



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.

Time to Be More Visible. As more major firms shed or demote equity partners, the need for lawyers to speak up and stand out, inside and outside their firms, in tasteful ways, is urgent. Some lawyers are uncomfortable with the idea that they need to engage in self-promotion and hope that their work itself will elicit respect from peers, and new business from clients, *sua sponte*. Others chafe at the success of lawyers who are less qualified substantively but who excel at self-aggrandizement. If you are still reluctant to promote yourself, give it up. The time for modesty about your accomplishments is past. But you still need to be discreet and appropriate in promoting yourself and your successes, consistent with your firm's culture. It is also critical to be inclusive and not hog credit that belongs to a team of people. Consider some of these strategies:

- Saying thank you
- Celebrating with lunches or dinners for the team and clients
- Posting information on successes on internal firm newsletters
- Listing successes on firm websites
- Issuing a press release
- Writing a client alert or an article for publication on the matter
- Speaking at practice group meetings and outside venues

Example: You are one of the lawyers, but not the most senior lawyer, who worked on a matter that has concluded successfully. You want to insure that the significance of the role you played in the firm's success is not lost, without violating the unspoken protocols in your firm or offending more senior colleagues. First, thank the other members of the team for the opportunity to work on the critical aspect of the matter you handled and for their confidence in you. If you send an email, keep it light. Offer to help organize an internal celebration to thank the team who worked on the matter. Also volunteer to write a blurb for the firm's newsletter, intranet, and website and to coordinate with the firm's public relations staff or consultants. If appropriate, you can also offer to co-author a client alert or article on the subject. Model the behavior you expect from more senior people by going out of your way to acknowledge the people junior to you. If your client hosts a celebration to thank the firm, try to showcase everyone's role in the victory, including your own, in a humorous way, perhaps with a skit or a compilation of funny or poignant moments from the matter. The biblical scholar Hillel said it all: If I am not for myself, who will be for me? But if I am only for myself, what am I? And if not now, when?