

Making the case for Westchester

BY JOEL S. LEVER

Lawyers in the New York Metropolitan area tend to focus on locating their law firms in Manhattan, in the belief that location translates into quality in the minds of clients. However, we have discovered that providing clients with a sophisticated legal practice and with the services of talented attorneys at the top of their game makes the need to be in Manhattan irrelevant. More importantly, our location in Westchester actually provides us with certain unique advantages over Manhattan-based firms.



Kurzman Eisenberg Corbin & Lever, L.L.P.'s White Plains location is not only integral to the development and retention of our client base, but to our firm's culture and ability to attract and retain skilled, savvy legal talent. From our tenth-floor offices at 1 North Broadway, a class-A office building, we maintain a broad-based legal practice of national and international transactions on behalf of a geographically diverse client base.

Our Westchester location has tangible benefits that have helped our firm prosper. They include:

- **Freedom from excessive administrative costs and overhead.**

Our firm leases prime office space in Westchester at about one-third of what it would cost in Manhattan. Not only does this allow us to invest our resources in high-quality legal talent and staff, but it translates into reduced costs to our clients. We can provide the same quality and diversity of legal services at a substantially lower hourly rate than a Manhattan law firm.

- **The current nature of the practice of law.**

Like other business enterprises, the business of the practice of law has changed dramatically with the rise of the virtual world. Much of our practice is now conducted by email, conference call, Skype™ or online conferences. Where once messengers had to deliver hard copies of documents by bicycle, documents and signatures are delivered from any location around the world by email. The number of in-office conferences is greatly reduced, saving time and money

for clients. Moreover, clients appreciate our willingness to meet at their offices, and if they are not located in Westchester, our accommodation of their schedules. All of this makes the location of our "sticks and bricks" location irrelevant to clients looking for legal services.

- **Opportunities for lateral growth.**

Our reduced overhead, diverse client base, and team of sophisticated legal talent have allowed our firm to continue to attract stellar attorneys with large books of business. Moreover, many partners who previously practiced in Manhattan have discovered that, particularly in this economy, clients are delighted when advised that the partner has moved to Westchester and therefore can reduce billable rates, and the client will save substantial fees. New partners soon discover that our reduced overhead supports a compensation model structured to accommodate the expectations of an accomplished mid-career attorney who is ready for a change and is excited by the prospect of making a meaningful contribution at an established firm.

- **Family friendliness and diversity.**

Working close to home allows parents to spend more time with spouses, partners and children, and to deal with eldercare issues. A trip to the pediatrician takes one hour away from the office, not half a day. This flexibility, along with the firm's attitude that accommodating family needs is important for its partners and staff, is one of the reasons why we have been able to attract a significant number of partners who are women.

- **Opportunities in Westchester.**

Westchester's affluence and economic vitality produce a steady stream of clients for the range of high-quality legal services offered by firms here.

- **A talented professional workforce.**

Westchester is a magnet for successful professionals who value its lifestyle, which is why so many put down roots in its communities. The county's well-educated workforce also ensures that we can hire excellent support staff.

Working in White Plains offers us the best of both worlds: an urban setting with a U.S. district court and all other professional businesses, as well as easy access to New York City and locations throughout the tristate area. There's a reason why people call this the "greater" metropolitan area! Our location has been and will continue to be a factor in our success.

Joel S. Lever is a founding partner at Kurzman Eisenberg Corbin & Lever L.L.P. in White Plains. He can be contacted by email at jlever@kelaw.com.