

Office Snapshot: Mayer Brown's Empire State Of Growth

By **Andrea Keckley**

Law360 (February 23, 2024, 2:49 PM EST) -- Having surpassed a headcount of 300 attorneys at its New York office last fall, Mayer Brown LLP says the Empire State shop is a hotbed of recruiting activity.

More than 80 lawyers have joined Mayer Brown's New York office over the past five years, including close to 50 lateral partners, according to the firm. That growth has encompassed tripling the size of the firm's corporate practice in New York and doubling the size of its finance practice.

"We want to continue to grow across the office — in particular, our corporate group, but not just corporate," New York managing partner Matthew Ingber told Law360 Pulse.

The New York office is home to 13 global practice leaders, but its growth there has occurred at every level, Ingber said.

"As you couple the growth with the demand, it presents opportunities for us to continue to bring in other people, which we did at every level — at the associate level, at the more junior partner level [and] at the counsel level," Ingber said. "And so that has been one of the drivers of growth in the New York office."

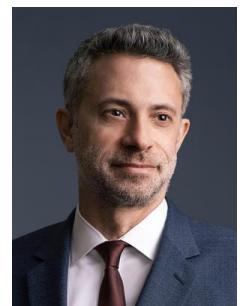
The Leader

Ingber has been with Mayer Brown since he joined as an associate in 1998. He took over as office manager toward the end of 2018, hoping to see the office through continued growth.

"We wanted to continue, in particular, growing our corporate group," he recalls. "We had started that process before I stepped into the role and we wanted to make sure to continue that."

Ingber succeeded Richard Spehr, who was appointed to lead the firm's global litigation and dispute resolution practice after leading the New York office since 2009. Ingber was co-leader of the global litigation and dispute resolution practice and the global banking and finance litigation practice before taking over for Spehr as office manager.

"We, together, had a pretty good sense of where we wanted this office to go," Ingber said.



Matthew Ingber

One of Ingber's other goals was to strengthen the firm's connections with local organizations. Last year, Mayer Brown and BNY Mellon received the New York City Bar Association's City Bar Justice Center 2023 City Bar Justice Award for their pro bono and philanthropic work. Ingber accepted the award on his firm's behalf during the center's annual gala alongside BNY Mellon general counsel Kevin McCarthy.

Ingber is currently on the executive committee of the New York Lawyers for the Public Interest board and the board of the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law.

"I wanted to make sure that we were expanding our partnerships with various public interest legal organizations," he said. "I wanted to make sure that I continued to serve on the boards of some of those organizations, and that my partners and associates in this office were stepping into boards or junior boards."

The Location

Mayer Brown's New York office is at 1221 Avenue of the Americas.

"At a time when firms are thinking a lot about how they want to use their space — and I think we hear that some firms are contracting, at least with respect to their physical space — we're growing," Ingber said, "and that's a reflection of the growth of our population of lawyers."

Mayer Brown moved to that office in 2015. Just last year, the team added office and conference space on the 15th floor of the Midtown Manhattan skyscraper. They also began creating a 6,200-square-foot collaborative working space and café on the 14th floor that will open this year.

As of now, Mayer Brown attorneys are expected to spend at least three days in the office each week.

"We've also realized that when we talk about a culture of collaboration, we need to create a physical environment where that's easier to sustain and reinforce," Ingber said.

The Team

Partners: 133

Associates: 162

Counsel: 25

Other lawyers: 9

Non-attorney professional staff: 141

Office Total: 470

The Work

Right now, Ingber says the New York office wants to continue investing in its corporate, funds, restructuring and insurance services, among others. But he wants to build these practices in a way that homes in on the firm's strengths.

"To say, generically, 'We're just going to have a funds practice,' I think, is a lazy way of thinking about how to build a practice," he said. "You have to start with the question, what are we good at?"

The New York team took a similar approach to building out its insurance group. Back in 2010, the firm

brought on David Alberts and two other attorneys from Hogan Lovells as part of an effort to grow its insurance offerings.

"They understood that the way to build their group was to not limit this to simply insurance transactional work, but to have the regulatory piece and to have the litigation piece," Ingber said. "And so we're able to grow around those handful of individuals who joined us about a decade ago."

A few years after that, the firm decided it wanted to strengthen its leveraged finance capabilities. It did this by working across practices, looping in lending lawyers, litigators and bankruptcy lawyers with the hope of capitalizing on a strong market for restructuring work.

Throughout the past year, Mayer Brown says its work has included advising Google, Veolia, Spotify, 3M and Nestle. Washington, D.C., attorney Carmine Zarlenga, for instance, helped Nestle convince a New York federal judge to drop the Swiss company from an antitrust lawsuit in an order issued earlier this month.

Three of the firm's New York litigators also helped Société Générale reach a \$35 million settlement in a class action filed by investors. That deal got preliminary approval from a New York judge this month.

Comings and Goings

Many of the attorneys Mayer Brown's New York office brought on last year joined after holding public sector roles. The firm kicked off 2023 announcing that John J. Sullivan, the former U.S. ambassador to Russia, had returned to the firm as a partner in both the New York and Washington, D.C., offices. The following March, President Joe Biden appointed him to the U.S. Institute of Peace's board of directors.

During his first stint at Mayer Brown, Sullivan co-founded Mayer Brown's national security practice, which he now co-leads.

In April, Justin Herring, former executive deputy superintendent of the cybersecurity division at the New York State Department of Financial Services, joined Mayer Brown in New York. He became part of the cybersecurity and data privacy, financial services and regulatory enforcement, and global investigations and white collar defense practices.

The next month, the firm announced the hiring of Adam Hickey, a former deputy assistant attorney general with the U.S. Department of Justice's National Security Division and former assistant U.S. attorney in the Southern District of New York, to join its Washington, D.C., and New York offices.

Around the start of the new year, Mayer Brown touted the addition of private equity attorney Robert Pohlus from Proskauer Rose LLP, the latest of several transactional lawyers to join the firm.

Other recent additions to the firm's New York office include William Patry, who previously spent 17 years as senior copyright counsel at Google, and Jason Friedman, who joined Mayer Brown's banking and finance practice from Gibson Dunn & Crutcher LLP. Litigator David Yolcut joined the firm as counsel from Weil Gotshal & Manges LLP in December.

Some of the firm's recent departures include insurance regulatory partner Sanjiv Tata, who joined Paul Hastings LLP in October.

The prior month, Willkie Farr & Gallagher LLP hired three energy attorneys from Mayer Brown. Two of them, Samantha Leavitt and Eric Pogue, are based in New York. Pogue now serves as Willkie's global chair of power and renewable energy.

--Additional reporting by Mike Cherney, Hailey Konnath, Gina Kim, Kevin Penton, Ryan Boysen, Alison Knezevich, Jack Rodgers, Sarah Martinson, Adrian Cruz, Anna Sanders and Aaron West. Editing by Robert Rudinger.

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