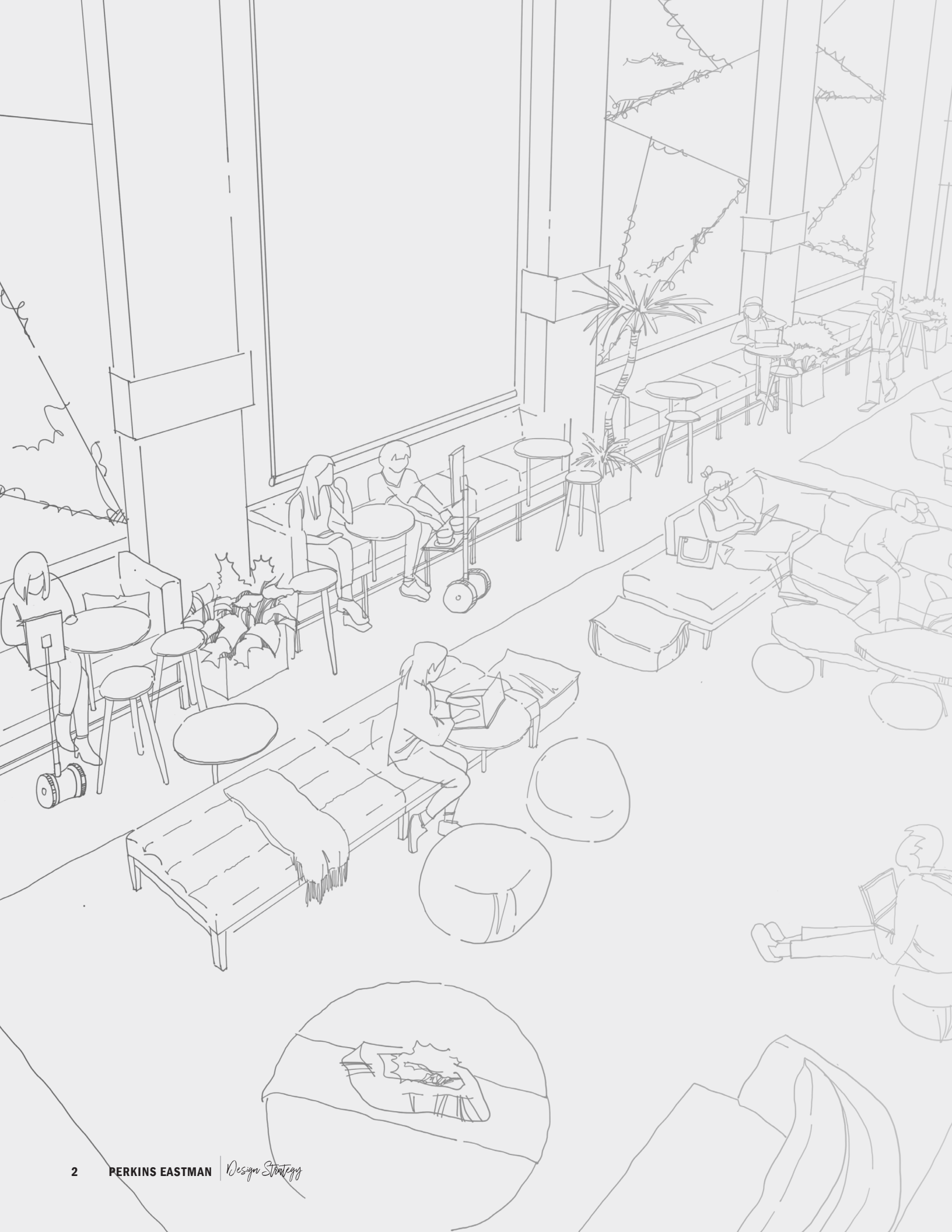


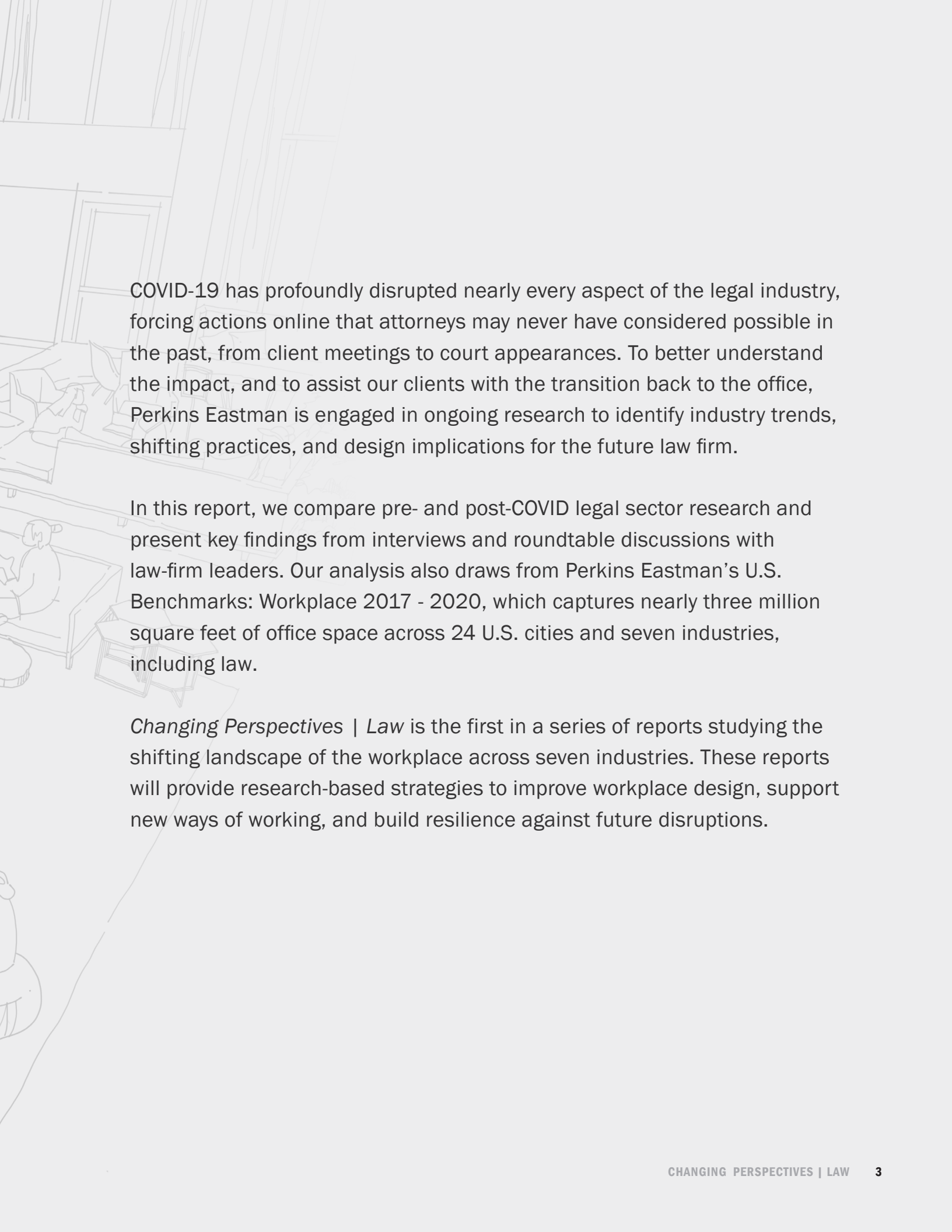


Changing Perspectives | LAW

Design Strategy

PERKINS—
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COVID-19 has profoundly disrupted nearly every aspect of the legal industry, forcing actions online that attorneys may never have considered possible in the past, from client meetings to court appearances. To better understand the impact, and to assist our clients with the transition back to the office, Perkins Eastman is engaged in ongoing research to identify industry trends, shifting practices, and design implications for the future law firm.

