



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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Investing in Future Clients

This year seems highly reminiscent of 2008 and 2009 when the financial crisis led to massive business failures and job losses. With many lawyers confronting clients whose businesses are closing, downsizing, or being acquired, I revisit a subject I wrote about in October 2008: [Helping Displaced Clients](#). Especially as we celebrate the holidays, the best gift you can offer clients — and colleagues in your own firm who are being laid off — is help finding their next job. Here are some steps to consider when you hear that people are looking for new opportunities:

- Do not wait to be asked for help. If you learn that your clients' or colleagues' jobs may be at risk, offer your assistance. You do not have to know of specific job opportunities to be highly valuable to someone's job search.
- Put yourself in their shoes. Consider who in your own network you would approach if you needed help in their situation. For example, do you know other people — clients, friends, or family — in the same industry?
- Keep your own involvement limited so you don't slow down the process. You do not have to arrange a personal introduction over a meal or a drink. You can reach out to a contact by phone or email and ask permission to make an introduction to your client or colleague.
- Always explain the mutual benefit you hope will be derived from the introduction you propose to make. In most situations, you are not asking your contacts to do you a favor by talking to your client or colleague.
- When possible, tell people about the successes you have shared with your client or colleague. Those successes will lend credibility to the introduction and educate your contacts about your own capabilities.
- Invite appropriate clients to join you at holiday or business events you are attending which might provide good networking opportunities and actively make introductions at the events. Being in job search mode can be very isolating and your invitations will be welcome.

When your clients and colleagues are forced to transition in uncertain times, your support will be greatly appreciated. Down the road, when your clients and colleagues need to refer work to lawyers, you are likely to be top of mind.

Example: A corporate partner who represented the acquirer in a merger transaction was very impressed with the in-house lawyer for the acquired company. As part of the transaction, the in-house lawyer remained with the merged entity for just a year and then started a job search in a challenging market. The partner first reached out to her own client to say that she wanted to offer support to the in-house lawyer with the client's consent. When the client had no objection, the partner met with the in-house lawyer to understand what the in-house lawyer was looking to do next. The partner then made several introductions to companies in industries of interest to the in-house lawyer. The lawyer ended up in a new job unrelated to any of the partner's contacts but was very grateful for the partner's support.

Are you ready to help displaced clients and colleagues find new opportunities by strategic networking?

Enjoy the holiday season and a healthy New Year!