

## **Chinese Wisdom for the Modern Workplace**

**Kirsten M. Lagatree**

Based on the premise that people are affected by their environment, Feng Shui unites ancient beliefs with modern space planning, interior design, ecology, psychology, and common sense. The words Feng Shui mean *wind* and *water*, two natural elements of incredible energy. They are a symbolic shorthand for the power of nature and the importance of living in harmony with it.

*Whenever Rose Murray travels on business, she rearranges her hotel room. "I drag the desk around so that I can see the door while I work. And if there's unattractive, depressing art on the wall, I take it down and hide it in the closet." As a telecommunications consultant, Rose is hardly an expert on interior design. But what this thoroughly modern, professional woman is practicing is the ancient Chinese art of placement, Feng Shui.*

In removing ugly art from hotel room walls, Rose makes her surroundings feel positive and inspiring. When she drags the writing table to face the door, she is following one of the most important rules of Feng Shui: do not sit with your back to the door. To be powerful, you must feel powerful. Sitting with your back to the door leaves you vulnerable to anyone who may come in unannounced.

### **How it Works**

The first principle of Feng Shui is Chi flow. In the office, the placement of your desk, files, furniture, and plants should allow unobstructed movement of this vital life force throughout your work area. If you have massive stacks of files or unwieldy piles of magazines stashed on and around your desk, you are blocking the free flow of energy that is vital to your power of concentration and creativity.

## **264 Contemporary Earth Design: A Feng Shui Anthology**

*Kristin Frederickson, art director at a small New York publishing house, thinks it is impossible for anyone to work well with their back to the door. "There's such a detrimental feeling about not knowing what's going on behind your back. If you work that way, you are going to have paranoid energy around you, which will be felt by your coworkers."*

If it is not possible to arrange your desk to face the door, hang a small mirror over your desk so that you can see the entrance reflected. If you are facing the door but unable to see the rest of the room, use a mirror to improve your view.



### **Lighting**

Good light is essential for an office, both to illuminate your work and to create good Feng Shui. Bright lights help promote healthy, flowing Chi. Glare is a distraction and a source of bad Chi, known as Sha. Be especially careful that glare does not hit your face. Ideally, windows should be to the side of your desk.<sup>5</sup> If you are seated so that glare<sup>6</sup> comes across your line of vision, hang a multifaceted crystal at the window to disperse the Sha of the glare and to create good Chi.

### **Office Location**

The location of the manager or boss' office is the most important factor in determining the overall success of any business enterprise. Check the layout of your workplace to see if its placement is auspicious.

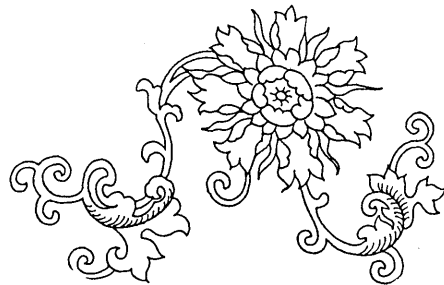
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<sup>5</sup> *If you are right handed, it is best if the natural light comes in over your left side so as not to block the light as you write; the opposite would be true for our left-handed friends.*

<sup>6</sup> *You may want to determine the source of the glare and make such corrections as installing window treatment or moving to another good Feng Shui location.*

If you are in a position of authority at your workplace, keep the following in mind: The manager should have the office furthest from the front door and office traffic. From this vantage point, he or she will see the big picture and not be distracted by the minutia of daily transactions. The desk should not be close to the office door, or the boss may be viewed by others as not having sufficient control over operations and will not be treated with proper deference. Similarly, workers whose desks are further inside the office than the boss' are likely to be insubordinate; they will feel more in command than their superior.

For a more powerful presence at meetings, try to take the chair facing the door. This position will make you highly sensitive to the dynamics of the room. Do not sit with your back to a window. A solid wall behind you will provide more backing for your ideas and will lend authority to your presence.



### **The Big Picture**

The relationship between Feng Shui and finance can be seen on a much grander scale in any number of large, multinational corporations. The headquarters of the Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation in Hong Kong is a famous example. Reputed to be one of the most technologically advanced skyscrapers in the world, the forty-seven story building was sited and constructed according to the strictest Feng Shui principles.

Many visitors wonder at the odd angle of the escalators that lead from the plaza level to the main banking floor. The moving stairs appear to have been placed at random, but they were carefully situated to distribute maximum Chi and wealth evenly throughout the structure. Moreover, it is no accident that the building faces the sea and has Victoria's Peak at its

## **266 Contemporary Earth Design: A Feng Shui Anthology**

back. These highly auspicious land forms endow this financial giant with their benefits: the mountain provides support and protection for the corporation's business ventures, while the ocean invites wealth to flow into the building.<sup>7</sup>

If you are feeling a bit skeptical about implementing this ancient art in your modern office, know that in many parts of the United States, especially areas like New York, Los Angeles, and Washington D.C., business deals rise or fall on good or bad Feng Shui. You might take a cue from Donald Trump, who routinely consults a Feng Shui master before embarking on new building projects. Trump says his international clientele prompted him to take the ancient practice very seriously. The billionaire real estate tycoon put it this way:

**“If they believe ... it's good enough for me.”**



Graphics: Courtesy of Frank Paine, 516 Paseo de las Estrellas,  
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<sup>7</sup> This layout suggests the classic or armchair Feng Shui configuration when locating structures on a property, please refer to “Contemporary Architectural Design,” p. 143.

Excerpted from  
*The Feng Shui Anthology*

Jami Lin's  
Feng-Shui-Interior Design

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In *The Feng Shui Anthology*, when the **Bagua** is discussed, **only the Life-Aspiration Energies are mentioned** (except in Derek Walter's article.). **To work with the Bagua and to maximize your Feng Shui with the information of all the masters, you must include your 8) Best Directions and 9) Flying Star Energies.**

Your [Personal Success Bagua-Map](#)  
will optimize Feng Shui & Design Success

If you are a Feng Shui beginner or an expert...

Your Personalized Success Map  
contains ALL essential, at-a-glance solutions  
that Jami Lin provides during a private consultation.

**IMPORTANT: Popular Feng Shui misconceptions!**

- REAL Feng Shui is not a "one size fits all"
- There is not one Feng Shui map generic to everyone's home.
- If you moved in your home between 1984 and 2048, there are 2048 Bagua maps.
- **ONLY ONE BAGUA-MAP is correct for YOU**  
and Your Home: and it is called YOUR [Personal Success Map!](#)

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**Because YOU are now on your Feng Shui journey,  
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