In this report, we compare pre- and post-COVID legal sector research and present key findings from interviews and roundtable discussions with law-firm leaders. Our analysis also draws from Perkins Eastman's U.S. Benchmarks: Workplace 2017 - 2020, which captures nearly three million square feet of office space across 24 U.S. cities and seven industries, including law.

Changing Perspectives | Law is the first in a series of reports studying the shifting landscape of the workplace across seven industries. These reports will provide research-based strategies to improve workplace design, support new ways of working, and build resilience against future disruptions.



2021 CHANGING PERSPECTIVES

LAW ROUNDTABLES, FEBRUARY 2021

Perkins Eastman's Workplace and Design Strategy teams spoke with industry leaders from eight national law firms, representing over 5,000 attorneys, to help inform our findings. We discussed the challenges, opportunities, and new ideas impacting the business and practice of law.



2019 NEXT GENERATION

LAW INTERVIEWS, MARCH 2019

Perkins Eastman conducted interviews with law students at American University in Washington, D.C. Questions focused on preferences and priorities related to work, including desired qualities and expectations for their employers, types of support needed in the workplace, and predictions for the future practice of law.



2020 WORKPLACE COVID-19 RESPONSE

ROUNDTABLE SERIES, APRIL-MAY 2020

Perkins Eastman's Workplace and Design Strategy teams hosted 10 virtual roundtable discussions with 41 industry leaders from a variety of sectors across the United States. Occurring in the early weeks of the pandemic, discussions focused on the themes of adapting to change and building organizational resilience.



ONGOING RESEARCH

Perkins Eastman conducts basic, exploratory, and inductive research to identify trends, understand influencing factors, and discover opportunities for growth and improvement. In the past year alone, we have published over 15 whitepapers/reports, written over 50 articles/blog posts, and spoken at over 150 conferences.



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Drivers

01



Embracing Technology

02



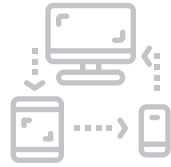
Prioritizing Experience

03



Reassessing Space Needs

01



Leveraging Technology



Touchdown spaces allow staff to work from multiple locations within the office and provide opportunities for informal collaboration



Dynamic offices use occupancy sensors and AI-enabled personalization to deliver a better hoteling experience



Tech-equipped collaboration spaces facilitate a seamless transition between home and office



Breakout rooms with visual and acoustic barriers support confidential proceedings like depositions, arbitrations, mediations, and court hearings that occur remotely



Social & interpersonal skills



Creativity & innovation



Problem solving



Specialization



Technical skills



Data entry & processing



Manual & repetitive tasks



Generalization



“This year, from a budget perspective, most expenses have gone down. But our annual technology spending keeps growing and growing.”

- 2021 Law Roundtable Participant

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Digitization of the legal profession has accelerated tremendously over the past year. Many of these developments have been positive, enabling attorneys and staff to stay productive and connected while working remotely. Law-firm design must respond to the expanding role of technology while maintaining the flexibility to accommodate change.

In our 2021 Changing Perspectives | Law Roundtables, firm leaders noted that some departments, like accounting and IT, may shift to fully remote work. Increased outsourcing of certain functions may lead to a reduced need for in-house staff (e.g. fewer paralegals required for the review of discovery documents).

With the transition to hybrid work, certain roles and departments within the firm become more significant. As one roundtable participant noted, “The CIO has never been more important for a law firm.” And while some aspects of IT may be outsourced or moved off-site, user support roles will become even more important as law firms shift to hybrid work models.

It is essential to incorporate technology from the earliest phases of design. Audio-Visual (AV) vendors, for example, play an increasingly crucial role as legal services and processes shift to digital platforms. With more employees working from home, virtual collaboration must be seamless, secure, and uncomplicated.

