

## Creative Re-Use Saves \$20 per sf on a Fast Track

### The Staubach Company

**B**rega & Winters PC recently relocated from the 22nd floor of Wells Fargo Center to the 13th floor of the same building. Paramount to Brega & Winters was that its new office space reflect its professional image. With the assistance of The Staubach Co., Brega & Winters was able to expand its office, use its space more effectively, and retain its desired image. Most importantly, Brega & Winters achieved its goals on time and in budget.

Brega & Winters is a firm of 30 attorneys specializing in diverse litigation and transactional law. Last summer, Brega & Winters hired The Staubach Co. to assist it evaluate its current building as well as other opportunities in the Denver market. While satisfied with its building image, Brega & Winters wished to take more space and decrease the ratio of rentable square feet per attorney. Additionally, Brega & Winters wished to accommodate future expansion and maintain its Class "AA" image while at the same time reducing occupancy costs.

Once a thorough understanding of Brega & Winters' needs was ascertained, suitable alternatives were evaluated, including available space in its existing location.

Each choice presented distinct advantages. In order to make an "apples-to-apples" comparison between the respective alternatives, it was critical to gain a thorough understanding of base-building inclusions and exclusions and establish a competitive tenant improvement allowance. To assist in assigning cost and schedule information to each of the alternatives, Staubach's Design & Construction Consulting Services was utilized.

The Staubach DCCS group performed a strategic plan that utilized benchmarking data from its national law firm practice group. Utilizing the latest national trends, the group prepared cost estimates and schedules for each alternative. Brega & Winters was interested in a full-floor suite located within Wells Fargo Center. The previous tenant was a financial brokerage group that had constructed the space with high levels of finish, including office walls constructed of etched glass and high-end lighting.

With modification, the space would provide a brighter environment with abundant outside lighting, all while mitigating costs. Additionally, the move within the building would be less problematic for both employees and clients, neither of whom would be too inconvenienced by such a move.

However, several challenges remained. Some within the Brega & Winters team were not sure that the new space would project the proper image for the firm. As configured, the space needed substantial modification to be utilized effectively by Brega & Winters. Most problematic were the existing glass partitions, which were not conducive to attorney/client conversations.

The project team expanded and located the appropriate expertise to address these concerns as well as proactively address the many other variables involved in the maturing

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project. W. E. Kieding Interior Architects was retained. Kieding had an existing relationship with Brega & Winters and could mobilize quickly to help refine the critical decisions. Margenau Associates Inc. was brought onboard to address the privacy issues, and a select group of general contractors was contacted to begin providing detailed cost estimates for the project.

As Kieding began to refine the design, much of the skepticism about the appearance of the space gave way to enthusiasm about the exciting new look that the project team was developing. The design was taking on the personality of the end user.

After interviews and a price competition, Integrated Interiors was selected as the general contractor with the responsibility to deliver the space in less than six weeks. Due to the penalties facing Brega & Winters for missing its move date, the general contractor was required to agree to penalties for late completion.

Under Staubach's leadership, the project team worked closely and effectively. With all parties motivated to meet the aggressive schedule, the Brega & Winters leadership group made the commitment to be equally responsive. Brega & Winters' organizational structure proved valuable. Decision makers were at the table for every meeting.

Key decisions were made to expedite the schedule while reducing costs. Cabinets, copy center counters, a coffee bar and lighting fixtures were tagged for reuse and located to storage during construction. Commonwealth Partners, the building manager, provided great support to the process, allowing re-use of materials from other floors that were undergoing renovation.

The heavy file requirements of the legal environment were another challenge. High-density filing areas were located near the building core with ancillary filing in strategic locations throughout the office. This allowed the project to avoid the costly and time-consuming prospect of reinforcing the building structure to handle the concentrated weight of filing systems.

Speech privacy issues were addressed with the addition of a sound masking system. The system provided an increase in privacy of approximately 35 percent over the existing offices. This increase allowed the bright, open office environment provided by the glass walls to be compatible with the high privacy needs of the law office. The addition of sound masking also assisted in keeping the budget and schedule on track. Costly wall construction and acoustical insulation were not required. The system also provides paging throughout the office.

Prequalified vendors were brought into the project early to handle data and voice cabling, signage and moving services. The



commitment from each was to provide a move with no downtime. Moving over a weekend was critical to the operations of the firm.

Preplanning the move with all members of the project team allowed for a smooth transition. All financial and schedule goals on the project were met and the move occurred as planned over a weekend.

Experience in the management of design and construction is earned through repetition. It is this repetition that provides the vision to find value and savings within a project. The combined results of modifying existing space — while re-using lighting, millwork and custom cabinetry — provided a savings to Brega & Winters in excess of \$20 per square foot on its construction budget.

Project management is an intricate process of coordinating numerous interests spread across multiple organizations. A successful project is contingent upon a team of professionals working toward a common goal. Brega & Winters, the consultants, contractors and vendors all worked to make this project a documented success

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