

Business

SECTION C

KEY INDICATORS

DOW/ Close, Friday	+ 11.64	10,472.
NASDAQ/ Close, Friday	+ 16.86	2,049.
CANADIAN DOLLAR/Fri.	- 0.29 cents	73.4
GOLD/ Comex, Friday	+ \$1.80	\$395.
BONDS/ 10-yr. treasury	+ 0.06%	4.4%

THE WORKING LIFE



Sharon Linstedt

Feng shui can align you for success

Are you feeling a tad uninspired at work? Is desktop clutter slowing you down? Has it been awhile since a promotion or pay boost has come your way?

Maybe it's time to add some feng shui to your day.

The ancient Chinese theory of harmony and placement (pronounced: feng schway) may have been around for 4,000 years, but it's the new, hot trend in office design and decor.

Stripped down to its most basic description, feng shui is all about positioning yourself in the most advantageous alignment with the energies of earth, heaven and humankind.

Good positioning equals good energy, and good energy equals good work and success in the world of feng shui.

Linda Ellson, founder of Feng Shui Your World, a local consulting firm, said what once was a fringe trend in the Western business world is now an increasingly accepted way of thinking.

"We spend so many hours a day at work, it just makes sense to make it the best environment it can be," said Ellson, who has helped several Buffalo area companies, ranging from real estate companies to accounting firms, to infuse feng shui principles into their work space.

Major corporations such as Coca-Cola Co., Procter & Gamble, Hewlett-Packard and Ford Motor Co. have incorporated feng shui tenants into their corporate offices. And a California lawmaker recently introduced a bill that would require the state's building codes to reflect feng shui theories.

Media mogul Rupert Murdoch reportedly traded in an office with a panoramic view of the Pacific Ocean for space overlooking a sewage treatment plant so he was situated in the spot best aligned for power, success and well-being.

According to Ellson, something as basic as the position of your desk can shift your energy and your outlook.

"I've worked with several executives who sit with their backs to a window, which leaves them vulnerable. It's very important to have a solid element in back of you," she said. If it can't be a wall, then put up a screen or sit in a tall, sheltering chair. Another important feng shui-booster is order. A cluttered desk, jammed file cabinets, and even piles of documents hidden away under a desk are energy sappers.

With your desk properly positioned and your office or cubicle in a state of calm order, it's time to add feng shui power by placing items, like diplomas, company sinage and plants in their most beneficial quadrants. In the North area (the career area) company logos and water elements are best placed, while the South (recognition area) is the spot to display diplomas, awards and achievements.

Bringing elements of the outdoors, especially live plants, to indoor space is another key tenant of feng shui, positioned in the East section of your work world. Beware of plants with sharp, spikey leaves, go for greenery with rounded leaves, like a jade plant.

And if you want to add zip to your financial life, consider slipping a crisp \$100 bill under the pot to stimulate growth of your bank account.

While improving your office environment will likely boost your spirits, will it really lead to business success?

Ellson points to her own experience after she applied the techniques of what was then a feng shui hobby at her former place of employment.

In the months that followed the physical changes, she received three raises and two promotions. A few years later she turned the hobby into a growing business.

"It's not a magic pill, but it's very empowering. It certainly changed my life," Ellson said.

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