02



Prioritizing Experience



A wide range of **collaboration opportunities**, including formal and informal spaces varying in size and degrees of openness, enable knowledge sharing and support firm culture

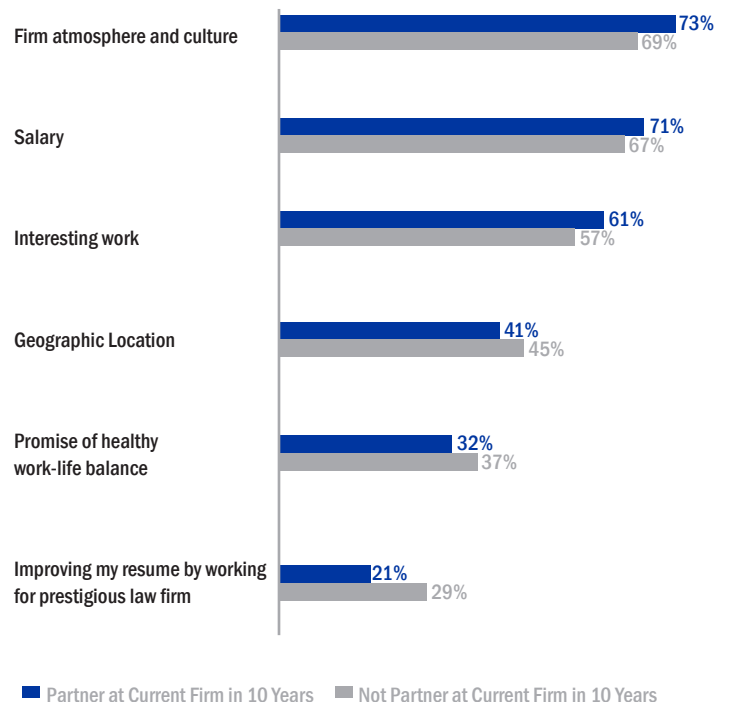


Premium amenities like state-of-the-art fitness centers, child-care centers, and dining with healthy food options support employee health and well-being



Visual transparency, through the use of glass-enclosed collaboration spaces and offices, promotes observational learning

The 2020 NALP Multi-generational Law Firm Survey found that firm atmosphere and culture is the most important factor for associates in deciding to accept their current job.



NALP's Multi Generations in Law Firms: Working Together

Survey responses represent two groups: Attorneys who said they want to be a partner at their current firm in 10 years and those who said they do not.



“Something I look for in an employer is: What is the firm culture like? How well do people get along with each other, and how much time do they spend together?”

- 2019 Next Generation Law Interview

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A firm's atmosphere and culture is one of its best recruiting tools. It is a key factor not only for Millennial and Gen-Z lawyers, but for associate and partner-level attorneys across generations. As law firms bring employees back to the office, those who provide a better employee experience will have a considerable advantage over those who do not.

Even as firms plan for hybrid work models and smaller footprints, there is collective agreement that the physical office is here to stay. In our 2021 Changing Perspectives | Law Roundtables, firm leaders said that the office remains essential to the business and practice of law. While the shift to remote work has been successful from a business perspective, roundtable participants agreed that networking,

mentorship, and learning through observation happen best when attorneys and clients are together.

Designing for well-being is key to creating a positive employee experience, particularly in a post-COVID environment. Since the shift to remote work, many attorneys are working harder than ever. It can be difficult to distinguish between “on” and “off” hours, leading to burnout and fatigue. As they transition back to the office, firms can minimize environmental stressors by taking steps to improve air quality, provide access to natural light, and reduce noise distractions. Amenities and perks like healthy food options, nap pods, access to outdoor space, and fitness centers support well-being and provide a better employee experience.

