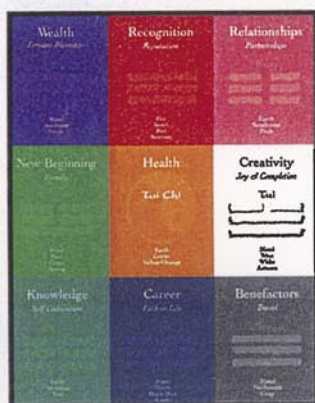


Presentations

TECHNOLOGY AND TECHNIQUES FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION



A bagua template.

TRENDS

PRESENTATION SHUI

Have you ever been in a room that felt strangely uncomfortable? Most presenters have, making

comments afterwards about a forebodingly long executive table, a sterile design that put a chill in the air or a frenetic disorganized feeling that seemed to bounce around the room during the talk.

It's reactions like these that corporate room designers and architects seek to avoid, striving to use technology and interior design to create a professional yet welcoming atmosphere. That quest has opened the door to fresh ideas, including the Chinese art of feng shui.

Some presenters may look at this ancient art and philosophy as New Age mumbo-jumbo, but others have sought it out, hiring consultants or studying its principles to improve their design of meeting rooms, corporate events, Web sites, PowerPoint slides and even business cards.

One company that aids businesses in applying feng shui to corporate spaces is Sacred Currents, a New York City design firm. Founder Judith Wendell says the basic principles behind feng shui are not complex. It's just a matter of arranging a room to promote harmony, she explains, a process that requires the use of a compass and a Chinese template tool called the bagua. "With the bagua, any room can be set up to better accommodate feng shui," Wendell says.

About 40 percent of Sacred Currents' business is corporate and, of that, a handful of clients have asked the firm to help set up corporate presentation spaces. While others are

rightfully concerned about straightening rows of chairs, Wendell works to ensure the room has better energy flow.

Feng shui in action

Recently, Wendell helped the staff at an international financial company prepare a conference room for a corporate meeting and presentation. Using a compass, the bagua and knowledge gained in a three-year training program, she rearranged the setting to better incorporate feng shui principles.

In an area of the room related to reputation and recognition, she hung a large corporate logo. The wealth area of the room, which according to the bagua was in the meeting area's southeast corner, was adorned with plants, flowers, wood and other elements believed to facilitate energy flow associated with wealth. Pictures of clients and customer-service workers were placed in the southwest part of the room, the relationship area.

According to Wendell, the event was well-received. "The presentation flowed for the speaker, and afterward he commented that he felt the room supported him," she says.

DIY feng shui

Presenters interested in feng shui but not ready to hire a consultant can apply some simple principles to presentations. In the bagua, reputation and recognition are associated with the color red and wealth with the color purple. Applying these colors to a situation could be as subtle as wearing a red tie or as elaborate as painting a room. Feng shui taboos include speaking in front of an open door or window.

Several books and Web sites on feng shui for business provide much information to get you started. If your next presentation feels a little uncomfortable, maybe you should consider some rearranging. Your presentation may gain the energy you've been looking for.

(STEPHEN REGENOLD)