
New Jersey Law Journal: Flaster Greenberg's M&A Group Has Shown Clients Don't 'Need a Mega Firm'

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*Flaster Greenberg's mergers and acquisitions group is a Law Journal Dealmakers honoree. Read the press release here. The below responses, provided by **Tami Bogutz Steinberg**, chair of the business and corporate department, were lightly edited for clarity and style.*

What are some of your most satisfying successes of the last year, and why?

While we consider each matter we close to be a success when we realize the client's goals, one of our most satisfying successes last year was probably the recapitalization deal we handled for a client with a private equity firm. Not only was it significant in terms of enterprise value, but also the complexity of the matter was satisfying because we were able to tap into of our firm's deep bench of resources, working in tandem to support the client's growth strategy and value proposition, through high-level asset protection, complex estate and income tax planning, and by serving as private equity deal counsel. This company has been a longstanding client, so it was gratifying to have the opportunity to manage this transaction for them. For years, we have advised this fast-growing company beginning with corporate structure, then continuing to represent them with their ongoing business, labor and employment, trademark and other intellectual property needs. At first, the client considered hiring an Am Law firm to oversee this high-asset deal, but we were able to convince them that they didn't need a mega firm name to achieve the same result, and the client was extremely happy with the decision they made.

How have COVID-19 and other economic factors affected your practice area?

Most of 2020 and the first half of 2021 witnessed a dramatic slow-down in market activity due to the pandemic. However, our firm saw a quick and significant uptick in activity during the second half of 2021 as previously stalled transactions revived, new undertakings arose, the abundance of cash in the market emboldened buyers to commit to deals and potential tax increases prompted the need to close before year end. In a very short amount of time, our attorneys were called upon to represent clients in deals that required sophisticated knowledge to manage fast-paced multifaceted transactions. As a result, the second half of 2021 was an extremely busy and productive period for our M&A practice and supporting practice areas.

Amid a changing market for legal services, what does it take to become a trusted transactional lawyer in New Jersey?

Becoming a trusted transactional lawyer in our region doesn't happen overnight—it takes years of developing client relationships and serving clients in a way that achieves their goals, on time. The reputation a transactional lawyer builds while managing client work cannot be underestimated. Word of mouth in our jurisdiction plays a key role. Flaster Greenberg's M&A team provides a holistic, full-service, individualized approach to our representations, listening to our clients' needs and providing our clients with efficient and high level counsel. We principally represent closely held middle market companies, but our deal volume, complexity of transaction, quality of service to our client and value proposition sets us apart. We often get involved early on in the process with strategic, tax and succession planning, with a significant emphasis on tax and wealth preservation, which enables us to facilitate a smooth and quick transaction. We organize and host a regional M&A conference (attended by over 150 professionals and business owners when last held in January 2020), that provides us access to key deal makers and M&A professionals to provide our clients with the additional services required to successfully maneuver through the M&A process. Our next conference is scheduled for January 2023.

Dealmakers are extraordinarily busy people. What must firms do to ensure that they remain engaged with pro bono work, their communities and their families?

Our firm culture and core values emphasize community involvement, inclusion and family. Although we do encourage attorneys to return to the office as often as possible to collaborate with colleagues and mentor junior attorneys, we have embraced a hybrid work environment, which many say helps balance the workload with their family responsibilities. Many of our attorneys began their careers at large law firms where the work dynamic was different, and they were ultimately attracted to Flaster Greenberg partly because of our work-life balance.

As a Cherry Hill-based firm, most of our transactional attorneys live and work in the community, and are engaged in outside activities, including serving on boards of local chambers of commerce, charities and religious institutions, on school boards, and on town councils, coaching junior sports and providing pro bono services to a variety of organizations. The firm supports these activities both financially and with in-kind services, and encourages volunteer hours outside of the office.

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