03

Reassessing Space Needs



Prioritizing **quality over quantity** of space supports a better employee experience



Hoteling solutions utilize space efficiently while supporting a hybrid workforce



Selective **outsourcing** and shifting certain departments to lower-cost locations saves money and space

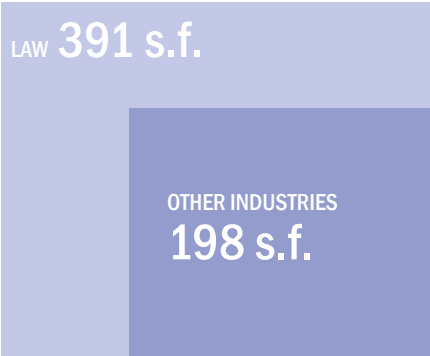


Single-size offices with standardized furniture offer flexibility and space efficiency



Digitized document storage saves paper and creates space in the office

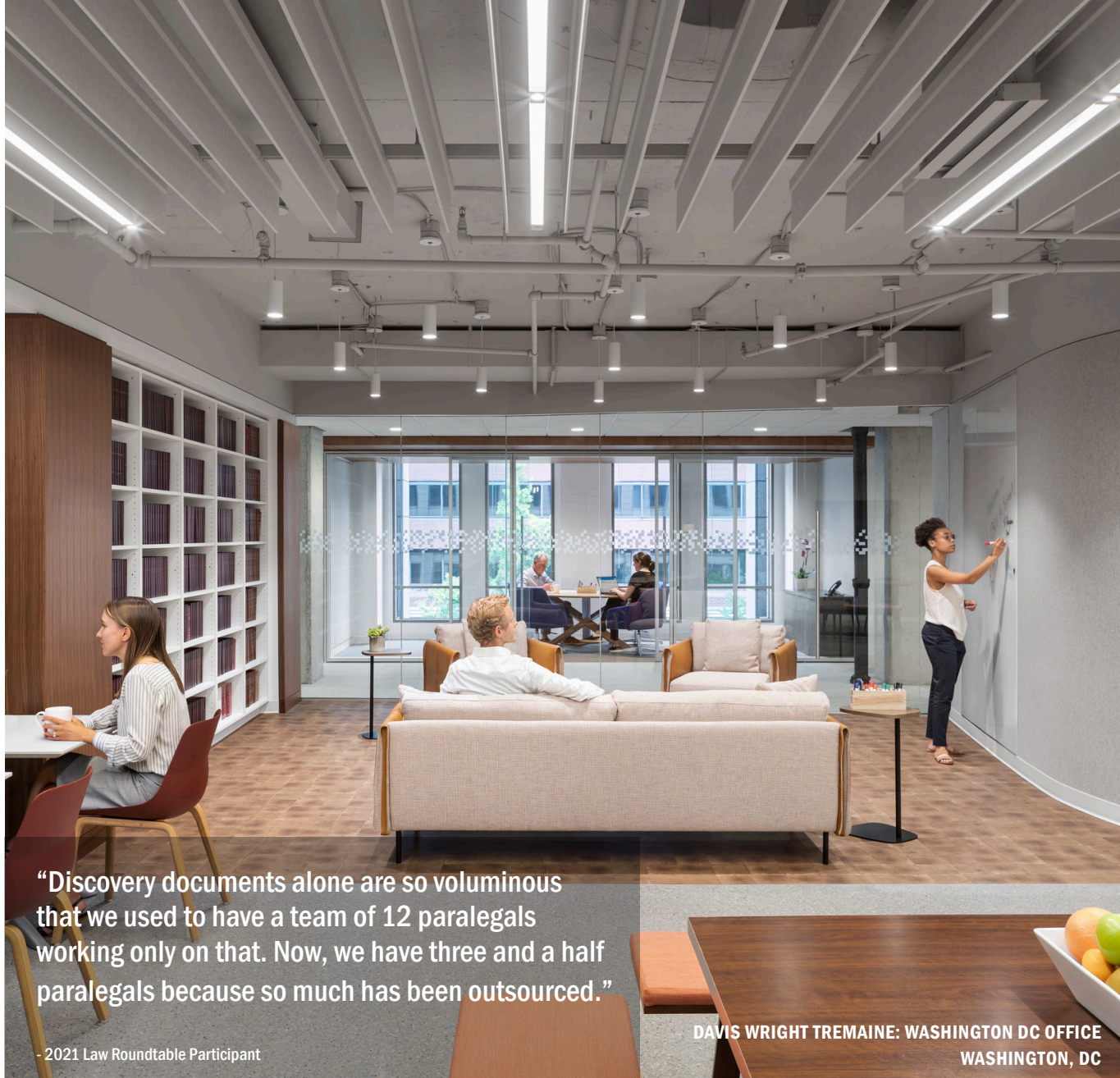
USF per seat pre-COVID



Open vs closed office space pre-COVID

| | |
|------------------|-----------------------|
| Law Offices | 25% open / 75% closed |
| Other Industries | 84% open / 16% closed |

Pre-COVID industry benchmarks calculated from Perkins Eastman's projects between 2017 and 2020. "Other industries" include finance, non-profit, science & technology, technology, consumer products, and government.



“Discovery documents alone are so voluminous that we used to have a team of 12 paralegals working only on that. Now, we have three and a half paralegals because so much has been outsourced.”

- 2021 Law Roundtable Participant

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Law offices of the past are notoriously inefficient, consuming nearly twice as much square footage per employee compared to other industries. Space has traditionally been apportioned by status and seniority, with large corner offices for partners and smaller ones for associates. And, as a paper-intensive profession, physical document storage consumes a tremendous amount of space.

But attitudes towards the office were shifting even before the global pandemic took hold. **The increasing acceptance of single-size offices and hoteling solutions, along with the adoption of paperless practices, is accelerating the trend towards shrinking footprints and new workplace typologies.**

In general, younger attorneys place a higher value on work-life balance and expect more flexibility in terms of when and where they work. COVID-19 has further shifted expectations around flexibility and choice across all generations.

