



50,000 SF Office – Tenant/Buyer Representation

Situation:

In the wake of the implosion of some of the largest law firms in the world, many firms are rethinking the efficiency and economy of their office space. In Metro Detroit, the move of Secret Wardle Law Firm from Farmington Hills to Troy, MI sets forth metrics for a law firm to consider as it evaluates the firm's commercial real estate needs. The one-hundred year old firm realized that the practice of law had changed functionally, aesthetically and economically and if it were to exist profitably, it would have to be responsive to those changes and select and design its space carefully.

Challenge:

The initial steps included understanding the firm's goals for the next couple of decades; geographic, economic and growth models were major factors to consider from the outset. The firm desired to centralize its location, redesign its space to address the law firm practice elements of the 21st century and reduce its overall occupancy costs. Given those goals, relocation was mandated into space that would address new law firm metrics. Even before a perfect building was identified, Forum Group coordinated design and function changes to not only improve efficiency, but significantly reduce the firm's occupancy costs. The firm also required that the suitable building also be available for acquisition.

Solution:

Forum Group noted that even today, Detroit law firms have comparatively high square foot ratios. Taking a cue from the cutting edge workplace strategies and creative lease terms more common in NYC, Forum, (together with design consultants Harley Ellis Deveraux) brought some of the best new law firm real estate trends to benefit Secret Wardle in its move. Along with lease cost factors, smaller spatial footprints and a complete redesign of the traditional law firm space often yields better performance, greater flexibility, higher levels of attorney interaction, and an effective, enjoyable workplace.

Benefits:

This relocation was in many ways ground breaking in Detroit. The merging of cutting edge law firm design and workplace strategies coupled with the identification of a well located, well-designed building and a sophisticated economic Lease/Option to Purchase structure, resulted in a significant reduction in the firm's operating expenses, improved the law firm synergies— all in a building truly designed for the 21st century law firm.