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Teamwork leads to excellence



Fitzpatrick, Cella, Harper & Scinto - 1290
Avenue of the Americas

Fitzpatrick, Cella, Harper & Scinto occupies the space that won the 2009 IFMA Award for Excellence for Design & Construction in the 100,000 to 500,000 s/f category. This 130,000 s/f law firm project occupies five full floors at 1290 Avenue of the Americas. The firm started with a staff of 9 lawyers almost 40 years ago. Since that time they have grown to 180 lawyers and over 150 other staff members.

Fitzpatrick needed to find a real estate broker that would understand the firm's need for a unique building to accommodate their present and future requirements. The challenge was to find a building that would support their growth and the image they wanted to project to their clients. They found a perfect partner in Newmark Knight Frank.

Mancini Duffy was retained as the interior architectural consultant to help Fitzpatrick achieve their design vision. The goal was to design a cutting edge facility reflecting a progressive, innovative firm, while keeping the history of the company alive. Mancini Duffy achieved this by incorporating important furniture pieces from the firm's past, blending them with contemporary design and finishes.

The design direction was to create an open space that is efficient, encouraging of collaboration and communication. This was not easy since the new facility was on 5 floors.

In order to encourage communication between the staff, intra-floor internal staircases enabled them to navigate easily and spaces were designed throughout the facility where they could comfortably gather. The roof terrace on the 17th floor is a good example of one of those spaces. The design team created a facility that highlighted the elegance of Fitzpatrick.

The success of the project is attributable in great measure to the team's ability to enhance Fitzpatrick's image, business and financial goals, through quality design. The result is a space that is not only beautifully appointed but has also improved the firm's productivity.

Nicholas Cannella, chairman, has noted that even though the project was well planned and thoroughly conceived, as in most renovations, each day had unexpected challenges. The one that immediately came to mind was the ornamental internal stair located in the main Reception Area. When the team initially located the stair, it was discovered that the building's structure was in conflict with the stair as originally design. The team reacted quickly and came up with a new design which moved the stair closer to the windows. In hindsight, the new location worked better than the original concept.

Cannella felt that the project succeeded primarily because Fitzpatrick assembled an ideal team at the inception of the project. The key was to establish a group of professionals that brought their individual talents to the project, their ability to listen and willingness to share information freely.

Upon accepting the IFMA Award for Excellence Cannella said, "Fitzpatrick is honored, but humbled, to receive the IFMA Annual Award for Excellence for this category. We gratefully accept this tribute, recognizing that we are merely a surrogate for all of the fine organizations and talented people who truly earned it, Newmark Knight Frank, Mancini Duffy, VVA, StructureTone and Evenson Best."

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