



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.*

Volume 3, Issue 9

May 4, 2009

Being a “Go-To” Lawyer. What does it take to become a “go-to” lawyer, the one who gets the call when there is a new problem to solve? Of course it helps to have built a national reputation as best in class in your specialty with a great track record. But often, the “go-to” lawyers are not the specialists or the most prominent lawyers. They are the professionals on whom people know they can rely to help them *find* the right lawyers to handle a particular matter. In either situation, “go-to” lawyers have distinctive characteristics:

- They are highly effective at responding to crises
- They are able to identify and corral the right resources
- They do not interject themselves or their firms if they are inappropriate
- They are well known and trusted by the client or the client’s other lawyers
- They focus on clients’ business needs as well as the legal issues
- They demonstrate they care about the interests of their clients and referral sources

If you have been going through all the steps of a marketing strategy without the success you hoped for, consider whether you have the ultimate magnet: a reputation for caring.

Example: A new partner adopted a classic business development strategy, becoming active in an ABA committee. He joined the programs committee so he could plan and participate in programs. He attended the ABA annual meeting and at least one other major meeting of the committee each year. Over time, he built a national network of peers who are experts in the same practice area. He made his firm’s offices available to lawyers when they visited his city and kept people on his committee aware of relevant legal developments in his state. He encouraged people to let him know if they needed any help that related to his state or state law, whether or not it was in his practice area or benefited his firm. He was highly responsive, jumping on requests for help. As a result, he began to develop a reputation of being a “go-to” person to call whenever lawyers he knew around the country had a problem in his state.

But this “go-to” lawyer was more than just a good networker. When people called, he did not pretend to have all the answers but would find someone who did. He considered if his own firm could handle a matter but did not overreach. Even when he recommended lawyers in his own firm, he often provided a second outside referral. Whether he referred work inside or outside his firm, he kept track of the matter. If he turned it over to a colleague, he asked to be kept abreast of major developments. If it was handled outside the firm, he asked to be told the ultimate conclusion so he could confirm that the client or referring lawyer was satisfied with the lawyers he referred. What really set him apart from other lawyers who pursued similar strategies was that he managed to convey by his actions that he really cared about the people who called him and their problems.

Are you in the habit of offering to help clients, prospective clients, and other lawyers find the right lawyer for their problems, even if you and your firm are not the immediate beneficiaries? And are your actions consistently conveying a sincere, not wholly self-interested concern for other people?

100 Overlook Drive, Suite 200 | Princeton, NJ 08540 | 888.890.4240 | NewEllis.com

To comment or unsubscribe, email to mondaymonday@newellis.com.

All communications treated in confidence.