

## Taylor English Chair Weighs Cutting Its Atlanta Footprint

By Emily Sides

*Law360 (July 13, 2021, 9:42 AM EDT)* -- Taylor English Duma LLP's chair is charting out a path that could possibly lead to slashing the firm's footprint in its Atlanta headquarters in half while ramping up efforts to increase its footprint around the country with attorneys working remotely as needed.

Marc Taylor, a founding partner, was unanimously reelected in early April to return to his role as chair after briefly stepping down to help create businesses similar to the firm's stand-alone advisory services business, Taylor English Decisions LLC, he told Law360 Pulse on Monday. Again at the helm — a role he's served in since the firm was founded in 2005 — Taylor said he wants to make the most of the lessons gleaned from working amid the pandemic.



Marc Taylor

The firm is actively looking at markets around the country that may be a good fit to open up small boutique offices that can be an as-needed space for remote attorneys, he said.

"There's no one size fits all; it's a complex issue beyond the simple math of well, we cut space and we cut costs and that's going to allow us to run a more value-driven model," Taylor said. "I think ultimately we'll end up with a smaller footprint in Atlanta, but I think we won't lose a total footprint, because I think we'll go out to other markets where it's appropriate and open up these boutique centers."

The firm's headquarters in the Atlanta area is an 80,000-square-foot office that includes 200 offices for attorneys, paralegals and staff, Taylor said.

"Our view is we could probably use about half that space, but we have to make sure we check with our stakeholders," Taylor said.

Joe English, a founding partner, told Law360 Pulse that even though the firm is considering cutting its office space in Atlanta, the firm still has plans to grow its lawyer headcount in the Peach State, which will enable it to prepare the firm's next batch of leaders.

"The other piece of that multi-generational commitment is making sure that the folks that come behind the founders of the firm are in leadership positions, that they have a voice, are reflected on the executive committee and leading our practice groups," English said. "That's something that we've been very conscious of, and we've got some great talent coming behind us that we want to make sure we tap into that."

The firm has recently set aside its tiered partnership compensation structure in favor of a nationwide unified partnership, English said.

English added that Taylor is a visionary leader that will help lead the firm in its next growth spurts.

"He has always within Taylor English taken the view of not what firms are doing or what law firms traditionally look like, but what can they be if you put the client first," English said. "Anybody who's worked with him would tell you that he always talks about driving value to the client and that's something that's ingrained in the firm's DNA, because of Marc."

The firm plans on talking with its attorneys and others to see their preferences, such as wanting flexibility to work remotely to help care for children, but have an option to work at the office, or wanting to fully return to working in an office, Taylor said.

The firm has about 140 of its attorneys in Atlanta and 40 additional attorneys who are based elsewhere in the country, Taylor said.

"About a quarter of our lawyers right now are outside of Atlanta, I would imagine that is going to flip substantially sometime in the next three to five years," Taylor said.

In the coming months and years, Taylor said the firm could pursue expanding its footprint nationally.

"It's not a traditional law firm [office], but more of a boutique and concierge conference center, where we have space that we can talk to clients, take depositions and offices where lawyers can come for a day and concentrate on their business," Taylor said. "Equally important, it allows our lawyers in other parts of the country to coalesce with one another, see each other [and] build their personal relationships."

Nearly four years ago, the firm began a program that allows some attorneys to work remotely, which helped the firm navigate remote work firm-wide during the pandemic, Taylor said.

Despite having a cost-effective office space in Atlanta, Taylor sees an opportunity to pivot to further embracing remote work, he said.

"We have an incredible space we're proud of, it's very cost-efficient compared to large towers downtown where our competition resides," Taylor said. "How much of that space do we need? Is there savings in operational costs so we can find ways to create more creative compensation systems for our partners and deliver real value to them in real time?"

Last year, the firm hired 25 new attorneys, including 17 who are working remotely outside of Atlanta, according to a firm spokesperson.

As the firm navigates its next moves, some attorneys have jumped ship. Most recently, eight entertainment attorneys announced Monday they were leaving Taylor English to join Greenspoon Marder LLP in its offices in New York and Atlanta.

Taylor said he's grateful for those attorneys' impact on the firm and wishes them well.

"The firm will continue to concentrate on the practice areas that are core to our full-service model:

corporate, employment, intellectual property, litigation and real estate," Taylor said. "Taylor English has the depth of experience in these core areas to continue delivering exceptional service and value to our sports and entertainment clients."

Last year, despite the uncertainty under the pandemic, the firm saw higher-than-expected client revenue overall, although some practice areas saw a decrease in work as industries took an economic hit, Taylor said.

"Frankly, it was a good year, it was the best year we've ever had, and that certainly was not predicted or forecasted in April of last year," Taylor said.

The firm was able to weather the pandemic without reducing salary or cutting attorneys and staff, and set up a fund to help supplement attorneys' pay if their client work decreased due to the pandemic, according to Taylor and English.

"Like every other law firm of any size, we are examining our needs," Taylor said. "What did we learn after 15 months of working remotely? What did we learn in terms of how it impacts our value to our clients? What did we learn about how we deliver value to our partners and our staff?"

The firm has attorneys in Georgia, California, Florida, Illinois, Michigan, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas and Washington, according to the firm.

--Additional reporting by Kevin Penton. Editing by Alyssa Miller.