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# CHICAGO LAWYER

## Brand new day: SFBBG's South Loop office build-out just one element of revitalizing established firm

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As the world continues to strike a new sense of stability during the coronavirus pandemic, full-service firm Schoenberg Finkel Beederman Bell Glazer believes it has found a new balance.

Along with a rebranding and firm name change, SFBBG has embraced its new South Loop home in Suite 1500 at 300 S. Wacker Drive after 40 years at its former home in the Loop.

"We had been in our old space since the 1970s," partner Adam Glazer said. "We now have a different perspective and I think it has really helped us. The firm is on a new footing... It's a favorable situation now."

In its new 15,000-sq.-ft. home, SFBBG has the floor entirely to itself which Glazer believes helps build a better sense of "collegiality" in the firm. Currently, the office is on a one-week-in, one-week-out of the office strategy for its 50 employees, but Glazer says no more than 15 people are in the office per day.

The offices are uniform, and the firm's conference rooms are showcases for the space and SFBBG.

"We thought there was value in egalitarian space. Nobody has the type of ego that requires a larger office anymore," Glazer said. "That's a vestige of the past. We were looking to get space at a more competitive rate."

New digs, new look

Making the trek across town provides SFBBG with a seamless opportunity to fully renovate and reinvigorate the firm. It adopted its new name, making Glazer, Daniel Beederman and Bruce Bell name partners. The firm launched its new logo with colors near the maize and blue of the University of Michigan. It doesn't bother Glazer, an alum of Northwestern Pritzker School of Law.

"If you're an Illinois fan, you're not thrilled with it. If you're a Michigan fan it's right up your alley," Glazer chuckled. "It's throughout our firm now. It showcases the full-service business law firm we are."

SFBBG partner Michael Friman said the firm negotiated "elevator identity" with the landlords. When people arrive at 300 S. Wacker, they see the firm's name and logo at the lobby's elevator bank, and when you get out of elevator you know you're on SFBBG's floor.

"We were looking for a wow factor," Friman said. "As soon as you turn toward our space, it's all glass — very bright and modern. Gone are the dark heavy woods and carpet. It's refreshing."

Maximizing the views 300 S. Wacker offered was essential, according to Friman. They now have views of the river on three sides of the office and can see a touch of Lake Michigan on the east side.

"The building offered fantastic window lines," he said. "We have many more window offices than before."

## The waiting is the hardest part

SFBBG's committee kickstarted the firm's process of selecting a new office. They started with around 10 buildings, whittled the list down to three finalists before selecting 300 S. Wacker.

Friman joined the firm in February 2018 and immediately joined its search committee for a new office. Friman, who practices in real estate matters and is a licensed real estate broker, was a part of two other firm relocations during his career. It allowed him to help SFBBG anticipate the hurdles that would come throughout the process.

"This process started in March 2018 and went all the way to the fall of 2019," Friman said. "During that time your vision of what you want ... it's a very fluid process. My experience was helpful because I've worked with many of these brokers ... I had dealt with the landlords on a personal level."

Glazer said beyond the amenities the building provides — including a rotation of food options, in-building gym with showers, and more — the southwest portion of the loop was expected to be a boomtown before COVID-19 put that on pause.

"It will probably take another year or more to see what everybody had envisioned to take place this year actually hit the ground (running)," Glazer said. "We do still expect, and I know the projections are that it'll be delayed, but it won't be cancelled, that the southwest corner of the Loop will be dynamic. There will be new restaurants, businesses, and opportunities."

Putting roots down at 300 S. Wacker for more than 40 years — like SFBBG did at its old home — sounds like a perfect plan to Glazer.

"It suits us very well and helps us grow. The building will remain a very competitive location for us," Glazer said. "We will end up being as happy as we were in our old space. Pandemic or not this will be a very valuable home for the lawyers of Schoenberg Finkel."

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