

Taking Care of Business: Getting Down to Business



Feng Shui [pronounced *fung shway*] is the art and science of balancing environmental energies to support the needs and comfort of those within that space. The principles of feng shui have been integrated into business by many, including Donald Trump, Oprah, Hyatt Regency, Salomon

Smith-Barney, President Clinton and countless others. There is nothing mystical or religious about feng shui, although it sometimes appears to work like magic. Implementing feng shui does not mean that you have to believe in it any more than you have to believe in electricity for the lamp to turn on. As Donald Trump said, “I do not have to believe in Feng Shui. I do it because it makes me money.” And that, ladies and gentlemen, is what we are in business for.

Feng shui doesn't have to be complicated and I'm not here to explain how it works. The purpose of these columns is to provide specific and concrete ways to immediately raise the energy levels of your business environment and cash flow. I will offer low and no-cost solutions that start with just “seeing” what you look at. Implementing these solutions will raise the energy levels in your place of business. Raising the energy levels will bring in more money. Think of energy as money: you want as much of it as you can get. The higher the environmental and human energy levels, the greater the business profit.

Let's start with the simple stuff. Paying attention to safety, cleanliness, order and simple details that affect any environment, like these:

If it's broken, fix it or get rid of it - now.

Broken stuff is simply that: broken. It doesn't work and it isn't going to work unless it's fixable *and* fixed. Keeping broken things means one of the following: 1) you grew up in the Depression; 2) you don't believe you are able to replace it; or 3) you are a clutter-holic and can't let go of things that no longer serve you. Still, many people have a hard time letting go of broken things. They'll put it under their desk or in a closet thinking they'll get it fixed later. Then,

out of sight and out of mind, it never gets fixed. The dead equipment sits there, probably with other broken things. By definition, dead stuff has no energy. So if you're going to raise your energy levels, you've got two choices: stop what you're doing and fix or pitch it. Anything that's dead or broken doesn't serve you anymore. [Picture yourself slapping the dust off your hands after you've flung that sucker in the trash and *feel* the energy!]

If you don't use it - lose it.

Things in your drawers, cabinets or storage spaces that you haven't touched in two years or more are now nothing but clutter. Clutter is disorder and confusion. It stands between you and order and focus. Get rid of it and the energy starts flowing.

If it's dirty - clean it or kiss it goodbye.

Let's see, which one do you want? The clean one or the dirty one? It's not likely that you'll respond, “I'll have the dirty one, please.” You can either choose to clean it or work with the grime. Up to now you probably haven't seen the dirt, but open your eyes [and Pandora's box] and you'll see that it's time to get out the cleaning supplies and get after it. Look at the things that are closest to your clients first: the door-knobs, doors, cash register, countertops or displays. Then look at the things closest to you: your computer, telephone, desk, ceiling vents and light fixtures, your chair. View your environment with fresh eyes.

Make it welcoming and comfortable.

If your place of business is dark, dirty or dreary and *you* are reluctant to step foot inside, you can hardly expect employees or clients to want to be there. So look around and DO something about it! After clearing and cleaning, brighten and enliven with full spectrum lighting and live green plants. Hang some beautiful artwork or motivational posters to inspire yourself and others around you. Play some music or whistle a tune to work by. Bring in some tasty treats or refreshing beverages to share. Put up some seasonal decorations or put down a new rug. A little effort here goes a long way towards translating positive energy into cash in your pocket.

If it feels comfortable - it is and vice versa.

Don't believe designers or friends who tell you that your business environment is beautiful, believe what your own senses tell you. If you feel comfortable then you are. If you don't, you are not – no matter who tells you that you should be. And if you're uncomfortable, so are your patrons. They won't stay and neither

will your money. Pay attention to your senses and the senses of others. If someone asks “What’s that smell?” it could be your new cologne or it could be that rotting garbage scent wafting in the back door.

Safety is supreme.

If it’s sharp, wobbly, explosive or dangling - deal with the safety issues or deal with the lawsuits. Sharp corners, stickery plants, hot spots, stuff in walkways, overloaded shelves, frayed electrical cords, broken glass...if you’ve got any of these things at your place of business, you’re a lawsuit waiting to happen. It doesn’t matter if it’s all of these things or just one, deal with it right now or things *will* get worse. It’s not just bad feng shui, it’s too dangerous to ignore. These booby traps will drain your energy *and* cost you money.

Never too much of anything.

All humans are Goldilocks in disguise. We don’t like it too hot or too cold, we like it *just right*. To make it “just right” for your clients and employees, the easiest thing to do is to call in a qualified feng shui consultant. But for those of you who are doing this on your own, start with looking at the different qualities of the environment itself. Is it made of metal or wood? Is there too much glass? Is everything just too sterile or too busy? Is it too dark or too bright? Is it too noisy or too quiet? Are there no plants or too many plants? Seek to find a comfortable balance of energies or risk losing clients and employees in droves and money by the bucketful.

Where attention goes, energy flows.

If you’ve got no one’s attention, you’ve got no business. Whether we’re talking about the attention of the employees or the clients, if their attentions aren’t focused on something within your business, then you’re not making money. Check out what is drawing attention at your place of business and be sure that’s where you want the attention focused. If everyone is talking about each other instead of the project they’re working on, then the gossip gets the lion’s share of their energy. If employees are focusing on what they can’t do, no one *can* do anything. If a client walks in and their eyes move right out a back window, you’ve lost their attention and they’ve lost their intention of doing business with you. Discovering where the attention is going may be one of the most important issues in this list and will require due diligence to track down and shift, or the help of a qualified feng shui consultant.

Next Week: *The Clutter Curse and Cure*

Trisha Keel of Tomorrow’s Key has been practicing the art and science of feng shui since 1995. She was certified by James and Helen Jay, who were trained by Grand Master Thomas Lin Yun, the man who brought feng shui to the Western world. Email Trisha at trishakeel@tomorrowskey.com.

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