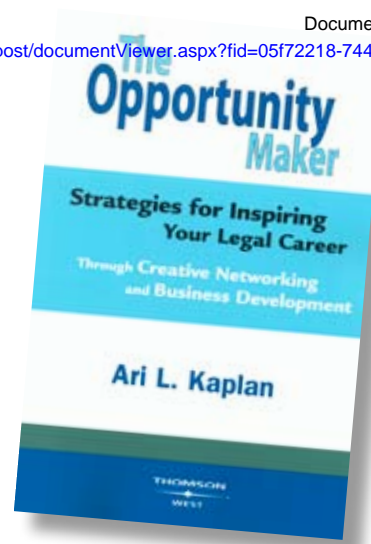


## Special Report



# Five Ways to Find Opportunity in a Faltering Economy

## Executive Summary

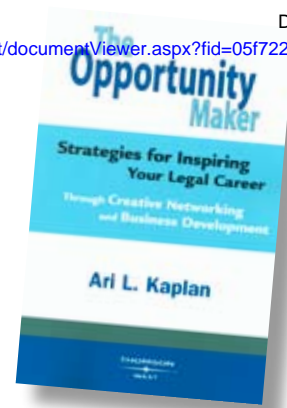
**I taught English in various summer camps, as a college student. Fast-forward 17 years and to my surprise, one of the campers saw my profile on the social networking website Facebook (after no contact for almost two decades) and sent me a note. Welcome to the era of opportunity, circa. 2009. My former student's effort highlights that making contact with others is no longer the problem. If you want to reach hundreds, thousands, even tens of thousands of people in a short amount of time in 2009, you can do so. Comment on a popular blog post, upload a catchy YouTube video or create a group, perhaps one for long lost English teachers, on the professional online network LinkedIn. Turning your initial contacts into long-term relationships is a worthy goal. And those that stand out by helping others build relationships benefit by earning a powerful form of acknowledgment, reflecting more on their character than their ambition. Here are five ways to find success.**

## 1. Profile Your Peers and Clients

Find individuals at your office or in your community who are doing something noteworthy, even if it is something small. You can write an article or record the conversation as a podcast (with permission, of course) recognizing his or her achievements. It demonstrates your interest (and technological aptitude in the case of the podcast), yet also allows you the chance to get to know individuals on a more personal level. Show your social media know-how by posting the profiles on the social messaging website Twitter (feel free to visit me at [Twitter.com/arikaplan](https://twitter.com/arikaplan)).

## 2. Use 'Google Alerts' For Others

Add those people you just met at a meeting or industry event to a Google alert ([Google.com/alerts](https://www.google.com/alerts)), which will advise you each time a person on your list is mentioned online. This may provide you with thoughtful opportunities to connect in a meaningful fashion. Consider adding terms that have absolutely no value for you, but could give you the chance to help others, which would be particularly welcome in today's softening market.



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### 3. Share Press Leads

With the immense popularity of the US-based online source provider HelpAReporter.com (HARO) and the allowance for sharing (though not posting) press leads, look for ways that your colleagues and other contacts can earn well-deserved press in print or other forms of broadcast media. The 70,000-plus subscribers to the free HARO service receive three e-mails per day with a variety of queries from reporters looking for experts to comment on stories they are preparing, ranging from the shopping habits of European tourists to the proposed economic policies of the new US administration. While you may not be the right expert for some (or any) of these requests, consider sharing them with those individuals who could provide the insight for which the journalist is searching.

### 4. Guest Blog

I do not have a blog, but I do participate in the digital conversation as a regular guest on Law.com's Legal Technology blog ([legaltechnology.typepad.com](http://legaltechnology.typepad.com)). Those interested in getting started, but not ready to make a permanent commitment, may want to consider contributing to other popular blogs or collaborating with colleagues. Doing so will build a level of comfort with the medium and help the writer find his or her voice. While blogging can be used to demonstrate one's interest in a specific area, it can also be used to highlight the writer's familiarity with the key thought leaders in the

industry. In that way, it is a powerful networking tool and those who provide thoughtful, well-researched content can quickly establish themselves as trusted authorities offering valuable information.

### 5. Jump on the Social Networking Train

Facebook is no longer for a younger generation trying to find their summer camp English teachers. A growing cross-section of the legal community is also using the platform to enhance the depth and consistency of their connections. It offers opportunities to reach out to clients and prospects on a more personal and multi-dimensional level, which helps to build friendships rather than simply contacts. There is even an increasingly popular invitation-only service targeted specifically to this group called Legal OnRamp. Twitter is also becoming a great supplement, and even alternative, to blogging because it allows for the same type of commentary and a similar audience. For many, it is more approachable because of the 140-character limitation. There seems to be less pressure to contribute as frequently as a blog, but more incentive to produce thoughtful content since there are identifiable followers.

### Conclusion

Marketing means different things to different people. For those that use their toolkit to demonstrate their character as well as their value, 2009 will be another successful year.