

# CRAIN'S DETROIT BUSINESS®

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## This office revolves around people

By JOANN AMICANGELO

The way business gets done at **Trott & Trott P.C.** has changed, and so has its office space. In July, the mortgage-foreclosure law firm moved into a new 53,000-square-foot office in Bingham Farms, nearly doubling the work space for its 235 employees.

Twenty years ago, David Trott's employees handled specific tasks in the foreclosure process for all clients. Today, independent teams of four or five people focus on all the needs of a particular client.

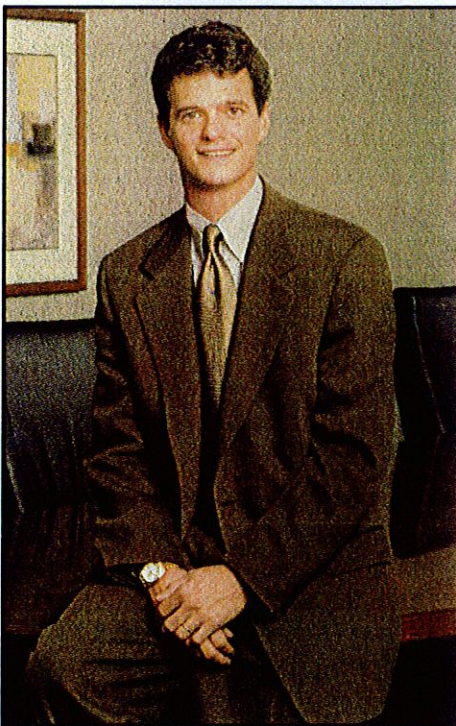
The setup requires team members to work near one another, and the firm's previous office was disconnected and too cramped to allow that.

"Where before clients were dealing with different people every day, this way of doing business makes an office of 200 feel like 10 to the client," Trott said.

Cubicles designed for optimum visual and acoustical privacy fill the center of the floor space. Covered in textured fabrics the colors of nature - ecru, moss green, purple, gold and terra cotta - they provide a framework for each of the customer-service teams. Private, windowed offices for attorneys who support the teams surround the cubicles along the perimeter of the space. Inside the cubicles are light-maple-looking desktops on black metal bases, separated with glass or step-down panels to make it easier for team members to talk.

Each team is like an office within an office, outfitted with its own fax machine, printer, e-mail boxes and direct-dial phone numbers.

Trott said the move wasn't just about improving the flow of work, however. He instructed the design team at **Scarcello**



**Employees and how they function are at the center of the new office design at Trott & Trott P.C. in Bingham Farms. David Trott says that these days independent teams of four or five people will take care of the needs of a particular client. That means their desks need to be near one another.**

**Associates Inc.**, also in Bingham Office Park, to make it a fun place to work.

"They wanted the space to be fresh and fun for their employees, and since it's such a big space, we decided to punch it up with color to make it more interesting and to give it a dynamic, fun feel," said Harrell Scarcello, president of Scarcello Associates.

With a modest build-out budget of \$550,000, Scarcello said, her team focused on paint, wall coverings and a custom-designed, coordinating wallpaper border to create the environment Trott wanted.

Main walls are covered in taupe wallpaper. The computer training center, nine conference rooms and support pillars are painted in the same palette as the cubicles.

Some of the fun comes from "graffiti walls"—framed dry-marker boards where employees can write messages, quotes or thoughts. One employee draws "As the World Trotts" cartoons.

In the bright lunchroom, in addition to grabbing snacks, employees can watch TV or play dome hockey. There's even a quiet room for those who aren't feeling well.

Trott's favorite part of the new office is the lobby.

Unlike most law firms, the majority of visitors to Trott & Trott are people in the foreclosure process who, Trott says, generally aren't happy and have kids in tow. So he wanted to make it as pleasant an experience as possible.

"I wanted it to be like a waiting room in a car dealership," he said. And it is. The room has tile floors, a receptionist behind bullet-proof glass, a coffee station, vinyl seating for six, a TV and a children's play area.

Samantha Gordon, a team leader at Trott & Trott, said she loves the design: "It encourages and promotes creativity and communication both within the individual teams and the entire organization." ■