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BakerHostetler makes new home in Century City

By Douglas Saunders Sr.
Daily Journal Staff Writer



At front, Eric E. Sagerman, BakerHostetler's office managing partner, leads ribbon cutting ceremony at law firm's new Century City office. | Photo courtesy of BakerHostetler

BakerHostetler relocated its Los Angeles office to the newly renovated Anderson Towers complex in Century City.

The move from Brentwood is part of a trend of law firms in Los Angeles favoring Century City. Skadden Arps is relocating from downtown Los Angeles and others, including Sidley Austin, are beefing up their space there.

Eric E. Sagerman, BakerHostetler's office managing partner, said he toured several office buildings during the COVID-19 pandemic in search of a new location for the firm to continue its expansion and strategically stay ahead of the competition. The minute Sagerman stepped into the Anderson Towers office he said he knew it was BakerHostetler's new home.

"It was 2020 and I was touring buildings, wearing my mask, looking at spaces, but no one was there because everyone was at home hiding from Covid," Sagerman recalled. "It presented all these questions like, what's going to happen after the pandemic? Will people come back to the office? Will they not? Do we need the same space in this new paradigm? Just a variety of the unknown, but when I saw the space in 1900 Avenue of the Stars, when I walked in there, and I talked to the building management team, I thought, this is it, you know it when you see it – this is going to be amazing."

Sagerman said the open-design office space offers spectacular views from just about every vantage point. 1900 Avenue of the Stars at Little Santa Monica Boulevard and Avenue of the Stars is undergoing a $100 million project.

"It's an A-plus location. It's going to be an A-plus building with all of the capital improvement. Our office layout, how it came out, I would have to say is A plus too," he said. "One of our attorneys said they've never seen a nicer law office. It's just beautiful, but the real thing is we doubled the size of the Los Angeles office."

Sagerman, a restructuring specialist, was brought on board by the firm in 2019 to accelerate the firm's growth trajectory in California. At the time the office, the Los Angeles office had 40 attorneys. That number has doubled.

"We added 120 attorneys to the West Coast since 2019. Our brand went through the roof, and our new space in Century City is commensurate with our increased brand recognition. The office is a full-service office. We've got M&A, private equity in our corporate group, intellectual property, complex litigation, restructuring, labor and employment and we have a robust, data and privacy practice. We drew on marquee talent from many AM-Law 100 firms," Sagerman said. "It's truly a new office and a new chapter for us and the move is just an exclamation point on that."

Sagerman said the firm has adopted a standard-size office model for all attorneys and had pushed for in-person attendance.

"We thought that law is a communal profession, and attorneys benefit from face-to-face interaction and the ability to bounce ideas off each other in real time. We need to be in person, in connection, to train our junior associates. There are a number of reasons why a physical presence is always going to be desirable. If we decide to do an office share or a hoteling model in the future, our new space is built to accommodate that. We considered all that when looking at the new offices," he said.

Sagerman said the work is paying off with more camaraderie and energy.

"Everyone is really happy in a way I haven't seen since before the pandemic," Sagerman said. "The pandemic put a damper on people's spirits, but people are happy to come in now and there's a lot of positivity and possibility in the air. It's a nice thing to see so I'm extremely enthusiastic about the future for our firm in Los Angeles and on the entire West Coast."

douglas_saunders@dailyjournal.com

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