

Feng Shui in Co-Working Spaces

Coworking Spaces *Jan 22, 2015*

Co-working spaces have cropped up all over Hong Kong. They are becoming increasingly popular amongst entrepreneurs who are looking for a creative and affordable environment to grow their start-up business.

The sheer number of existing co-working spaces often makes it difficult to decide which one to pick. Cost, access and comfort are all important factors. But in Hong Kong, where Feng Shui plays such a big role in business, how can a co-working space ensure good Feng Shui for all its occupants? And how can you tell whether a co-working space has good or bad Feng Shui?

Although Feng Shui is a complex science and needs to be adjusted to suit each individual, there are a few very simple tricks that can improve the overall Qi flow (energy flow) in a co-working space, to ensure that everybody gets their fair share of good Feng Shui:

Clear the Clutter

Always keep the workplace clean and tidy. A cluttered-looking work environment with obstructed, narrow, or maze-like pathways does not allow Qi to flow freely, thereby stifling creativity and analytical thinking. An organized and open work space, on the other hand, enables everyone to focus on challenging issues with a clear mind.

Support your Back

When designing a co-working space, ensure nobody sits with their back towards a door or corridor. In Feng Shui, it is ideal to sit with your back against a solid wall. This gives you the necessary support and confidence to tackle difficult tasks, whilst minimizing errors. After all, nobody wants to work while a lot of activity is taking place behind them! It takes your focus away from the most important thing at hand – your business.

Sometimes the layout of a co-working space does not allow for everybody to sit against a solid wall or partition. In this case, cabinets, bookshelves or high pot plants can be used to create a “virtual” wall behind you.



Avoid the Beams at all Costs!

Many co-working spaces feature “industrial design”, i.e. exposed beams, air conditioning ducts, etc. In itself, this does not create a negative Qi flow and is not a sign of bad Feng Shui. It is, however, extremely detrimental to sit under a beam. Think about it this way: Beams are an integral part of the building’s structure and are designed to endure a tremendous amount of stress and pressure.

Invisible to the naked eye, this pressure exerts downwards and on to the person sitting under the beam. Over time, this can lead to an increased sense of stress, serious migraines, neck problems and the sense that there is a heavy burden resting on the shoulders.

Designers and owners of co-working spaces should therefore make sure that no desks are positioned directly under a beam. In fact, this is so important, that I would make that the number one rule for all co-working spaces!

Don’t Face Staircases

Staircases are another feature to be aware of when it comes to designing a co-working space. Not only should the desks all have a solid backing, they should also not face a staircase. Staircases are exit points of energy and change the air flow – especially when the staircase is relatively steep. Facing a staircase when working

This effect is aggravated when the staircase points downwards. Your energy level will suffer, since it is likely to exit via the staircase, causing you to feel fatigued. As a result, it's probably that your performance level will quite literally "go downhill".



Shield Against Sharp Pointed Edges

Considering the limited space available, it is often difficult to position desks in such a way that no sharp edges from corners or pillars are pointing at any of the work stations. Facing a sharp edge can lead to health issues. It can also cause an increase in office-related conflict and office politics. If you cannot move the desk away from such an undesirable position, the next best thing is to obscure the corner by placing a live potted plant in front of the corner. This will act as a virtual shield, and has the added benefit of creating a much more natural and relaxing work environment.

These are merely a few simple suggestions to keep in mind when planning and designing a work environment that is shared by many different people and businesses.

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