

## DC Managing Partners On Their New Year's Priorities

By **Alison Knezevich**

*Law360 (January 2, 2025, 8:01 AM EST)* -- As the new year ushers in seismic political change in the nation's capital, office managing partners at Washington, D.C., law firms are looking ahead to a busy 2025.

Firm leaders are monitoring how client needs will change amid regulatory shifts that will take place under President-elect Donald Trump's administration and a new Congress, while remaining as focused as ever on recruiting and developing talent in the competitive D.C. legal market.

And five years after the pandemic first shut down offices, managing partners are still navigating how to keep people engaged in the now-standard hybrid work environment.

Here, Law360 Pulse speaks to leaders from four firms about what's on their minds for 2025.

### **Lindsay Harrison Jenner & Block**

Jenner & Block LLP's Lindsay Harrison said she expects her office to benefit from the wave of attorneys leaving the federal government amid the presidential transition.

"There's a massive amount of talent coming out of the administration, and we're very focused on talking to folks who will complement our existing strengths and trying to bring some of that talent in to benefit our clients," said Harrison, who was named managing partner in 2023 and also co-chairs the firm's real estate and hospitality practice. "So I am expecting to see us grow by acquiring some really outstanding people coming out of the administration."

Another priority will be continuing to grow beyond recruitment from the government, concentrating on people "who are going to buy into our culture" of collaboration and "client service through teamwork," Harrison said.

Harrison said she's also focused in the new year on "getting people to keep thinking more about coming back into the office."

"There is still a little bit of resistance," Harrison said. "And honestly, the resistance comes more from senior partners than it does from associates or junior folks."

Her office "has returned to a norm of being in-person three days a week," she said. "And I think getting people to continue buying into that and recognizing the value of being in the office in person is really important to us."

In terms of its work for clients, Harrison said the political transition is "a time of instability and change, and so they're looking to us for guidance about how to navigate it."

"Whether it's a university or a business, everyone's just trying to figure out how do we accomplish our goals ... and see government as a partner, instead of as an adversary?" Harrison said. "That's really the question everyone's asking, and that we're trying to help them navigate."

**Michelle N. Lipkowitz**  
**Mintz**

Since taking over as managing member of Mintz's D.C. location in 2023, Michelle Lipkowitz has prioritized fostering camaraderie, business development and transparent communications with attorneys and staff, a focus she wants to continue in the new year.

Lipkowitz said the office's litigation department has doubled over the past year, and she would like to see continued growth there.

"I think we have a lot of opportunities in areas where we already have strength," she said, including work involving the Federal Trade Commission, U.S. Department of Justice, and the International Trade Commission, as well as work before the U.S. Supreme Court.

Lipkowitz, whose practice includes complex commercial litigation, white collar defense and government investigations, looks for ways to strengthen connections among people in the office.

She hosts events such as themed happy hours and has a monthly newsletter that includes profiles of lawyers and staff members. A recent holiday party featured awards like "find my phone award" for the person most likely to lose their phone and "the Google award" for the person who knows all the answers.

"We definitely have a fun environment around here," she said.

Still, in the hybrid work environment, Lipkowitz said that "some of the more natural ways of people connecting are just kind of gone because people aren't around as much as they were" before the pandemic.

For Lipkowitz, this raises concerns about younger lawyers losing points of connection, so the office has also been facilitating coffee and lunch conversations hosted by members for associates.

At the front of her mind is "creating an environment of belonging, making sure that people feel heard and valued and that they can contribute."

"The more that people feel that they belong and feel that they are connected and that they have a say, an input into this office, the better for all of us," Lipkowitz said.

**Ajay Kuntamukkala and Carine Stoick  
Hogan Lovells**

Ajay Kuntamukkala, the D.C. managing partner for Hogan Lovells since 2023, said he has worked "listen to our people" as part of his goal to recruit and retain talent.

Disruption across the legal market — such as mergers, office closures and changes to compensation systems — can be unsettling, so people frequently have questions about firm strategy, he said.

Based on feedback from a series of retreats held by the firm, Kuntamukkala said that in the coming year, "we'll be focusing on a number of ways to bring greater transparency to how we do things."

With the hybrid work environment now ubiquitous, he also hopes to boost engagement.

"We're trying to shift the discussion a little bit away from just getting people in seats" to engagement while they're in the office, said Kuntamukkala, who also co-directs the international trade and investment practice. "It doesn't do a whole lot of good if folks are here, and they're just on Zoom in their office with their doors closed."

Leaders will also work to capitalize on shifts in client demand resulting from the change in administration and Congress, said Kuntamukkala and Carine Stoick, who serves as deputy managing partner of the D.C. office and managing partner of the firm's northern Virginia location.

Noting the firm's deep D.C. roots — which celebrated its 120th anniversary last year — Stoick said its specialty "is shining at the intersection of business and government."

In the government transition, "I think we're really well positioned to advise our clients ... and we expect to drive demand through that" in areas including international trade, energy, government regulations and government affairs, Stoick said.

The firm is also ready in D.C. and beyond to handle an increase in mergers and acquisitions activity that dealmakers are expecting due to less M&A scrutiny at agencies such as the Justice Department and FTC, said Stoick, who heads the firm's aerospace and defense M&A group.

**Phil Inglima  
Crowell**

Heading into 2025, Crowell & Moring LLP will continue stressing the themes of a strategic plan that has been in place for the past few years, Phil Inglima, the firm's chair, said.

Crowell will be "doubling down on our core strengths," including antitrust, government contracts and healthcare, said Inglima, who was elected chair of the D.C.-headquartered firm in 2017.

The firm is also "very intent on growing our transactional and corporate practices in particular," Inglima said.

"That's going to continue, and the timing is somewhat fortuitous because we expect to see some unleashing of pent-up M&A demand," he said, noting that many companies "parked ambitions in view

of regulatory enforcement trends, which are likely to reverse in favor of more M&A activity" under the incoming Trump administration.

"So we certainly anticipate seeing more activity, more opportunity there, and we're already building towards it," Inglima said.

Additionally, the firm is looking to grow its presence in the state attorneys general space.

"Some of the domestic antitrust enforcement that had been occupied more by FTC and DOJ, we expect to see that shifting to the state AG level," Inglima said.

When it comes to hybrid work, Inglima said what matters is how well people are serving clients, and how well they are collaborating and developing professionally. He noted that attorneys often need to work "in the field," whether that be in a courtroom, client meeting or at a conference.

"There are just so many ways in which people move in today's work environment," he said. "So we count all of that against what for us is a three-day expectation of on-site work."

Not everyone meets that expectation, and "we are trying to find ways both to motivate and to require more adherence to it," Inglima said, "but we're also not being absolutist about it because I think the reality is we do work very effectively wherever we are."

--Editing by Drashti Mehta.