



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 Post-Covid Workplace

In 1968, when I started law school at the University of Chicago, my faculty advisor's first greeting was: "Welcome. You are one of General Hershey's Girls". General Hershey was the head of the Selective Service which ran the draft. Calling all the women students "General Hershey's Girls" was a statement of fact. Because men, both students and applicants, were being drafted for the Vietnam War, the Law School had admitted a record number of women. My class had 30 women, 20 percent of the class. My women classmates and I were Vietnam-era equivalents of Rosie the Riveter, the WWII symbol and recruiting tool used to attract women to take factory jobs when men went to war.

When WWII ended, many Rosies lost their jobs. In a 1993 [Harvard Business Review](#) article on what happened to Rosie the Riveter, Nancy Nichols observed that the enormous success of women in the WWII war effort had had a limited effect on opening workplaces permanently to women and chronicled the continued obstacles to women's advancement in the workplace.

Unlike post WWII, the Vietnam War surge of women law students in the late 60s and 70s started a demographic shift in the legal profession which has not stopped, even with Covid. Covid caused a lot of women outside of law firms to leave their jobs but according to [data](#) from the Seramount [formerly Working Mother] 2021 Best Law Firms for Women survey, women in firms on the 2021 list held their ground and even increased their numbers slightly.

As we begin to emerge from Covid, what are the prospects for women in the workplace? I am an advisor to the Seramount Best Law Firms for Women Initiative. This year's awards program on December 9, [Women Reimagine: How We Work](#), which will recognize the [50 Best Law Firms for Women](#) and the 70 Top Companies for Executive Women, will examine this issue. Some of the questions we will tackle are:

- What were the lessons learned during the pandemic about the systems and policies which maximize productivity, preserve mental health, and avoid gender disparities?
- To what extent will law firms and companies allow people to continue working from home?
- How can organizations separate myth and reality about the necessity of in-person meetings for building workplace culture?
- Will lawyers and executives who choose to work from home sacrifice access to career opportunities like training, the best assignments, or mentors?
- How can law firms and their clients be allies in advancing the careers of lawyers and executives in a post-Covid workplace?

Rosie the Riveters turned out to be a temporary phenomenon. Vietnam-era Rosies, like me and fellow "General Hershey's Girls" at the University of Chicago Law School, launched an enduring demographic shift in the legal profession. So far, Covid has not derailed women lawyers in the Best Law Firms for Women who managed to stay the course. Please join us on December 9th for [Women Reimagine: How We Work](#) to explore how to preserve the benefits of working flexibly from home during the pandemic and to preserve the most meaningful aspects of in-person work and collaboration. Click [here](#) to register.

With gratitude, wishing you a joyful and healthy Thanksgiving holiday.