In our 2021 Changing Perspectives | Law Roundtables, firm leaders signaled a new openness to desk-sharing and smaller, single-size offices. Based on these changes, one participant estimated a 25% reduction in law-firm real-estate footprints going forward. Square footage recouped through office right-sizing, document digitization, and outsourcing certain roles may be reallocated for collaboration, professional development, and special amenities.



Ideas in action



Overview

COVID-19 has accelerated long-brewing changes in the legal profession: The forced departure from the office has shifted attitudes about remote work; technological advances have transformed the business and practice of law; and financial pressures have driven firms to re-evaluate and prioritize investments.

While it is clear that many firms will embrace remote work, the law office of the future maintains a role that—while different—is no less important. A well-designed office can be a firm’s greatest asset for attracting talent, building professional and interpersonal relationships, and strengthening public image.



Recruitment & Retention



Mentoring & Development



Community & Culture



Reputation & Brand

“I think wellness initiatives can go a long way to help prevent burnout. But simple things like ergonomic chairs and standing desks are important too.”

- 2019 Next Generation Law Interview

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Recruitment & Retention

Economic pressures associated with COVID-19, along with increased competition from nontraditional providers like on-demand legal talent agencies and virtual firms, means attracting and retaining the best talent is more important than ever. According to a recent survey by Cushman & Wakefield, **68% of law-firm leaders said that recruitment and retention is their biggest business-competition challenge.**¹ As firms reassess space needs post-COVID, there is an opportunity to invest in amenities that support recruitment and retention.

