

Undertaking a library move is daunting under the best of circumstances. Coupling the move with a significant downsizing and decentralization of a library's physical footprint makes the task even more challenging. As the Bose McKinney & Evans LLP Law Library discovered when facing this scenario, however, the ultimate result is rewarding.

According to *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, "change" means "to become different, to undergo transformation." Certainly this has been the case with the reorganization of the firm's library. While the former library was very large and centralized with four small practice group libraries, the new library is largely decentralized and consists of one smaller main library with nine small- to medium-sized satellite libraries scattered throughout the seven floors occupied by the firm. Additionally, the main library is located on one of two floors that are separated from the other five floors by a bank of elevators. This creates a slight disconnect between the main library and the rest of the collections, but it is a logical separation since the satellite collections house the resources used by the practice groups on those floors.

Among the most significant challenges in creating the new space was the need to fit enough shelving to house the print collection, as well as the workspace of the library assistant, which consists of a small study table, a two-sided study carrel, and a soft seating area in the main library itself. Thus, in order to fit all of this into the new main library's smaller space, we needed to change the ratio of print to online resources in the library's collection.

As a result, during the months leading up to the firm's move to new space, the library switched multiple loose-leaf treatise subscriptions to online Web subscriptions, canceled upkeep of all case law books, and migrated numerous current awareness publications to electronic alerts. While doing so reduced the library's print collection, it also raised the question of what to do with the several hundred books to be discarded.

Fortunately, in planning for the overall firm move and relocation, the move management team made a commitment to be "green" in the building of the new office space, and the library followed suit. Not wanting the withdrawn books to end up in a landfill, the library staff sought the highest form of recycling: reuse. Via multiple postings

to various law library online discussion lists, the library was able to find new homes for the majority of the books. The discarded books went to several law libraries including some as close to home as a new Magnet School for Law and Public Policy in Indianapolis and others as far away as Nigeria. All of the remaining books were recycled through a partnership with a local recycling company.

Overall the reorganization and decentralization of the library has been positively received. Many individuals have embraced the restructuring. Partner Bob Clemens, upon learning of the satellite libraries, even quipped, "We have satellite libraries? Who knew?" On a more serious note, another partner, Bryan Babb, states, "The decentralization of the collection makes it easier to use the satellite libraries, especially as the overall office space is so much larger now, thus it is not as convenient to travel to and use the main library."

The positive aspects of such an effort extend far beyond the reuse of the discarded books, as evidenced by Babb's comment, "The downsizing of our print collection was helpful because it removed many of the older and seldom-used books, making it easier to locate the more frequently utilized print resources. The main library is still big enough to create an atmosphere where you can think and browse in relative peace, which is what you typically expect from a library." This peaceful environment is enhanced by the inclusion of a soft seating area near the current newspapers and magazines in the main library.

While the decentralization has resulted in fewer in-person visits to the main library, not surprisingly there has been a definite uptick in the number of e-mails and phone calls from people needing to know the new location of print resources they rely upon, as well as seeking help on how to do research online.

Jim Hamilton, a tax partner located on a floor with a small tax satellite library and several online tax resources, states, "It is a bit startling to admit that I haven't even been to the main library

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The main library includes a soft seating area.

CHALLENGES AND REWARDS



The tax satellite library is one of nine satellite libraries scattered throughout the firm's seven floors.

The reorganization and decentralization of the Bose McKinney & Evans LLP Law Library

By Cheryl Niemeier

yet, five months after the move. When I started my career, I was in the library virtually every day.” Karen Sharp, an associate in the education law group, also admits, “With the improvement in technology and the availability of research materials online, I have not visited the library once since the move.” These comments reinforce the attorneys’ increasing reliance on the online research technology readily available from the desktop. In addition, many attorneys and paralegals have been taking greater advantage of the myriad training opportunities the library has always offered, as training continues to be very

crucial in the wake of the decentralization and more virtual library world in which the firm now exists.

The often-quoted phrase “Change is the only constant” was most certainly true during the reorganization and downsizing of the library and continues to be so even now, eight months later. Change always has been in greater or lesser degrees a part of libraries. Nonetheless, as British Theologian, Richard Hooker (1554-1600) said long ago, “Change is not made without inconvenience, even from worse to better.”

The firm’s library always was and

continues to be an important resource in the firm’s practice of law. The library in its old form was definitely not worse, nor is its current form necessarily better, but simply different. Perhaps there have been minor inconveniences; however, any difficulty is expected to be short-lived. Library staff confidence abounds that since all things are subject to change, staff will ultimately adjust and may even wonder why they ever did things the old way. ■

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