

Office Snapshot: Barclay Damon's NYC Expansion

By **Adrian Cruz**

Law360 -- Over the last six years, Northeast firm Barclay Damon LLP has been putting a heavy emphasis on growing its presence in major markets such as Boston, New York and Washington, D.C., which includes a substantial expansion in New York City that has seen the office grow by more than 500% since 2019.

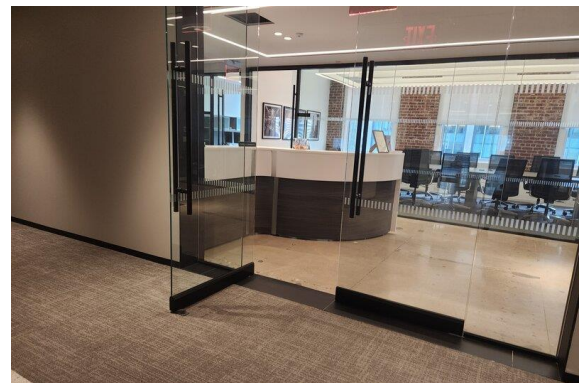
In response to its fast growth in New York, Barclay Damon announced that it has moved its office from the fifth floor of 1270 Avenue of the Americas in the Rockefeller Center complex to the building's 23rd floor, which nearly doubles the footprint and office capacity compared with the firm's previous space.

"This move represents an important step forward for our firm as we continue to strengthen our position in major markets," firm managing partner Connie Cahill said in a statement. "It also reflects an extraordinary level of success in finding great lawyers in New York and expanding that office over the past five years, from less than a half-dozen lawyers before COVID-19 to over 30 lawyers today."

Barclay Damon officially moved into its new space July 21. The firm's chair, John Langan, told Law360 Pulse that the decision to stay in the same building was primarily driven by the flexibility offered by the Rockefeller Center complex, which would allow the firm to rapidly grow its office space or relocate to a different floor, depending on its immediate needs.

"If we came across a firm of 30, 40 lawyers we wanted to combine with, we could stay in the same complex and they can move us around," he said. "Because of this, a lot of stand-alone buildings wouldn't have been a good fit for us. We did look around, but ultimately there was a strong preference to stay because even if we had a 10-year lease, we could always pivot from one space to another if we needed to."

Langan added that Barclay Damon's fast growth in major markets stems from its success in firm-to-firm combinations and integrating large teams of attorneys into existing setups. Some notable additions over the last few years include a 20-person team from LeClairRyan in Boston; New Haven, Connecticut; and New York, along with teams from Washington, D.C. firm Shapiro Lifschitz & Schram, and Burns &



The entry to Barclay Damon's new office in New York City. The firm has nearly doubled its previous footprint in the building at Rockefeller Center. (Courtesy of Barclay Damon)

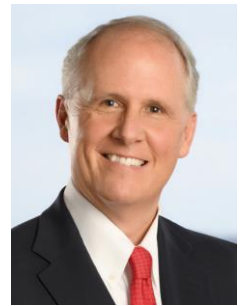
Levinson LLP in Boston.

"We've had great success finding talent in the New York market and our clients want services there," Langan said. "It's been a good period for us and the real growth has been since 2019. From that period, we went from less than a dozen to nearly 35 attorneys in New York, with more than 90 in all of the major markets."

The Leader

John Langan has been Barclay Damon's chair since 2021, when he stepped down as managing partner as part of a long-term succession plan. During his 20 years leading the firm, Barclay Damon grew substantially from a primarily New York-focused operation of around 60 attorneys to a Northeast regional firm with nearly 300 attorneys, its website said.

A graduate of St. John's University School of Law, Langan has been with Barclay Damon since 1995, originally joining as a corporate attorney, working on white collar, fraud and complex commercial litigation matters before transitioning into a management role in the early 2000s.



John Langan

"It was quite an adventure," Langan said. "It's an old line firm of over 170 years old, but back in the day, a small group of us were able to take it to a different place in terms of its markets, talent and platform. Besides my children, this has been my favorite thing to talk about."

