

# 2020: Becker Celebrates Its Strong Culture, Resilient Community, & Collaborative Clients

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Every business has done its best to weather the many challenges of 2020 – from safeguarding the physical health and mental well-being of both its clients and employees to ensuring compliance with governmental restrictions and establishing protocols for remote working environments. As the world prepares to welcome a new year, Becker Managing Shareholder Gary Rosen reflects on how our firm responded to these events and what he expects for the year ahead.

## What has been Becker’s proudest moment of 2020?

This is one hell of a unique year to look back on! In a sense, this year represents one of the firm’s proudest moments because we were faced – like so many other organizations and law firms around the country – with unprecedented challenges.

In late March and early April, the pandemic appeared to be a potentially existential threat. But as an organization, we responded to it in exemplary fashion. **We demonstrated our resilience** – as an organization, as people, in so many important ways. We transitioned 95% of our workforce to a remote working environment within a matter of days which required the coordinated efforts of our entire infrastructure.

I cannot say enough about the spectacular performance of our HR team, our operations team, and our IT team – what they did, how quickly they did it and how efficiently, seamlessly, and undramatically they did it. The result has been very gratifying.

It would be easy to throw your hands up in defeat after being removed from your office and working from home with all kinds of distractions. I’m grateful and proud that no one did.

Of course, for months, we were waiting for the other shoe to drop and for that unknown problem to arise that we hadn't and couldn't have anticipated because we'd never done this before. We did face little brush fires that had to be extinguished from time to time. But no matter what we encountered, we came together as an organization, solved the problem, and moved on.

I would say that in the 47-year history of the firm, 39 of which I have been proud to be a member, nine of which I've served as managing shareholder, if this is not our proudest moment, it's certainly near the top of the list.

### **How did the upheaval of 2020 affect Becker's client service?**

Probably the largest unknown factor during 2020 was the health and viability of our clients' businesses. We're a service provider and take great pride in having our clients' best interests at heart at all times - we knew if their businesses were in trouble, so was Becker.

One of the advantages, if there is such a thing, of a global pandemic, is that 'we're all in it together' takes on a deeper meaning. It does not only affect us as a service provider, or our clients in a certain industry. It impacts us all.

It's my job to watch the revenue flow for the law firm - week to week, month to month - and we're very fortunate that our clients have been able to sustain their normal business activities with manageable adjustments. We were able to collaborate on solutions and implement innovative ideas that worked and kept the businesses stable.

### **How did Becker show its appreciation for the extraordinary efforts of its professional staff?**

For our firm to respond and show our resilience comes down to our people. Everyone at Becker - from the ground up - was instrumental. However, there are always some people on whose shoulders the burden falls heavier than others.

As managing shareholder, I felt strongly that it was important to recognize the folks who stepped up in an unusual way, especially those who served as part of our in-office skeleton crew to maintain functional operations. So I did something I've never done before - I got on the phone or on Zoom with more than 30 of our employees to personally thank them for what they did to help the firm get through the past year. I really wanted them to hear it from me. Sometimes, it's the non-monetary expression that means the most. And, hopefully that personal touch made our folks feel just a bit more appreciated for what they do for Becker.

### **How did Becker lay the groundwork for success in 2020?**

This is a direct result of our firm culture - the past year has proven that having a really strong infrastructure in place is a must. Because if there are cracks, a stress test like this year will enhance their visibility and even widen them. If you're solid, then that infrastructure will carry you through the crisis. **You**

**cannot improvise your way through something like this.**

The foundation must be strong, with the right people who have the right attitude, understand the importance of teamwork, who recognize the challenges presented, and willingly step up to do what they need to do. Becker is very, very fortunate to have that.

Our culture is not something that you can put in place overnight; it has to be built over time and with an unwavering focus. It was something I prioritized from the first day I became managing shareholder - to expand on the infrastructure already in place, add any missing elements, and ensure those principles were consistently applied and reinforced at every level of the firm.

**What is your opinion of the future of the workplace environment?**

We will never go back to the structure we had pre-pandemic. However, the remote environment, while allowing us all to be very productive, lacks some intangible element that is rooted in serendipitous, unplanned human contact. That open communication contributes to a strong sense of identity, belonging, and, ultimately, cultural harmony.

So, I believe the way forward will be some form of a hybrid environment with both virtual and in-person aspects. We are still grappling with how this new structure will look. We'll figure it out. We'll put it into application. We'll adjust it. And whatever it is that we end up with, it'll be authentic to Becker.

**What are the firm's top priorities for 2021?**

Our top priority has always been and will remain the success of our clients. Their success is our success. Additionally, I genuinely want Becker to continue to provide a supportive environment in which our people can find an overarching sense of job fulfillment and professional satisfaction.

I believe healthy growth is vital to the future of Becker. There is no question that, pre-pandemic, I was very focused on expanding the firm - both in terms of geography and practice. Obviously, we had to shift gears. But even as we addressed the immediate, pandemic-dictated needs of the firm, we continued to bring on new people in certain practices where there was high demand.

Future planning, lateral hiring or bringing others onboard, and evaluating burgeoning areas of law that might be suitable for Becker are still on our agenda, just pushed further down the priority list. Now, we are focused on determining when we can resume a pseudo-normal type of work arrangement.

My vision for 2021 is going to be malleable to some extent - depending upon how quickly we emerge from this craziness. Having flexibility is going to be the differentiator between being successful and falling short.

**What is your biggest hope for Becker in 2021?**

I would love to continue expanding our profile on a national level. That doesn't

mean that Becker is suddenly going to become a firm with offices in every major city. But we enjoy a great reputation in certain practices that I feel are well-positioned to create an expanded and more nationally-oriented footprint.

Our Washington, D.C.-based Federal Lobbying team's portfolio already stretches coast to coast and we continue to build on that success. We are also a celebrated Band 1 rated law firm in construction law by the esteemed legal publication, *Chambers USA*, and we're probably the largest community association law firm in the country. Particularly in these practices, I know that Becker has a strong foundation and is ready to serve as a springboard for the firm to take its place on the national stage.