

CHICAGO LAWYER®



'The Wow Factor'

Salvi, Schostok & Pritchard's new space engages the senses

BY DUSTIN J. SEIBERT

At the new Salvi, Schostok & Pritchard offices, change comes in details big and small. Many of those changes are designed to engage your senses as soon as you arrive on the 47th floor at 161 N. Clark St.

There's the pristine view eastward toward Lake Michigan. There are the fresh flowers in the main lobby. There are the striking glass sculptures made by local artists. There's faint Chicago-style jazz playing in the main lobby.

"We told our designers that we wanted people to feel like they were walking into the Peninsula Hotel as they came off the elevator," said firm founder Patrick Salvi.

In late June, the firm moved its Chicago offices from 22 W. Washington St., a place the firm has been at for about seven years. The new Clark Street space became operational in early July.

"The last space was nice, but I think the stature of our firm has reached a point where we needed to have a space that was truly extraordinary," Salvi said. "But the primary reason we left was that we were busting at the seams with regards to personal office space as well as storage and conference room space. The improved workspace quality here lends itself to a much more comfortable space for clients and employees."

Chief Operating Officer T.J. Saye agreed that space was an issue in the former office. The new space has slightly more than 18,000 square feet — well over the 8,000 square feet in the old office.

"It's hard when you work right within three feet of somebody for eight hours a day," he said. One person gets sick, everybody gets sick. We had boxes sitting on a secretary's desk ... all those things were becoming a problem."

The partners gave themselves a two-month period to find a commercial broker and spent about six months walking through office spaces, armed with a list of several things Salvi required, including close proximity to both downtown courthouses, good building amenities and available parking nearby.



"As we started checking off that list, it really narrowed us down to a select few that would allow us to move in in a certain time frame," Saye said. "It took much longer than I think we'd all anticipated, but this space had the 'wow factor' with the view."

Patrick Salvi II, managing partner of the Chicago office and Salvi's son, said the new space had plenty of potential the first time they walked through it.

"As we watched the design and construction move along, it developed into something even better than what our imaginations believed was possible," he said.

LESS IS MORE

Those familiar with the old space will immediately recognize the new logo attached to the office lobby wall: The partners' initials SSP are encircled and "trial lawyers" replaces "Law Office of."

"Since we're in trial so often, I thought it was appropriate to refer to us as trial lawyers," the senior Salvi said.

The elder Salvi wanted to establish a modern and high-end, yet minimalist approach, when building out the space. There's a luxurious but not ostentatious feel to the furniture and light fixtures. The glass dividing the lawyer offices from the support staff is designed to bring in ample light for everyone regardless of where they sit.

All the employees had a say in how the office would look when completed.

"At some point, every person sat in on design meetings and helped make decisions," Saye said. "Secretaries and paralegals all played part of the process in designing the layout and choosing the furniture. At the end of the day, we made sure everyone had a vote in the process."

Tech upgrades were a big part of the new space: The new IT room is much larger than the old room, the client management area got a long-overdue upgrade and workstations were at least doubled. The technological link between the firm's Chicago and Waukegan offices now has a better interface.

"We use this as an opportunity to make some really positive changes in the name of technological efficiency," Saye said.

"Café Salvi" is likely the biggest upgrade as it pertains to the staff: a much larger and more fully realized space for lunch, coffee or breaks than in the last office, Café Salvi was designed to encourage more staff members to leave their offices and congregate with each other. It's also designed as a hosting space for events, as it can hold 75 people.

The café has Wi-Fi facilities and a pool table that doubles as a dining table. The firm caters food in for the staff two times a week, and there are two beer taps in the corner. ("We try not to have too many before five o'clock," joked the senior Salvi.)

"It's really a retreat for them to get away from the grind and take a little time to themselves," Saye said.

As the firm specializes in personal-injury work, they made sure to establish a warm and cozy family room that makes clients feel at home.

The response to the new office, from clients and staff alike, has been "palpable," Salvi said.

"It seems people feel really good about the space and are happier to come to work," he said. "I've always been proud to be part of this firm, but now even more so." CL

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