

Crowell & Moring's Plans For Continued Growth In New York

By Kevin Penton

Law360 (November 16, 2021, 4:48 PM EST) -- Soon after taking over as head of Crowell & Moring LLP's New York office in 2016, Glen McGorty began implementing a plan to double its size.

The white collar and regulatory enforcement attorney sought to increase the office's headcount to 100 attorneys, growing in practice areas such as litigation and corporate transactional services.

With the office now employing 85 attorneys, McGorty spoke with Law360 about how he developed the growth and his plans for fulfilling his goal. This interview has been edited for length and clarity.



Glen McGorty

How have you targeted your growth?

One of our growth strategies has been to grow to our strengths and to help our clients lead. That's why we've developed a pretty exciting financial services practice, doubling down on what we've already done. Plus we've expanded into new areas, such as fintech, cryptocurrencies, securities, derivatives, distressed debt trading. These are all areas that I think are super cutting edge, particularly in financial services, that augment our traditional trade sanctions and regulatory practice that we've had for years.

Looking ahead to 2022, how are you planning to target your growth?

The growth strategy right now is continuing to find opportunities to grow, continuing to add folks to the core areas of our strategic plan, and overall make sure that the folks who are joining us continue to get the integration attention that they need to make them successful. The metric is people being glad they made the move, not just simply making the move.

We're pretty thoughtful about our growth. We've had opportunities to be much, much bigger than we are. In [the firm's 42 years], there's a reason we've grown from 30, 40 attorneys to somewhere between 600 and 700 now and not much more. And that's because we're deliberately thoughtful in wanting to attract people who want to practice in a very particular way.

How is Crowell & Moring's culture different from its competitors'?

When something comes in, we have no sharp elbows, we're not siloed; we pool our resources and collectively think about how to best staff matters, irrespective of our office. So our clients have come to know us as the firm that gives them the best team for a particular project, wherever it may be. We attract folks who want to come here and collaborate. They're going to pick up the phone and call their partners and ask for help, and say yes when they're the ones who get that call.

So many firms have a negotiation between partners about how to get credit for stuff. But we take that element out of it. We don't make our partners worry about how much credit they're going to get. We don't have origination credit in that sense — we give all the credit in the world to the folks who develop business, but we don't have that original, formulaic calculus. So we get folks who want to help on matters whenever they have an opportunity to help on matters. That creates a culture where you're benefiting from new matters that other folks are bringing in across the firm, opportunities that you helped generate for other people, and opportunities that you helped others with because of your expertise.

How is the firm working to ensure that its attorneys are diverse and have equal access to advancement opportunities?

In New York, not long after I took over, it was just so jarring how disproportionate our diverse talent was among the junior ranks of the firm and our office in particular. We made a commitment that it was going to be a number one priority to grow and diversify the partnership, particularly in the New York office. I'm proud of where we are, particularly on gender lines. There was a moment where we were down to two female partners in the office. We're now up to 11, and growing. There's never going to be a "mission accomplished" on this front.

What are your office's plans related to COVID-19?

We've decided as a firm at the present that we're not going to mandate days back. We're going to see how things progress. We in the New York office have had a steady flow of people coming back since last summer and certainly through the early part of this year.

As the new year approaches, I'm hopeful we're going to have folks who really embrace the flexibility that practicing this way has given them, but also return to our roots of community and being around.

So much is useful for junior lawyers from a development perspective to be present. I do think, candidly, that because we were a tight-knit community in the beginning, it made navigating COVID easier than had we not been. Considering the growth we've had, that's something we need to really double down on going forward, and that means bringing people back in a community. Community can be virtual in a sense; we've done a lot of stuff to maintain that community virtually, but I think a part of it is going to be more in person as time goes on.

--Editing by Bruce Goldman.