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Feng Shui tips for the workplace

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According to a recent Brookings Institute study, 85 percent of American company assets are human talent - not machinery, electronics or other tangibles. This means leaders must shift their thinking from past strategies to meet today's needs by creating effective employee relationships, and with much less stress. Energy drainers such as divisive cubicle walls and harsh paint colors can have a negative impact on the bottom line.

So, how do today's leaders remove the energy drainers from the workspace, and then focus positive energy on improving creativity, interdependence and profitability? The answer can be as simple as changing the color of the walls.

Transformational Solutions

Transformational solutions should be easy to implement, inexpensive and results-oriented. The following suggestions are based on Feng Shui principles, which will help you build a 21st century bridge to higher employee retention and job satisfaction while increasing productivity, efficiency and profits.

Remove energy draining barriers. Human resources matter - they are your biggest asset. Evaluate workplace surroundings to see what is hampering your employees' ability to concentrate and be productive. Is there clutter everywhere? Are there boxes to be tossed, papers to be filed and inefficient organizational tools? The fact is, even in this electronic age, we are drowning in paperwork and clutter. Find ways now to eliminate the clutter and organize space so your employees can focus.

Are cubicles and walls standing in the way of communicating with others and resolving problems? Reorganize your employees' workspace by tearing down those walls or replacing them with something clear so their space is more expansive rather than caged. The last thing most Generation X, Millennials and Generation Y workers want to do is sit in a cubicle for the rest of their lives.

Paint the walls. Look at what is going on around you, in your office surroundings and workplace environment. Are there certain areas that provide calm and others where chaos rules the day? Paint the walls a different color. Each color provides energy and has either a positive or a negative effect on productivity and relationships.

Get rid of that impersonal white or gray, and replace it with calming light green or blue in chaotic high-tension areas. These colors work well in IT areas, hospitals, manufacturing and deadline-oriented spaces such as newsrooms. In areas that are customer- and employee-relations oriented, or have any contact with clients, paint the walls a soft earth tone such as light terra cotta. This color enhances communication.

Communication is key. While technology provides instant access to everything and everyone, it also limits the employee's ability to communicate and connect with others. The advances technology has provided in the form of instant communication are great except they are also impersonal connections, void of any feeling or emotion. Great care must be taken to compensate for its hard-edged impersonal energy.

Because communicating electronically is very impersonal, surprise an employee or client with

an actual phone call instead of texting or emailing. Stop by her desk in person. If you receive a phone message from someone - return it. You automatically receive some satisfaction or emotional connection through hearing the message but the person that called is still electronically impoverished, waiting for your return call.

Create harmony through music. While there is a massive amount of research done on the negative side effects of noise pollution, there is even more written about the positive impact and benefits of specific types of music, when listened to regularly. Research shows that certain kinds of music can improve self-perception, reduce anxiety, produce a feeling of calm, while increasing creativity and productivity.

Some of the most beneficial music is classical music, such as compositions by Mozart, Bach and Handel. New Age music has also been shown to be helpful, and there are a number of New Age composers who create music for very specific needs such as calming, learning, healing, creativity, success, and even enhancing self-esteem.

Playing the right music throughout your workplace can make a huge difference in the attitude of your employees and their productivity. Just remember, you can control the selection of the music based on the objectives of the workspace it is used in.

Add life to the workplace environment. If your daily routine is filled with computers, big screen communications, iPods, cell phones and other electronic devices, make sure you balance all of that hard, impersonal energy technology with something living. Plants, small indoor trees and aquariums provide great living energy in the workplace.

Choose plants that reach upward (not downward like ivy) to energize the health of the business, the flow of new ideas and income. They should be placed in the east and southeast area of rooms, offices and desks. Make sure they are well cared for at all times and replace them immediately if they look sickly. Aquariums can be any size and shape, and will serve a business well if they have at least eight fish of a golden color and one black fish to absorb any negative energy. If the black fish should perish, replace it immediately. An aquarium's energy will serve the company best if located in the north or northeast of an entrance or office. It can also be used as a clear spacer between employees to replace cubicle walls.

Employee retention need not be a dilemma in today's environment. It just needs a different approach. Begin your leadership transformation by being aware of the differences in doing business with a whole generation of new employees - and then creating transformational change through using a few basic Feng Shui principles.

The result: increased efficiency and effectiveness plus improved client and employee relations, which lead to increased bottom-line profits.

Pat Heydlauff is president of Energy Design, a company that uses proven Feng Shui design principles to improve the bottom line. As a consultant and speaker, Pat helps organizations and businesses of all sizes remove stress and clutter, while increasing creativity, employee retention and productivity. Her forthcoming book, "Feng Shui: So Easy a Child Can Do It" outlines the small changes that can lead to a big improvement in one's personal and professional success. For information, visit:

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