

Tech Meets Open Space—and Views—at Cooley's New Hudson Yards Home

By Meghan Tribe
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Walking into Cooley's new office at 55 Hudson Yards, it hardly seems like you're walking into a law office at all.

A dramatic two-story video wall greets guests as they approach a glass staircase illuminated by floor-to-ceiling windows, framing stunning views of Manhattan atop one

of the city's fastest-growing neighborhoods.

The 44th floor entrance also happens to be Cooley CEO Joe Conroy's favorite place in the new office.

"It's a very dramatic space, and it says Cooley so loudly and clearly," Conroy said.



CEO Joe Conroy. Photo: David Handschuh/NYLJ



Attorney suite. (Courtesy photo)



At Cooley's new offices at Hudson Yards, CEO Joe Conroy stands in his favorite place in the office, with a view of the Empire State Building behind him. Photo: David Handschuh/NYLJ



Reception area on the 44th floor. (Courtesy photo)



Grand staircase on the 44th floor of Cooley's new offices at 55 Hudson Yards. (Courtesy photo)



Kathy Pakenham, partner in charge of the New York office, and CEO Joe Conroy sit for a chat in the cafeteria with a view of the World Trade Center behind them. Photo: David Handschuh/NYLJ



Courtesy photo

The “Tech Bar” in Cooley’s offices at 55 Hudson Yards.

Chatter emanating from the Sidebar café next to the staircase evokes the bustle of a local coffee house more than the sounds of a traditional law firm office. But Cooley has always liked standing out from its law firm rivals.

The Silicon Valley firm first entered New York in 2006 through a merger with New York litigation boutique Kronish Lieb Weiner & Hellman. Since then it has lived in the W. R. Grace Building overlooking Bryant Park in Midtown. But last Monday, more than 250 Cooley attorneys and staff made the move to its new 130,000 square foot home in Hudson Yards.

“It’s my first day, and I’m walking around like a kid at Christmas,” Conroy said. “It’s a culmination of a vision that a bunch of us had a while back, and it’s really awesome to see.”

The firm signed a 20-year lease for the space back in 2017 and over the last 18 months has worked to construct a space that was “brand accretive,” Conroy said.

Cooley is “a brand that has an affinity with entrepreneurship and being on the leading edge of technology,” Conroy said. So the idea was to infuse technology throughout the workplace, where everything that you’re working on transfers with you from space to space to space, he said.



Courtesy photo

An interior partner office in the new Cooley offices.

The offices include integrated WiFi connectivity throughout all five floors, including elevators, and they’re fitted with touch-screen conference room televisions and “softphone” technology that allows seamless calling from any device.

Positioned next to the café is a tech bar where dedicated experts help attorneys and staff with their technological needs, from basic hardware and software issues to advice on getting a Peloton bike in the fitness center working.

Following office trends in the legal industry and beyond, the design is also optimized for interaction and collaboration, Conroy said.

Cooley has created what it dubs a “hybrid open space concept.” Partners can elect to occupy interior closed-door offices with glass walls. Or they can opt for—as Conroy has—attorney suites that are custom designed to give attorneys and staff acoustical and visual privacy in a relatively open floor plan layout.

Throughout the offices are “collision points and collaboration spaces” that are meant to encourage “knee to knee” interactions between lawyers, Conroy said.

“Some of it sounds sort of cheeky, but when you get on the ground here and you see the way it’s actually working ... people are interacting in a different way,” he said.

The New York office will be the archetype for Cooley’s offices going forward. Next up for renovation is the firm’s London office, and then San Francisco, where the firm was **founded** nearly 100 years ago.

Hudson Yards is now the largest private real estate development in the U.S. by area and one of the biggest in New York City since Rockefeller Center was completed nearly 80 years ago. With a \$25 billion price tag, “the city within a city” has attracted countless high-profile tenants, including several Big Law firms.

Milbank, Tweed, Hadley & McCloy and Boies Schiller Flexner have already moved into the same building at 55 Hudson Yards. Debevoise & Plimpton has been rumored to be close to signing a deal for a new office in the neighborhood.

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