

Crowell Sees Strongest Revenue in Firm History Amid Year of Expansion

In the past 10 years since 2011, Crowell's revenue has increased 57.1%.

By Bruce Love
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What You Need to Know

- Crowell's year-on-year revenue eked up a modest 0.6% to \$517.6 million.
- The firm's 2021 result represents a 20% increase over the past five years.
- The firm significantly swelled its total head count to 546 from 465 and its equity partnership to 117 from 89, resulting in a decline in RPL and PEP.

In a year of concerted expansion for one of Washington, D.C.'s most well-known locally born firms, Crowell & Moring last year saw its highest revenue ever.

While year-on-year revenue in 2021 eked up a modest 0.6%, to \$517.6 million from \$514.4 million in 2020, that result represented a 20% increase over the past five years. Gross revenue in 2016 was \$434.3 million, which itself was a \$71 million jump over 2015 levels. Since 2011, revenue has increased 57.1%.

The 2021 increase also came in a year where the firm was not anticipating the levels of contingency revenue it enjoyed in 2020, when Crowell's total revenue rose 18.7%.

"[2021] was a year where we exceeded our own expectations," said firm chair Philip Inglima, adding the firm's base business performed with "great strength," increasing 20% in revenue. "When you put 2020 and 2021 together, we feel extremely good about it. We knew that the contingent revenues wouldn't



Photo: Diego M. Radzinski/ALM

Phil Inglima, a partner and chair of Crowell & Moring in Washington, D.C.

be at the same level as 2020, yet we still were able to eclipse the revenue tally from the prior year—which itself was quite a spike. So, we felt extremely good about that.”

In talking to the partnership about the firm's results, Inglima said he had encouraged the view of a two-year window of performance over a time period characterized by the current pandemic, as well as significant head count growth for the firm.

The firm spent the year significantly adding not only to its overall head count, but also its partnership. In late 2020, it added 19 lateral partners firmwide

and opened an office in Doha, Qatar. Last March, it combined with financial services boutique Kibbe & Orbe, adding 24 lawyers in three cities. And in June it [merged](#) with 61-attorney intellectual property boutique Brinks Gilson & Lione in Chicago. It also added offices in Denver and Indianapolis.

In London, Crowell has nearly quadrupled in size over the past three years and added two teams of financial service lawyers from Kibbe & Orbe and McGuireWoods.

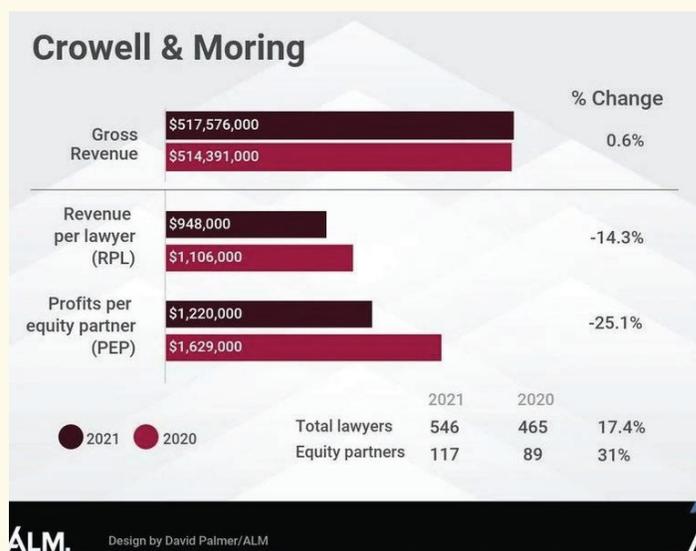
All told, last year Crowell's head count swelled 17.4% to 546 from 465, and its equity partner ranks shot up almost by a third to 117 from 89. More revenue spread across even more lawyers—as well as the absence of 2020's oversized contingency fee income—inevitably meant a sizable drop in the year's revenue per lawyer and profits per equity partner, each dropping 14.3% and 25.1%, respectively.

“With those numbers goes the understanding of the drivers of success in our engines of production,” said Inglima. “We know that our base business needs to continue to grow ... and we see great harbingers of long-term success when we see the number of client relationships that expanded in the year. We know that predicts well for us over the next two to five years.”

Over a three-year period, since 2018, RPL has increased 9.6% to \$948,000 in 2021 from \$865,100, and PEP increased 19.7% to \$1.2 million last year from \$1 million.

Inglima added that 2021 saw “talent growth in exactly the areas where strategically we have said we need to grow.”

“[These areas are] where our clients need more from us, and where we see opportunities to be more competitive throughout the market. That assures us that we're on the right path,” said Inglima, adding “of course” the firm would “love to see” a straight-line growth curve. “But we're not evaluating ourselves as



if we're a stock on the stock market. We're evaluating ourselves as a talent-based business, and we continue to grow that talent and see our clients embrace more and more opportunities to use our talent.”

Inglima is also quick to point out that the year's record growth was not at the cost of the firm's commitment to diversity.

Almost 40% of the firm's lateral partner hires and 58% of its lateral associate and counsel hires last year were women or identified as racial minorities, while almost three-quarters of its first-year associate class and 91% of its 2021 summer associate class were diverse, according to figures provided by the firm. Of its seven newly elected equity partners, 29% were women or racial minorities, along with 38% of its 13 newly elected nonequity partners.

According to the firm, women and diverse lawyers currently constitute 33% of the firm's management board, office managing partners, and practice group leaders, while 48% of its committee leaders are women or diverse.

“We're trying hard to look on a systemic level where there are opportunities for improvement, enhancement and growth [in the firm's diversity], and we're seeing results from it,” said Inglima.