

Everything in its place

Businesses incorporate principles of feng shui into their environments

DENISE MOK

Feng shui, literally wind-water, and pronounced fung shway, is the ancient Chinese art of placement to increase flow in a space or structure. Feng shui is one of the primary considerations for many businesses today as merchants and offices use the principles of feng shui to enhance business success.

It is about careful arrangement of space and people so that both benefit from the harmony and beauty of the surroundings, leading to comfort and top performance. This translates into success, wealth and longevity for businesses.

Feng shui seems to be incorporated into the planning phase right from the start. Richmond City Hall is one notable example. The architects of this structure consulted feng shui master Sherman Tai on the design. This reflects the aim to bring the greatest harmony and vitality to all Richmond businesses and residents.

The private sector has jumped on board, too.

Great Canadian Gaming Corporation's Howard Blank, vice-president of corporate communications, believes that feng shui is an important consideration. He says it's essential at the company's casinos to have a floor layout that exudes fair prosperity and good fortune for all guests, and makes them feel comfortable and respected in the space.

Blank says this can be done with subtlety, through an awareness of the diverse ethnic cultures that patronize the gaming business.

"People vote with their dollars, so we want to provide facilities that attract our guests to return," Blank adds.

So what are the principles of feng



FENG SHUI MASTER Sherman Tai consulted for the design team at Richmond City Hall. **BRETT BEADLE/SOUTH SHORE BUSINESS JOURNAL**

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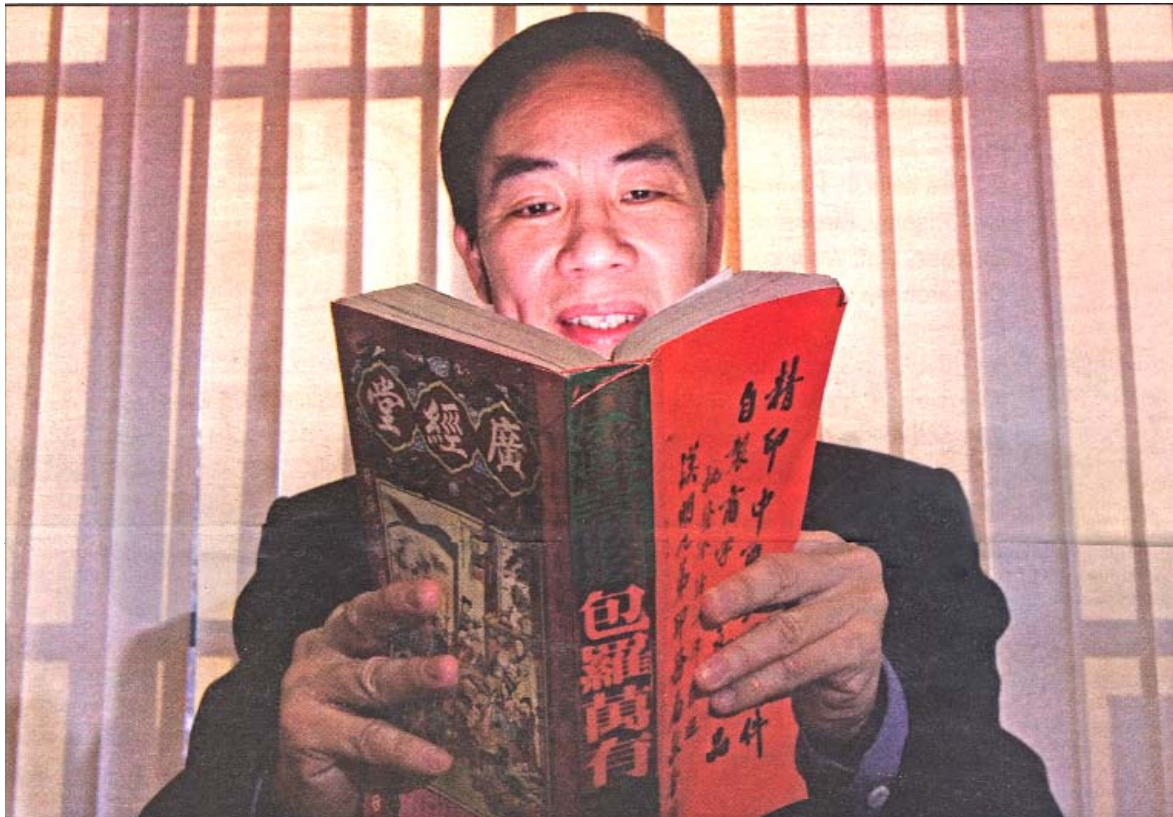
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shui for business success? And how are these applied? Feng shui is about creating a good flow of energy called chi, to invigorate and harmonize your business location so that productivity and good energy are nurtured. It is about achieving balance. It is also about preventing blockage of this flow or allowing the good energy to escape from your business location.

For instance, if your store is set up with a door directly opposite the

entrance, then the good energy (that is fortune-enhancing) might enter from the front but make a quick exit out the back door. In feng shui terms, this is allowing your business fortune to dissipate.

Sometimes it's about avoiding the taboos in feng shui culture. For example, a black door frame at a casino would be a definite no-no, according to Blank.

Some practical (and easy) ways to create harmony and beauty at your

business location:

- Establish order and de-clutter the space. This will improve work performance and business wealth. Good energy cannot flow if unnecessary clutter is blocking its movement and cluttering up your mind or that of your employees.

- Install live plants and flowers into the store and work space. They provide natural beauty, improve air quality,

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Feng shui: Use plants, water

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unite us with the natural world outside and their green colour encourages personal and business growth. A well-placed plant or flowers can move energy along, harmonize sharp corners and invigorate a dead space.

- Use moving water or a small fountain, so that its sparkling energy attracts health and wealth. Keep water fresh and clean. Another choice is a fish tank, aquarium, or any artifact that depicts water.

Feng shui master Tai believes that it is vital create peace, harmony and good traffic in a given space so that the customer, the boss and the employees are equally benefiting from the harmonious environment.

Tai considers his role as feng shui coach only, and it's up to the businesses to enforce and maintain good feng shui.

Tai, who studied engineering, has 32 years experience as a feng shui master, and considers the role his fate. **©**