During his last few years as managing partner, Barclay Damon said that Langan began focusing on the plan to grow the firm's larger markets, which has seen it attain its current reach of nine offices across the Northeast along with a Canadian location in Toronto.

"When I first stepped down, Connie asked Lizz Acee, managing director of major markets, and me to take our success growing the firm and apply that to doing the same thing in major markets," Langan said. "It's been a great source of pride, meeting all of this new talent and traveling to the different offices. We're not done, but we've already been very successful so far."

The Location

From a design perspective, Langan said that the approximately 11,500-square-foot office space at 1270 Avenue of the Americas looks to blend traditional design with modernity, highlighting the exposed brick that harks back to the Depression era when the building was first constructed, along with more contemporary features including glass finishes, a large kitchen and chairs with built-in electrical outlets.

"You get to see the original brickwork along with exposed mechanics, but at the same time, we have modern lighting and a lot of glass," Langan said. "We want to ensure that everybody has a view, whether you're in an interior office, a secretarial station or the kitchen."

Another feature Langan said was important to the space design was ensuring that all the offices were identical in size, adding that it reflects the flat



The view from Barclay Damon's new office space on the 23rd floor of 1270 Avenue of the Americas. (Courtesy of Barclay Damon)

management structure of the firm, which puts less emphasis on hierarchy compared to traditional business models.

"Part of our culture is to be very flat in our management structure with not a lot of hierarchy," he said. "The first-year associates should have as nice of an office as the partners do, and during the build-out, we made our best efforts to have the offices be the same size."

Although there are over 30 attorneys practicing out of New York, the new space has only around 25 workspaces featuring remote docking stations, which Langan attributed to Barclay Damon's post-COVID-19 work environment. The firm currently has a "team engagement policy" in which attorneys are expected to be in the office at least three times weekly, and he said that each week, they are able to reserve specific spaces using the hoteling model that is increasingly being adopted across its different locations.

"People move around offices and they're set up to be accessible by anybody on any given day," Langan said. "You have a higher number of people in the office on a daily basis under the system and it creates a good energy and vibe. People aren't competing for office space, but they realize it's a valuable resource. They sign up for the next week, pick their favorite spaces and check out if their friends are going to be there. We're going to this model more in our different locations to balance having an office for everyone without wasting space."

The Team

42 total employees
16 partners
17 other attorneys
9 staff

The Work

Langan said that commercial litigation, healthcare, insurance, bankruptcy and data security are the most prevalent practices out of the New York office, citing one recent highlight as 2021's Board of Managers of the 432 Park Condominium on Behalf of the Individual and Commercial Unit Owners v. 56th And Park Owner LLC.

The ongoing state court suit alleges that the 432 Park Ave. tower was built with a number of defects including faulty elevators, flooding and noise caused by the swaying of the building. Barclay Damon currently represents the manufacturer of viscous damping devices that help moderate the building sway.

"It's one of those matters that captures the imagination of the city," he said.

Other notable matters include its public finance attorneys' work for the Dormitory Authority of the State of New York in its pricing of \$1.03 billion in school district revenue bonds, and its bankruptcy attorneys' work in a wide range of areas including litigation against foreign banks and healthcare company defense.



Uniform-size offices for all attorneys is a hallmark of Barclay Damon's office design and reflects the firm's flat management structure. (Courtesy of Barclay Damon)

Comings and Goings

Barclay Damon's most recent partner hires in New York are bankruptcy attorney Allen Underwood II, who joined the firm in May and benefits attorney Michael McGovern, who joined in late April, according to the firm's website.

Underwood joined Barclay Damon after four and a half years with Lite DePalma Greenberg & Afanador, LLC. He graduated from Seton Hall University School of Law and his practice focuses on restructuring, bankruptcy and creditors' rights; commercial litigation and complex trials; and corporate law.

McGovern was with Morrison Cohen LLP for a little over two years before joining Barclay Damon. The graduate of Northwestern University Pritzker School of Law represents companies, private equity sponsors and venture-backed startups on incentive compensation plans, merger and acquisition-related benefits and compensation issues, and Internal Revenue Code compliance.

--Additional reporting by Andrea Keckley and Rose Krebs. Editing by Robert Rudinger.
