

Friday, August 22, 2008  
Bricker & Eckler lauded as law firm for women  
Business First of Columbus - by Maria Gallucci

Bricker & Eckler LLP has ranked among the 50 best law firms for women by Working Mother magazine and Flex-Time Lawyers LLC.

The Columbus firm is the first in Ohio to make the list, which is out on newsstands this month, the firm said. Firms on the list encourage the retention and promotion of women in the workplace.

“Law firms need to make a fundamental shift in their policies by instituting female and family-friendly benefits as Bricker & Eckler has done,” Carol Evans, CEO of Working Mother Media, said in a release. “We hope that by recognizing Bricker & Eckler, who has already moved the needle, a paradigm shift will follow.”

The firm is proud of its accolade, Rich Simpson, Bricker & Eckler’s managing partner, said in the release.

“Our firm has encouraged all of our lawyers for decades – women and men – to play a part in the leadership and direction of this organization,” he said.

At Bricker & Eckler, women lead a fourth of the firm’s practices and head a third of its committees, Working Mother said on its Web site at [workingmother.com](http://workingmother.com). The firm’s scheduling policies also garnered praise, including a job-sharing program and recent guidelines for part-time partnerships.

The firm allows associates to work nontraditional and reduced-hour schedules, and those who telecommute are outfitted with home offices, the magazine said.

“We have always thought of ourselves as a flexible workplace, one which is open to suggestions from our lawyers and employees,” said Betsy Swift, a partner at the firm who is chairwoman of the employment and labor practice group.

Swift said Bricker & Eckler looks for high-quality lawyers for its clients while recognizing that lawyers cannot always work from the office. Partners and associates can work from their homes either out-of-state or within Ohio, she said.

“We want to be at the forefront of considering new ways of having lawyers practice their professions,” she said. “Once we have someone here who’s a quality lawyer, we want to do everything we can to retain them.”

Rankings for the list are based on firms’ submissions to Working Mother’s Web site. The magazine and the Flex-Time consulting firm determine winners by reviewing firms’ self-evaluations of their work-force profile, family-friendly benefits and policies, flexibility, leadership and business development.

Since the first list last year, the applicant pool has grown 29 percent, with 115 firms applying for one of 50 slots in 2008, said Flex-Time President Deborah Epstein Henry.

Henry said the list is intended to make work-life balance and women's issues a basis of competition among law firms.

"We wanted to recognize the firms that have begun to make strides in this area, and recognize there's a lot more work to be done," Henry said.

Bricker & Eckler, which specializes in banking, insurance and financial services practices, employs 137 attorneys in its Columbus office and 14 between its Cleveland and Cincinnati offices.

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