

Industry Update



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Workplace Feng Shui: Effectively Organizing your Workspace

We're Moving!

The Award Staffing Team is excited to announce that we will be relocating our operations to Bloomington in late September. Please call your Award Staffing contact for more specific details regarding our move date. We look forward to introducing you to our new home!

Award's New Address

Our new building will be located across Hwy 77 from IKEA near the Mall of America at:

8030 Old Cedar Avenue South
Suite #110
Bloomington, MN 55425-1213



Almost everyone has heard of Feng Shui in recent years as it has invaded American popular culture, newspapers, magazines, and television shows. To the Western ear it sounds like a form of martial art or a dish at a local Asian restaurant. However, if you were to guess that Feng Shui was one of these things you would be very far from correct. So what is this Feng Shui (pronounced “fung shway”) that all the buzz is about? Feng Shui is an ancient Oriental theory based on the idea that the healthy flow of vital energy (what Feng Shui followers refer to as “chi”) in an environment creates a positive effect upon a variety of other aspects of life including: health, family, happiness, and even success at work!

According to Feng Shui theory, everything in the physical world enhances or hinders the natural flow of energy in an environment. As a result, the way your environment is designed can positively or negatively affect your life depending upon the way the design affects the flow of energy. For non-followers, this basically means that the way you arrange items in a room will have an effect on your level of success at performing a specific task in that room. Whether you are an avid Feng Shui follower, a recreational Feng Shuist, or a skeptic, the basic concept that functional design and good organization lead to success is a solid one. In fact, whether you call it Feng Shui or not, functional design should be considered when designing or organizing any workplace to ensure maximum employee productivity.

Consider minimization of clutter, one of the main design concepts for Feng Shui in the workplace. Feng Shui theorists believe that eliminating clutter in a workspace gives vital energy a clear path toward career opportunity. This means you can achieve good Feng Shui by removing any unnecessary items from your work area and organizing the piles on your desk in an orderly fashion. From a Feng Shui and a smart workplace design perspective, these are both important steps to take to achieve maximum efficiency on the job. By ridding your work area of unnecessary items, you are ridding your work area of distractions unrelated to the tasks at hand. Arranging papers and files in an orderly fashion ensures that you are able locate important pieces at a moments notice and easily prioritize items by their level of importance and the level of immediacy needed for a response.

However, this does not mean that according to Feng Shui you should not have any non-work related items in your office. While Feng Shui experts warn against placing personal items such as romance symbols in the office, they encourage the placement of plants, small fountains, and moving objects in the office. Followers of the theory believe living things, like plants, and objects that move, like fountains and mobiles, have natural energy that revives the good vital energy in an environment. Non-followers can still benefit by using

(Feng Shui continued on page 2...)

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(...Feng Shui continued from page 1)

these decorating tips in the workplace because they help create an ambience at the office that aids in daily stress relief.

Another Feng Shui design principle for the office is sit with your back to a solid support structure. Feng Shui books say this is as simple as placing your chair so that your back is to the wall or using a chair that provides good back support. According to Feng Shui, this is an important work design element because the support of the structure behind your back will lead to support from authority figures in your work environment. From an ergonomics standpoint having a chair that properly supports your back will help eliminate the aches, pains, and potential injuries related to sitting in an ill-suited chair, and ultimately allow you to be more comfortable and productive in the workplace.

Feng Shui also recommends hanging awards, diplomas, and certificates of recognition to your left in your workspace to ensure that energy flows from one achievement to the next in your career. This piece of Feng Shui decorating advice easily translates into the real working world because placing your certificates of achievement in a visible place in your work area communicates your talents and abilities to colleagues and potential clients before you even exchange your first words.

If you feel tired or lethargic at work, Feng Shui recommends adding lamps that give off vibrant light to revive the energy in your work area. Again, this decorating tip is not only in accordance with Feng Shui principle, but it is also an important element of a well designed workspace. Bright lights ensure that you can clearly see what you are working on and help avoid eye strain associated with looking at a computer screen for too long in an office or intricate parts on an assembly line in a warehouse.

