



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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## 'Tis the Season for a Career Check

'Tis the season for career assessments: Self-Evaluations, Partnership Decisions and Announcements, Bonuses, Compensation Committees, and Business Plans for next year. When all the formal activities are done, and you have wrapped up major matters for the year plus spent quality time with family and friends, it is also a perfect time for reflection and a personal assessment of where you stand. Here are some questions to help you compare how you see yourself and to consider how your firm sees you:

- At this stage of your career, are you in the position that you expected to be?
- Do you see yourself as being on a path to get to the next desired stage?
- Are you getting signals from your firm's leadership that you are considered a high potential lawyer?
- What additional resources and support do you need to achieve your goals?
- Which resources and support do you expect that your firm should provide to you?
- Which resources do you need to provide for yourself?

If you are a firm leader involved in talent retention, here are some questions to help assess whether you are communicating enough to retain your high potential lawyers:

- Do you keep a list of the high potential partners that your firm cannot afford to lose?
- Have you asked each high potential partner what additional resources they need to maximize their practice building opportunities? Do they need additional talent? Or more competitive compensation to retain their own best talent? Partnerships for key associates or counsel? Equity partnerships for non-equity partners? Brand-building support? More access to existing clients for cross-selling purposes? A mentor or coach?
- Do you assure each high potential partner that you will go to the mat with firm leadership to obtain any critical resources you identify that they need?

**Example:** After arranging to send champagne to clients for the holidays, a practice group leader added several "must keep" partners in her group to the gift list and invited each one to an individual Zoom call to toast the New Year. On one call, a partner was blunt about his frustration that he expected to lose one of his chief lieutenants, a highly sought-after senior associate, when the firm announced new partners in January and the associate did not make partner. The practice group leader offered to obtain an assurance from firm leadership that the star associate was on track to become a partner the following year and to personally participate in the review to deliver that message. The practice group leader also offered to include the star associate in a group of high potential lawyers who would receive coaching support as part of a program designed to retain top talent. The partner expressed his appreciation and hope that the practice group leader's intervention would keep the star associate from accepting another firm's offer.

I will elaborate on these issues in 2022. Look for the next issue of *Monday Monday* on January 3, 2022. In the meantime, all my Best Wishes for a Great Holiday and Healthy New Year!