



# 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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**Purposeful Charity.** Bad times are good times for more community service and pro bono work. Many firms have offered new lawyers whose jobs have been deferred the option of working for non-profits at firm expense in the meantime. If you are still employed, but underutilized, this is a good time to contribute your legal and business skills to the sustainability of non-profit groups, which are at risk in this economy. In selecting charities, be strategic. There is no reason not to advance your own interests, too. By blending a charitable purpose and a business value, you increase the likelihood your firm will support your participation even when business picks up. Try to find a community organization with these characteristics:

- You have clients who are active in the group
- The charity attracts people from industries you serve
- The board has few if any lawyers and no competitors of yours
- The board is powerful
- Your expertise would be relevant and would be showcased by your board service
- You have access to the group's leadership

**Example:** One of your clients, a general counsel, mentioned that his CEO asked him to meet with the board of a non-profit group. The CEO asked the general counsel to help the non-profit's board consider whether a merger with another non-profit group was an option for addressing their diminished donor base and government funding. You offer to help the general counsel address the issue on a pro bono basis.

When the general counsel invites you to a preliminary meeting with the non-profit's president at the company's offices, the general counsel makes a point of introducing you to his CEO, who expresses his appreciation. Because the general counsel has brought in the company's CFO to evaluate the financial aspects of the possible merger, you also have the chance to work with the company's CFO for the first time.

You then attend a meeting of the non-profit's board, with the general counsel, to make a short presentation and answer questions about the proposed merger. Your client introduces you to the non-profit's board as a lawyer who has worked as outside counsel to his company on several major merger transactions. His introduction is an endorsement of your quality and experience. At the board meeting, you meet several new business leaders in the community and run into a former client who is on the board. The former client explains that they have not called you recently because lack of financing has slowed down their own acquisitions but promises to call soon.

Do you have clients who are passionate about certain non-profits with whom you can deepen your own relationship by volunteering to help those non-profits? Do you see how your willingness to volunteer your services for non-profits can actually connect you with future profitable business for your firm?