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## Hellmuth & Johnson brings new office building to Minneapolis region

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Chad Johnson

Chad Johnson looks at [Hellmuth & Johnson](#)'s new office building in Edina, Minn., as a sign that Minnesota's economy is in the midst of a slow, but real, recovery.

Johnson should know. He's founding partner of law firm Hellmuth & Johnson, and chairman of its real estate practice group. Unlike many law firms across the state, and the country, Hellmuth & Johnson is actually growing.

And the firm's decision to commission a new office building is evidence that Johnson and his fellow firm leaders see nothing but more growth in the company's future.

To anyone who cares about the success of the state's economy, this is good news.

"This is a good sign that maybe we are turning the corner from an economic standpoint," Johnson said. "In the commercial real estate market while we are not seeing a boom of construction, our project shows that if you have a need there are opportunities to build. That holds true even in today's commercial market."

### A commitment to growth

Hellmuth & Johnson moved into its new Edina office building late last year after previously having leased office space in Eden Prairie. Hellmuth & Johnson took on the build-to-suit project to accommodate the firm's growth.

Hellmuth & Johnson, founded in 1994, today boasts a total staff of 90, with 42 of these being attorneys. Johnson said that he expects the company to eventually grow to include 60 attorneys. And that's about where Johnson would like the growth to level off.

"We want to be one of the 20 largest firms in the state. That way, we can service the big client and the smaller clients with an equal amount of effectiveness," Johnson said. "We don't want to be the mega downtown law firm with 300 lawyers. The building we now have is set up so that we can grow to about 60 lawyers. That is a good size law firm in the Twin Cities market."

Hellmuth & Johnson's new building covers 35,000 square feet, and is located just northeast of Highway 169 and Interstate 494. It includes two floors of office space and a 172-car parking garage.

Given the economy's troubles, this might not seem like the right time to build a new office building. Johnson, though, says today's market as the ideal time to commit to the firm's future.

"It is such an economically attractive time today to be building," Johnson said. "There isn't that much construction going on now. We had the opportunity to go out and get some competitive bids. We were able to save a significant amount of money because of this."

### Beating the odds

Unlike many companies, Hellmuth & Johnson continues to grow even as the economic recovery moves along at a painfully slow rate.

Johnson said that in 2010, Hellmuth & Johnson's revenues rose 18 percent when compared to 2009. Johnson expects to see revenue grow again in 2011.

Johnson didn't have just one answer when trying to explain the reasons for his company's growth.

"Number one, we have some extremely talented attorneys with this firm," Johnson said. "Good talent is

always going to be able to attract clients. We can attract clients who are looking for top-tier attorneys to represent them in their cases.”

The weak economy has also provided Hellmuth & Johnson with a big of an advantage when it comes to attracting new clients, Johnson said.

“There are a number of companies out there that are struggling with today’s economy,” Johnson said. “They are looking for ways to get the same or better service at a better price. Some of those businesses are looking away from the downtown or larger law firm. They are deciding that they don’t need all of the services that the mega firm is offering. They can instead work with a law firm that suits their business and their needs a bit better. They get cost-effective legal representation, which boosts their bottom line.”

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