



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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**Failing to Plan is Planning to Fail.** Most law firms do not require lawyers to have a business plan. But the axiom “failing to plan is planning to fail” squarely applies to marketing strategy. Would you create a simple business plan for next year if you were confident it would enable you to expand your practice by 20 percent or more? Would an hour or two of clear thinking be worth achieving this goal even if you are not required to produce a business plan?

Here is the essence of a basic planning session: work from strength by focusing on existing clients, prospects, and referral sources. Your plan should include:

- Up to five existing clients for whom you have achieved good results whose work can be expanded and the specific ideas you are going to discuss with each one.
- Up to five prospective clients you already know, with a specific action list for growing your relationship with each one.
- Consideration of how to reward your best existing referral sources, inside and outside your firm, with reciprocity, explicit thanks or otherwise
- Involvement in at least one outside business, professional, charitable or social organization to help you extend your network.
- At least one venue in which to write or speak.

With a simple plan to refer to, it is easier to stay in touch regularly with the people who are important to you and to integrate marketing into your workday.

**Example:** One small case, combined with good marketing habits, transformed my career. The case was a wrongful termination claim against a railcar company whose parent company I represented. When the railcar company filed bankruptcy, I defended the parent company against an alter ego liability claim, and successfully settled the matter for a modest sum. The creditors of the bankrupt subsidiary then sued the parent on the same theory for a few hundred million dollars. Because of my mastery of the alter ego facts and law, the parent company included me on a team of great lawyers all over the country who worked on the matter. I recognized and cherished the opportunity. One member of the team, a superb Minneapolis lawyer, later referred his partner to me for a major litigation. One small success, combined with a plan to sustain important relationships, led to a network of great colleagues and friends and millions of dollars of assignments.

Consider how much more confident and effective you will be in marketing if you have a clear vision of your marketing plan for next year. Are you willing to devote an hour or two this holiday season to create a game plan for your own expanded success?