



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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Leveraging Your Success. Most lawyers fall in two camps: those who believe that business referrals are totally random and unpredictable and those who expect that if they do good work, they will automatically be rewarded with more business. Neither group's assumptions are well-founded. Nothing is automatic but the process is highly predictable. You get work from people who know you, know your work, and trust you – IF you are proactive and stay in touch with them. Outsiders do not make referrals and inside colleagues do not invite you to work on their teams on new matters unless they trust you, feel comfortable vouching for you to others, and have you in mind. To increase referrals, the first step is to assess who you know who will vouch for you and who is in a position to refer work to you. Make a list, including:

- Clients for whom you achieved good results
- Colleagues with whom you have shared success who have a client base
- Former opponents when there was mutual respect
- People in the community with whom you have worked on projects
- Friends and family

Next, organize the list, giving top priority to people who control business, have referred work in the past and with whom you have the strongest relationship. Then focus on the priority people. If you have lost touch, figure out how to reconnect. Finally, be conscious of opportunities to maintain –or increase-- the level of trust you enjoy with your priority group by (1) working together whenever possible (client matters, firm administration, or outside organizations); (2) keeping your network apprised of your successes; and (3) above all, staying in touch.

Example: On a small project for a partner in your firm's newest Asian office, you got a good result which pleased your partner and the client. You hope that each of them will send you more business and refer you to other people in their respective organizations but you know you cannot take either one for granted. First, focus on learning about your new partner: her practice, her other clients; when she is coming to the United States; which of your clients who do business in Asia should meet her; and what other kind of work she would appreciate your referring to her. Also, go to school on the client: the nature and location of its business and legal needs and its current use of your firm and competitors. Finally, stay in touch with the client and your partner by all available means: tracking business information about the client and relevant legal developments; taking advantage of the information to reach out to them; getting everyone involved onto firm mailing lists and your individual distribution list to report on your successes; and looking for every opportunity to work together.

Success breeds success. Are you ready to make the referral process less random by consciously strengthening your relationships and staying in touch with the people who know and trust you and are in a position to send you work?