



# 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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**Using Charity Events Effectively.** Tonight you are attending a charity dinner honoring a client. You wheedled the unbudgeted expense from the firm because the client is “significant.” You are still scrambling to fill the table. You induce some associates to come even though they are stressed at the loss of billable time and will depart early. You see your client for two minutes, eat too much as the program drones on, and leave expecting to do the same thing the next time. Is the charity circuit just a corporate Groundhog Day or is there a way to break the cycle?

There is always the option of writing a check and not going. But if you really need to attend, are you prepared to do some planning to get more value from the occasion? Can you consider who to invite who would be interested either because of the subject or the people involved? Can you set a deadline to get commitments from people to join you so you are not left with seat fillers? If you are going to use the occasion to mentor another lawyer, are you willing to show your colleague how to plan and set expectations for the event?

**Example.** An invitation from a client hits your desk. You don’t wait to be reminded to buy a table; you spring into action. You are on a mission to expand your work from securities litigation to IP litigation. It will be easier to approach firm management for funding if the event specifically advances your strategic goals. You have met the client’s IP lawyers and have been assured the firm will be considered for the next major IP matter. Can you invite an IP partner and an IP lawyer from the client to accompany you to the dinner? Will you have trouble corralling IP lawyers to join you when they hear who will be at your table? Can you get help, with research or preparing your colleagues to work the room, from your marketing department?

There may be no way to turn rubber chicken into caviar, or exploit tonight’s dinner, but what can you do to make better strategic use of the next charity affair?