Feng Shui experts even offer advice on how to go about getting your office organized for success. They suggest starting any re-design project by making a list of your successes and failures. In the workplace, this would mean making a list of the parts of your job in which you show a lot of strength and other parts in which you may need improvement. Making this list allows you to pinpoint areas where better Feng Shui (or organization and design for non-practitioners) will help you improve in problem areas and become more successful.

For example, if you list missed deadlines as a workplace weakness or failure, you may discover that the missed deadlines are the result of losing track of important pieces of work because you are disorganized. You could then determine what design and organization steps you need to take to help improve your problem areas. In this example case, you would need to get rid of non-work related items that cause clutter and sort and organize the piles on your desk to clear the Feng Shui energy path to success and meet all of your deadlines.

Ultimately, the ancient practice of Feng Shui may only be a trend in American pop-culture. However, it offers a lot of functional decorating and design advice for the workplace that is no passing fad. Organizing your office or work area in a way that maximizes efficiency and achieves good Feng Shui is an important element of any successful workplace. So take some time to consider your workspace and the ways you can design it for the better and achieve workplace Feng Shui.

Top 10 Efficient Office Design and Organization Tips

10. If you are assembling a large number of the same product, place each piece in the order in which you need it for assembly.
9. Ensure that your workspace has good lighting so you can clearly see what you are working on and avoid eye strain.
8. Avoid leaving spare chairs around your work area to minimize distractions. If you are meeting with a colleague bring a spare chair into your work area for the meeting.
7. Create a filing system in which related files are kept together. A good way to do this is by color coding files by category.
6. Keep current and important files in your desk drawer or the nearest file cabinet. Use less accessible file space for older and lower profile files.
5. Post a calendar and clock in a highly visible place to keep track of important weekly events and to be on time for those events.
4. Don't be a pack rat. Throw away items that are outdated or unrelated to your work and don't require that you retain a copy.
3. Use file names that indicate the contents of the file when saving documents on your computer.
2. Take five minutes to organize at the end of each day to stay on top of your office organization project.
1. Remember to make your office a place that is comfortable and pleasant for you to work. After all, you will be spending a significant part of your week working there!

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Labor Day Fun Facts

As September kicks off, workers nationwide look forward to a nice long weekend in honor of Labor Day. Labor Day, a holiday to celebrate hard-working individuals and reward them with a day off from work, became an official federal holiday when it was a bill signed by Congress and President Grover Cleveland in 1894. As one of the Twin Cities' largest independently owned providers of personnel services and temporary employees, Labor Day is like Christmas at Award Staffing! What follows are some fun facts about the holiday that honors all of Award's hard-working employees!

151 million individuals made up America's workforce in May 2006.

Labor Day honors these 81.2 million male and 69.8 million female workers.

28% of workers work overtime.

20 percent of America's 151 million workers work more than 40 hours in a week. A very busy 8 percent work 60 hours or more in a week.

4 years of service.

4 is median number of years that workers have worked at their current company. Approximately 10 percent of workers land on the high end of this scale and have been with their current employer for 20 years or more.

5% of workers work 2nd shift.

5 percent of the American labor force works between 2pm and midnight. An additional 3 percent of the labor force works 3rd shift between the hours of 9pm and 8am.

7.5 million workers hold multiple jobs.

5 percent of workers, called "moonlighters", work more than one job. Of the 7.5 million moonlighters, 3.9 million work full time at one job and part time at the other.

82% of workers are covered by employer provided health insurance.

77% of workers receive paid vacation as an employment benefit.

In addition to paid vacation, 14 percent of workers may take advantage of employer assisted child care, and 11 percent have access to long-term disability insurance.

19.6 minutes is the average commute time in the Twin Cities.

The Twin Cities average is on par with the average for a handful of other large cities across the country. Only 7 percent of the Twin Cities workforce spends 45 minutes or longer commuting each day.

It is evident from these facts that American workers are a busy bunch of people. To all of you hard-workers out there, Award Staffing wishes you a happy and restful Labor Day!



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