



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 18

September 14, 2009

Finish What You Start. How many times have you committed to a marketing plan, made phone calls, sent notes, tried to set up lunches, and then felt stalled or defeated when clients or prospects just did not respond one way or the other to your outreach? More people have *incomplete* marketing initiatives than have *failed* marketing initiatives. One critical habit to form is completing each cycle. That means that when you initiate a move, you see it through to the conclusion, even if it means that your client/prospect rejects your invitation to meet or talk. To make the process easier, consider these steps:

- Keep track of your calls and invitations.
- Avoid unspecific invitations like, “let’s get together soon.”
- Tell people how you will follow up if you don’t hear back from them, like calling their assistant or following up on a specific date.
- Enlist clients’ assistants to help you; explain your objectives, always including an explanation of the value to the client; copy them on emails so they can help you—or tell you it won’t happen.
- Give people permission to say they are not interested in meeting or talking.

It is better to clear out unrealistic targets and concentrate on your best prospects, responsive people who really need your services. But you can’t distinguish between them until you get in the habit of following through on each initiative to discover if the non-responders are busy or just not interested. If your list of targets has the same old people year in and year out, you need to evaluate how to finish more initiatives.

Example: When you saw your client at a closing, she concurred when you said that it had been too long since you had come out to have lunch. You asked her if she had her calendar with her to set a date. When she said no, you said that you would contact her assistant to set a date. You then sent her assistant an email, copying your client, to say that you were following up on your discussion with the client and asked her assistant to help find a convenient date. The email also said that if you didn’t hear back from the assistant, you would give her a call the following week. When you didn’t hear back, you called, without anxiety that you would be perceived as pushy, because you were just doing what you promised you would do.

After a few tries, you still could not pin down a date for lunch. You were at a crossroads. You asked the assistant for advice. You asked if you should call back; forget lunch and come by for coffee at your client’s offices instead; or just give up. The assistant then told you that your client was not ducking you but had a murderous schedule until she finished a transaction in time to go on vacation and suggested you hold off a bit. You thanked her for the information and asked her to suggest a date that she thought would work. You asked her to pencil in that date for lunch, and told her that you would follow up with her closer to the date to confirm whether it worked for the client. The assistant agreed. You finished the cycle with either a date for lunch—or at least a date to set a date for lunch.

For clients and prospective clients who matter, are you willing to commit to press on with each marketing initiative until you finalize a plan or take the people off your list?