider at this juncture?
- Are there some things that will require a “reverse pivot”?

Many people celebrated the end of 2020 with great anticipation for 2021. “Is 2020 over yet? Cheers to a New Year” was a common holiday refrain. Before declaring gratitude about the end of 2020, this is the time to assess what changes emerged from 2020 that are worth keeping in 2021.

Example: At the beginning of 2020, the new global head of litigation for a leading firm scheduled an ambitious year of traveling to each of the firm’s offices to meet lawyers and clients in the practice group. She had barely made a dent in her itinerary when the pandemic forced her to rethink her plans. Instead of being forced to lump all her goals into one trip to each office, she broke down the elements of each visit. First, she scheduled a virtual meet and greet with each office’s practice group leaders. Based on their priorities, she scheduled virtual professional development sessions with the practice group members and meetings with key clients. She was able to invite other firm leaders to the virtual client meetings including other practice group leaders whose services were of potential interest to the clients. Because she eliminated all the travel time involved in her original schedule, she was able to complete initial meetings in every firm office in a third of the time she had originally expected. Based on her initial meetings, she formulated a new business plan for herself which prioritized cultivating several major clients for non-litigation work. When firm leaders asked her whether she planned to reschedule her standalone trips to the firm’s many offices around the world when safe to do so in 2021, her answer was a clear NO. Instead, she scheduled similar virtual meetings with practice group leaders, lawyers, and clients. Instead of special purpose travel, she also recommended that post-pandemic, that every office plan to host a client reception whenever firm lawyers visited their offices in order to foster greater familiarity with the firm’s capabilities. She set an example by tracking every opportunity to leverage her own travel plans to other offices and by notifying other offices as far in advance as possible so they could organize suitable meetings.

If you have been waiting anxiously to revert to pre-pandemic business models, reversing your pivot may not be your best choice. Instead, consider continuing to pivot in ways that will advance your objectives with more ease, less expense and less wear and tear.

Wishing you a healthy and productive post-pandemic New Year in 2021!