

# BOSTON BUSINESS JOURNAL

## Morgan Lewis looks to make name for itself in Boston

GREG RYAN  
Law and Money Reporter  
Boston Business Journal

When Morgan Lewis & Bockius LLP absorbed Bingham McCutchen LLP late last year, it shook up the Boston legal landscape in a big way. The Bingham name, among the most prominent in the city for more than a century, vanished. In its place was a huge national outfit that until that point had a minimal presence in Boston, but was suddenly the fifth-largest firm in the city.

Five months later, the firm is beginning the task of making Morgan Lewis the household name Bingham long was. Sula Fiszman, a co-managing partner of the Boston office, said the gap in name recognition in the city between Morgan Lewis and Bingham is one of the firm's biggest concerns.

"The thing we're working on – and it's a work in progress – is that, all of that 125 years of excellence, [the vast majority] of the people that were here, they're still here," she said. "I think that's just a question of time and getting the word out."

To that end, Morgan Lewis is supporting most of the civic groups and charities Bingham backed, including a Boston Bar Association sponsorship, according to Fiszman and co-managing partner Joanne Foley. Fiszman joined Morgan Lewis from Bingham in 2009, while Foley came over as part of the Bingham combination last year.

"We may not do everything exactly the way Bingham did, but I suspect we'll continue to support the vast majority of what Bingham supported, and we may do more," Fiszman said. Among the other groups the firm backs are the Boston Symphony Orchestra,



**Sula Fiszman and Joanne Foley are the new managing partners of Morgan Lewis' Boston office.**

Image: © Boston Business Journal | W. Marc Bernau

the Boys and Girls Clubs of Boston, and the Jimmy Fund/Dana Farber Cancer Center.

Name recognition concerns aside, Morgan Lewis saw the Bingham combination as a rare chance to grow quickly in a market that lines up with many of its practices. Partners in Boston don't move around very frequently, as "they tend to be much more loyal to the firms that they start with" than lawyers in other cities, partner Mark Stein said. Added Fiszman: "This is the first, and maybe the only, major investment by a national law firm in the Boston market. [Latham & Watkins] has moved in, and Jones Day has moved in, but none of them... has cracked 60 people."

As it put its new face before the public, Morgan Lewis made several moves internally to promote the integration of the two firms. The nearly 40 lawyers Morgan Lewis had in its Franklin Street office joined 160 Bingham attorneys at

One Federal St. in the Financial District. To mix the two groups together, the firm forced long-time legacy Bingham partners to switch offices. It also hosted a partner and associate retreat "on steroids" in Washington in March that included hundreds of lawyers from around the world.

Legal consultants said that while it will take time for Morgan Lewis to match Bingham's cachet in Boston, it has several factors in its favor. Wellesley-based BTI Consulting recently ranked Morgan Lewis as one of the top 20 legal brands worldwide. "Its reputation was good to start with, and it's going to continue to be good in Boston," consultant Jeff Coburn said of the pre-combination Morgan Lewis. Bingham's last years of existence may have made Morgan Lewis' task easier. "Bingham had sort of been exiting Boston in a sense. Its last decade was spent growing itself elsewhere," Coburn said.