

Inside Proskauer's New York Office

By Linda Chiem

Law360, New York (October 27, 2014, 6:55 PM ET) -- When New York-based Proskauer Rose LLP had the chance to design a completely new office from scratch as the anchor tenant in the brand-new 11 Times Square tower, the firm knew just what it would do with the new space.

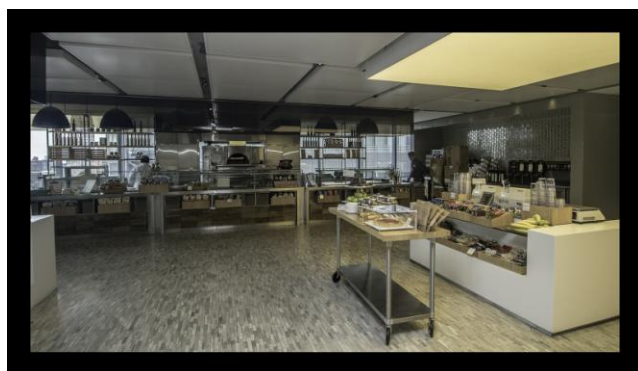
Even though the firm's deep New York roots date back to 1875, Proskauer's offices are far from traditional. The firm's top brass wanted to go modern with the 400,000-square-foot space at 11 Times Square by opting for a sleek, glass-heavy esthetic that showcases its best feature — the city itself.

Proskauer's reception area and main lobby on the 28th floor boasts a 180-degree view of the city with up-close glimpses of the Port Authority Bus Terminal, Times Square and the theater district — thanks to the building's minimum 9-foot-6-inches of floor-to-ceiling glass windows.

The features give visitors their first introduction to what is a grand space that's decked out in a posh bright white and grey color scheme and a clean look designed by architectural and interior design firm Gensler. Proskauer takes up all of floors 17 to 30 at 11 Times Square, located at Eighth Avenue and 41st Street, for the firm's more than 375 New York-based attorneys.

The new space reflects the firm's goals of offering efficient and effective client service, as well as fostering innovation and collaboration among the team.

"We were looking for a space that was simultaneously modern, yet warm, inviting and collaborative," Hal Plott, Proskauer's chief real estate and facilities officer, told Law360. "We were looking for a space that would excite all of our personnel when they came to work everyday."



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Employee favorites include The Proskauer Cafe, an upscale, restaurant-style eatery that offers a rotating daily menu that serves breakfast, lunch and dinner options that can include sushi, salads, sandwiches,

oven-fired pizza, grilled-to-order steaks, fish and veggie burgers. The firm also provides a coffee bar featuring a wide selection of made-to-order Starbucks coffee and espresso drinks, pastries, as well as a wine bar complete with fully stocked wine refrigerators that are put to good use for firm and client events.

"The space is very open and light and airy and the corridors in front of the offices are generously sized," Plott said. "We wanted to make sure the functions were organized in a way that really made sense."

Proskauer, one of the few firms that can boast of having its name emblazoned across the exterior of a token Manhattan building, followed the lead of 11 Times Square's development and design team at SJP Properties and FXFOWLE Architects in emphasizing the use of natural light and glass in designing its own space.

"The building makes it a pleasure to come to work every day with all the natural light that comes through opaque glass walls on every floor," litigation associate Adam Deitch told Law360. "It's the only law firm building I've ever seen that looks like a movie set of a law firm."

The firm outgrew its previous, more traditionally designed offices at the Morgan Stanley building at 1585 Broadway and moved into the contemporary and eye-popping space at 11 Times Square in 2011, painting a compelling picture of the firm's robust health.

The firm tackled a number of major cases this year, including helping to defend the Office of the Commissioner of Baseball against New York Yankee Alex Rodriguez's grievance challenging a suspension. Aside from the noted name recognition, this was the first time that a Major League player had been disciplined for using prohibited performance enhancing substances based on a 'nonanalytical positive' — evidence other than a positive drug test — and challenged that discipline in an arbitration proceeding.

The firm also left its mark in the health insurance sector. Proskauer gave New York's Prompt Pay Law some teeth when it solidified a major victory for Maimonides Medical Center in a \$19 million breach of contract suit against First United American Life Insurance Co. Maimonides claimed First United had underpaid for work done to patients with supplemental Medicare insurance policies, but the insurer argued that only the state could sue under its Prompt Pay Law. A New York trial court ruled that the law created a private right of action, allowing Maimonides to sue directly and an appeals court upheld the decision in March.

The New York attorneys who've been churning out those and other victories for Proskauer work in offices that are outfitted with double-layered frosted glass that are designed both to promote transparency and allow for soundproofed privacy. Natural light flows through the windows while overhead fluorescent light fixtures provide the added lift to the corridors.

"There's this feeling when I come into the office that it's very bright, things are shiny and new, and it's a nice feeling to be the first tenant in the building," Julie Kim, a mergers and acquisitions and private equity associate, told Law360.

Proskauer's office serves as an art gallery on its own. The extra wide hallways showcase an expansive art collection — which the firm even highlights in a published book — that includes approximately 500 works including paintings, sculptures, works on paper, photographs and multimedia works spread throughout the firm's offices.

To the left of the main reception desk is a spacious seating area outfitted with tan leather chairs and a sprawling Frank Stella pixel painting, one of the first things to greet attorneys as they step inside the calm from the chaos of New York.

"I've lived with the design and the buildout and one of the things I still really enjoy is the artwork that we have in different locations," Plott said. "On my floor, just as I come off the elevator I see an artwork from Mel Bochner called, 'Blah, Blah, Blah' every morning and that really makes me smile. Sometimes just starting out your day, it's a really nice piece of art that makes you chuckle."

--Photography by Cara Salvatore. Editing by Katherine Rautenberg.

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