



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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Focus on Your Best Targets. One essential element of your business plan for this year is a prioritized list of prospective clients. Organizing the list by the size of the potential client or the seniority of the people you know at the companies is a common starting point. But ranking these prospects in order of likelihood of success will allow you to invest your efforts more realistically. If the companies on your list have entrenched relationships with other firms, you have to help them discover a reason to make a change or add you to their bench. Here are some questions to explore with prospective clients:

- Are they getting good results?
- Are they satisfied with the service they get?
- Is it costing them too much for the services and results they are receiving?
- Is their current firm proactive in helping them institute policies and practices to reduce their legal risks?
- Do their current lawyers work in a collaborative fashion with in house lawyers?

It is important to acknowledge to your prospects that you understand that they have many other important relationships with highly capable lawyers and that you assume that they will only change horses if you have something better or different to offer.

Example: A former lawyer in your firm who left on good terms has recently joined the law department of a big company. You are thrilled to have entrée to a new client, especially one where you have a relationship with the lawyer. This relationship allows you to say candidly that you hope she will help you get business from her new company. To get the most help from her, ask her to be on the lookout for opportunities in which her company is not completely satisfied with their existing firms. Then give her ammunition to help steer work your way by regularly sharing with her your firm's successes on behalf of other clients.

"I thought you would be interested in the savings we helped our client achieve in their class action litigation by instituting early settlement procedures. Have your company's lawyers recommended that you adopt this type of protocol?" Or

"I wanted to share with you our success on motions for summary judgment in employment discrimination cases. Our success rate is now 75 percent. What kind of results have your outside counsel been getting on motions for summary judgment?"

Are you ready to give priority to the most realistic prospects on your list instead of the biggest ones? Are you also willing to adopt a two-pronged strategy with your prospects: probing for their dissatisfaction with existing counsel and advancing the success and advantages you would bring to their representation?