Design Strategies

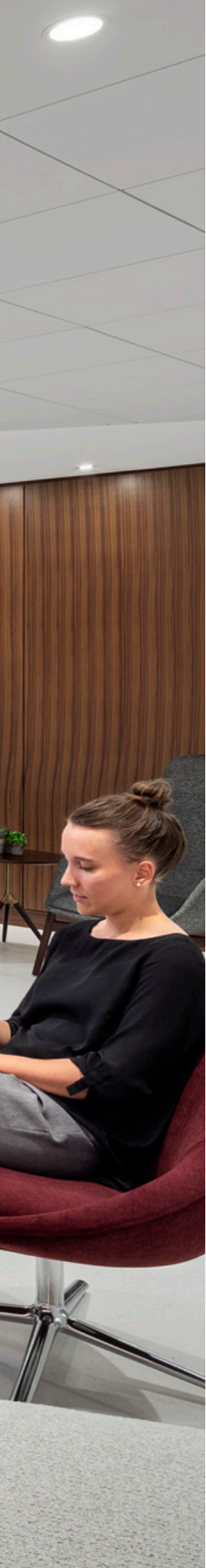
-  1 User-controlled settings (e.g. lighting, temperature, ergonomic, and privacy shades)
-  2 Wellness-centered amenities like fitness centers, lactation rooms, and cafes equipped with work surfaces and power connections
-  3 Flexible workplace policies and supportive, integrated technology to encourage work/life balance

“I am personally opposed to going fully remote for any employee. How are young associates going to rise through the ranks without day-to-day interactions with partners and clients?”

- 2021 Law Roundtable Participant

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Mentoring & Development

The legal profession has long relied upon apprenticeship for the professional development of new associates. Informal mentorship in particular plays an important role. According to a 2019 survey of 1,200 Millennial lawyers, **61% said an informal mentor has had a significant or crucial impact on their careers.**² Finding opportunities to foster meaningful mentorship—both virtually and in-person—will be increasingly important as remote and flexible working arrangements become more common.

Design Strategies

-  1 Offices with height-adjustable work surfaces, whiteboards, and guest chairs
-  2 Huddle rooms, collaboration pods, and working lounges with whiteboards, “plug and play” monitors, and flexible seating
-  3 Strategic programmatic adjacencies to encourage chance encounters and informal collaboration

“Collaboration is key. Going forward, we will continue to need things like conference rooms, cafes, and touchdown spaces in the office.”

- 2021 Law Roundtable Participant





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Community & Culture

The ability to attract and retain talent is increasingly reliant on workplace culture and policies that support flexibility and work-life balance.

According to the 2019 survey of Millennial attorneys, dissatisfaction with management and firm culture was second only to dissatisfaction with compensation as a top reason for considering other job opportunities.³ The workplace itself is a key driver of culture, influencing employee engagement, collaboration, and overall satisfaction.

Design Strategies

-  1 Wide range of work settings available throughout the office (e.g. formal/informal, open/closed, individual/collaborative)
-  2 Visual transparency (e.g. offices with glass sidelights and glass-enclosed conference rooms with adjustable shades)
-  3 “Remote first” design approach to promote an equitable experience for in-person and remote workers



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Reputation & Brand

Building firm reputation and trust is key to sustaining a competitive advantage amid uncertainty, economic turmoil, and changing market demands. While COVID-19 has placed significant financial pressure on many law firms, those with the best reputations and concentration of talent in relevant practice areas remain in relatively high demand.⁴ As a destination for employees and clients alike, the workplace has an important role in shaping a law firm's public image.

Design Strategies



- 1 Environmental branding to reflect the firm's mission and core values



- 2 Visual storytelling through imagery, materiality, form, and function



- 3 Multi-purpose "showcase" space with breakout rooms and adjacent support (e.g. catering and reception) to host clients and special events

THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING!

The Design Strategy team would like to thank all of our roundtable participants and industry leaders who generously lent their time and experience to help us gather key insights and data regarding changes in the workplace across a variety of disciplines. To our PEOple, who participated in all of our recent in-depth industry surveys, your continued work at Perkins Eastman is invaluable.

ROUNDTABLE PARTICIPANTS



FEATURED CLIENTS

Liddle & Robinson LLP

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Keane & Beane, PC

Olshan Frome Wolosky LLP

McCarter & English, LLP

Davis Wright Tremain LLP

Davidoff Hutcher & Citron LLP

Troutman Pepper Hamilton Sanders LLP

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