

Feng Shui Takes Hold in Corporate Offices

[Feng Shui, from Page C1] the unit didn't handle money, but rather tended to DirecTV's relationships with its dealers.

Murdoch moved his own New York office about three years ago at the behest of a feng shui expert, company sources said. He and several other corporate officers relocated to the eighth floor, a number that is financially auspicious, according to feng shui tradition.

It's not clear how Murdoch decides when and where to use feng shui.

News Corp. executives noted that he didn't rely upon it two years ago after he wrested control of Gemstar-TV Guide International from its founder and moved the financially troubled company from Pasadena to Hollywood. "Maybe he wishes he had," said one.

Once reserved for China's emperors, feng shui is now widely used in Asian corporations. Most banks in Hong Kong, for example, practice feng shui by placing a pair of lion statues in front of the building to "guard" the wealth inside.

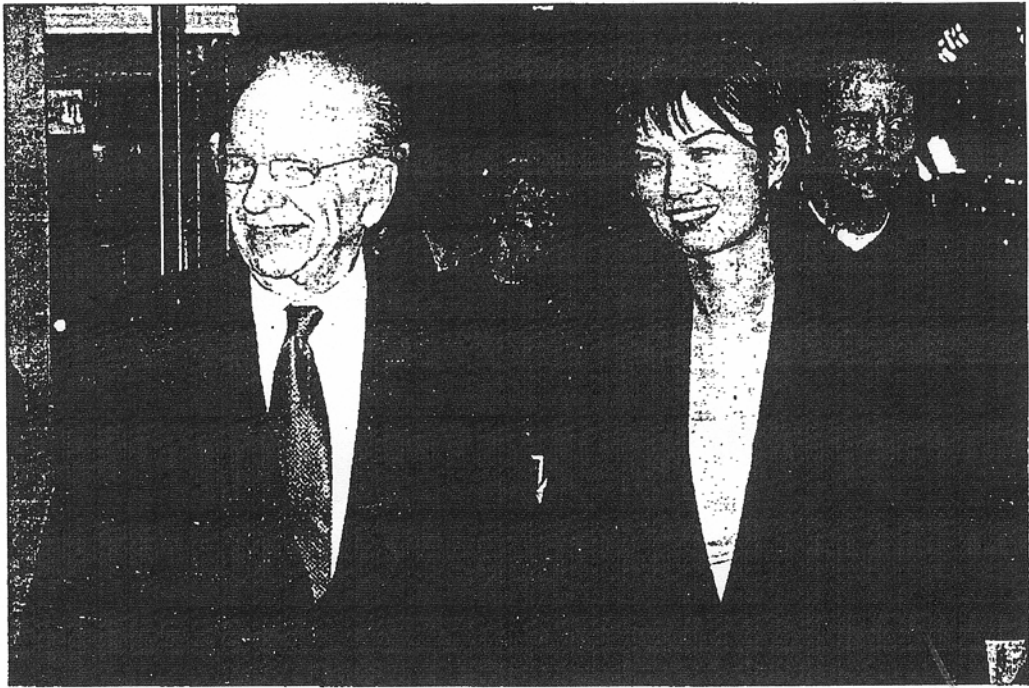
Although feng shui is becoming more common in U.S. homes and businesses, experts say companies typically try to keep its use a secret because some people consider it a flaky New Age fad.

Reiss, the feng shui consultant, won't discuss his clients but concedes that few people in an organization know when he has been hired. "It's the chairman, president and comptroller," he said. "The board might not be OK spending money on a feng shui consultant."

A source at DirecTV said only a handful of people knew about the feng shui masters who paid a visit in January.

According to its followers, feng shui is equal parts philosophy, science and art. Its basis is the belief that everything in the universe has a life force or energy, called *chi*, that can be manipulated for beneficial results.

Good chi can generate new business and rising profits, according to proponents. Bad chi conjures up mayhem and can cause business to go south.



LOVE AND CHI: Sources say that since Rupert Murdoch's 1999 marriage to Wendy Deng, who is of Chinese descent, the News Corp. chairman has embraced the principles of feng shui. Reuters

Feng shui consultants, who can charge hundreds of dollars an hour for their services, typically assign certain objects, such as crystals, plants and water fountains, to specific locations. Or they may change the color scheme within a work space. The aim: to reverse bad chi or to achieve good chi.

One Silicon Valley company, for instance, painted the walls green and purple—the colors of wealth—in the department that takes customers' orders.

Regent Worldwide Sales Inc., a Los Angeles-based entertainment company that produced the movie "Gods and Monsters," hired feng shui expert Angi Ma Wong to help it relocate to a penthouse on Wilshire Boulevard in Westwood.

Wong used the birth dates of Regent's 35 employees to position them in the new digs. A birth date can determine how a person's energy will coincide with the Earth's magnetic pull, as well as a building's energy force.

"It's very personalized," Wong

said. "I can tell someone whether they should be using a wooden or a marble-top desk" based on their birth date, she said.

There is no way to know for sure if the feng shui is working, said Paul Colichman, the chairman of Regent. But, he added, business is healthy and "I have a very happy staff."

For his part, News Corp.'s Stern had largely overlooked the feng shui recommendations as he settled into his 11th-floor

quarters with the great view and had four large-screen plasma TVs installed, those inside the company said.

Then came the foot-long ceramic horse in the mail. Before long, Murdoch followed up with a phone call to ask Stern whether the talisman was correctly positioned—with its head facing east—inside his new, child-friendly office.

The one overlooking the sewage treatment plant.