

Baltimore smart CEO

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Required Reading for Growing Companies



The Chief Energy Officer

caskey's corner

By Wayne Caskey
for Smart CEO

The world only responds how you tell it to respond. You create it all.

As CEOs, we may not think of ourselves as *chief energy officers*. But if we aren't, who is?

There are functions that only we can effectively perform for the entire company, which certainly affect the energy level, like:

- Motivating and inspiring
- Establishing direction
- Promoting change
- Aligning people
- Promoting stability and order

How well we're energizing our companies will be determined by our strengths and weaknesses in these various areas.

If we're fortunate enough to have a large management team, or to have sufficient funds to hire appropriate outside consultants, we can support at least some of the areas left short by our weaknesses. Also, if we're inspired and have sufficient time, we can take courses or engage in self-directed study to strengthen ourselves where we're deficient. Or, if we have to wear all or most of the hats ourselves, or we lack suffi-

cient funds, we make do as best we can.

So, however we address the issue, suppose we're dissatisfied with the energy level in our business. What might be some added support?

One area left out of the traditional leadership/management lexicon of energy-generating activities is alignment of place.

Ordinarily we approach this task in one of two ways-by the twin criteria of cost and gut (if we do it on our own), or by hiring an interior designer who parades multiple design scenarios before us for our selection.

What may get left out here is choosing surroundings which uniquely promote the energy of our workplace and the people who work there, in accordance with the nature of our business, and our strategic and operating plans.

To assist us, consider Feng Shui, the ancient Chinese art of energy manipulation. Feng Shui practitioner Annie Pane says that the "real secret of Feng Shui" is "You decide who you are or who you want to become, and what

you want. Then, with intent, you make your surroundings support that image and those desires. You are then well on your way to making it real. You...interpret the meaning of your surroundings subconsciously, and you become what your surroundings represent."

Wouldn't it be great to have our strategic and operating plans subconsciously supported each hour of each day?

Feng Shui is built around certain basic premises (what follows is by no means exhaustive and only covers what I am most familiar with:

1. There is a natural way of ordering a business to promote its energy flow. This natural order is shown by a Feng Shui tool called the Bagua Map.

Are we supporting the energy flow? Suppose the sales department or public relations is located in the Introspection corner of the business? Or, suppose the controller is located in the Love and Relationship corner? Probably not great support.

Locations may legitimately

change over time to reflect various emphases. For example, your HR department might be located in the Support, Helpful People or Fame and Reputation areas, depending on what you're emphasizing at a particular time. And you as CEO may have a special emphasis this year which makes you want to move out of your natural location at the center.

2. Paper, books, equipment, furniture and general clutter which do not serve the present or the future of the business are drags on energy flow and must be disposed of.

Record retention is required by various governmental agencies, but how much stuff do you have that isn't? Or are you a pack rat that never throws anything away? Think of the drag that puts on the energy you're expending to optimize your present and create your future!

3. To maintain balance, each office or space needs to have at least figurative representation of earth, air, fire, water and wood.

We all say balance is impor-

tant in our lives and the lives of our employees. But that bottom line stares us in the face each quarter, month or payday! (A CFO friend of mine has behind his desk the sign “Remember---Cash In Must Exceed Cash Out”.) With all this pressure, wouldn't it be comforting to know that at least the surroundings were promoting balance?

4. Furniture placement is important to maximize energy flow.

Very few of us would have our desks with our backs to our office door, if only for defensive reasons, but how many of us are sensitive to energy flow within offices, within multi-level building headquarters, in manufacturing plants, warehouses, shipping floors, or in retail shops? If we want to have things flow together, why not work on the flow of the energy which helps ideas, research, products, and services-everything about a business-flow with it?

5. Collections of an owner of a business are full of power.

We all seek sources of power to run our businesses skillfully. Some of us consider ourselves masters in the wielding of power to advance the interests of our businesses. But Machiavelli, or the authors of *Marketing Warfare*, never wrote about the power of Feng Shui, much less owners' collections. Suppose you're in the trucking business and you have a toy truck collection - Feng Shui would hold that display of that collection would advance your power and the power of the business by increasing the power of the energy flowing through the business.

Do you have a collection which would fit in this category?

6. Each individual employee's space should support that employee's energy and the collective energy of the business.

Even if employees have only a cubicle, it is important that they have an opportunity to express their individuality, both for the

sheer joy of it, and for recognition by others including the CEO. Also, placement of the cubicle or office is important so that it supports the departmental and collective business energy flow.

We're all trying to get the world to see our businesses as we see them. Feng Shui agrees that that is the challenge. Annie Pane says:

“If you change your energetic pattern, by changing your sur-

roundings, you change your presentation of who you are to the world. If you change your presentation of who you are to the world, the world will respond to you differently. The world only responds to you how you tell it to respond. You create it all.”

It's true that in our roles as Chief Energy Officers we are, in many ways, a primary energy source: through our dedication, our determination, our enthusiasm, our intelligence, our savvy,

our perseverance and our example. We can add to that, through conscious choice of our surroundings.

Wayne Caskey is a 3-time CEO who is now an executive coach. His web site is at www.waymecaskey.com. He wishes to acknowledge the help of Feng Shui practitioner Annie Pane in the preparation of this article. Her web site is at www.EastCoastFeng-Shui.com.

The Bagua Map

