



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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Integrating Marketing into Every Day. It is the end of the first quarter. You had an ambitious marketing plan for the year which included seeing every major client once a quarter. But you got diverted by important things, like working on a major transaction and keeping up your billable hours. You are discouraged that you have not made a dent in your marketing plan and you are tempted to abandon it. Don't do it. Instead, consider integrating a marketing awareness into your everyday contacts with your clients. There is no reason to relegate marketing to periodic lunches or client entertainment. If your marketing is confined to a standalone plan, it is more likely to be displaced by other obligations and deadlines. The essence of marketing is being attentive to your clients and their needs. That attentiveness should be part of every client interaction, and in a purposeful way.

The questions to consider—and ask—are what do your clients need and want, in their business and individual roles and how can you help them get what they want. For most clients, lunch and golf are not at the top of their hierarchy of needs. Their goals vary but most clients have the same priorities you do: meeting business objectives, job security, family and health. Are you paying attention to their priorities or are you narrowly focused on the particular legal matters you are handling? Even if you have no time to add marketing-specific activities to your schedule, you have an opportunity every day to interact with clients in ways that demonstrate your concern and focus on them. And every time you do so, you are “marketing”. If you can't make the time for offsite marketing activities, you can at least take the time to stay abreast of what is happening to your clients beyond the narrow confines of your assigned work and to talk them about those issues.

Example: Your client's CEO is retiring and the board is doing a search for an external replacement. You have enjoyed a close relationship with the general counsel for many years. There is no immediate jeopardy to the general counsel that you know of but you have seen several new CEOs bring along the general counsel from their last company and understand that there is risk. In this situation, it is not only appropriate to ask the general counsel whether she is concerned about the impact of her boss's retirement, it is imperative. If you don't raise the issue, you have missed a major opportunity to show your concern for her. You might have advice to offer or you might just provide reassurance that you and your firm will help her down the road if she needs to find a new position. Either way, without leaving the confines of your office, you have cemented your relationship with an important client.

Are you willing to devote the time to engage more fully with your clients on a daily basis about all the issues that matter to them?