

Live Wire: Finding the Alignment for E-Commerce Impact

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Barbara Alpers for the New York Times

Feng shui-ing offices isn't new, but Websites?

Yup, the ancient Chinese art of room design and object placement to boost prosperity in homes and workplaces is being applied online. "Most people would probably think it's a wacky idea, but I'm sure if you ask in five years, people might do it as a matter of course," says Barbara Corcoran, who tapped feng shui practitioner Alex Stark to reenergize the Website for her New York City real estate company, the Corcoran Group. Stark, whose growing on- and offline client roster includes architecture firms and consultants, diagnosed Corcoran's site as having too much yin (slow, dark, feminine qualities) and not enough yang (active, vibrant, masculine characteristics).

On Stark's advice, Corcoran added more yang elements, contrasting warm and cool colors (to appeal to both the emotional and intellectual sides), and active images of people and animals. It worked. Hits to the site have tripled, and Corcoran has received a flood of compliments that she says more than justified Stark's \$1,500 fee. While feng shui may not have averted the dot-com deaths of recent months, Stark does have an opinion regarding the downfall. "A lot of dot-coms went full yang," he says. "Lots of icons, advertisements, splashy primary colors, crowded pages. That's good for short-term prosperity, but after that the energy wanes, and you crash." Profitable business plans may have helped keep dot-coms afloat too.

Last 10 Quotes Portfolio Summary

| Ticker | Company name | Price | Change |
|-------------|--|-------|--------|
| CSCO | Cisco Systems, Inc | 29.99 | +0.69 |
| Aug 17 | Cisco gets new credit facility (Thomson Financial News Europe Focus) | | |
| Aug 17 | Cisco gets \$3 bln unsecured credit facility (Reuters) | | |
| GE | General Electric Company | 38.45 | +1.25 |
| Aug 17 | Chinese Medical Device Maker Finding Friendly Customers Abroad (Investor's Business Daily) | | |
| Aug 17 | Private Infrastructure Booming In Most Places, But Not In U.S. (Investor's Business Daily) | | |
| GM | General Motors Corporation | 30.55 | -0.22 |
| Aug 17 | UPDATE 1-GM CEO says consumers holding up despite turbulence (Reuters) | | |
| Aug 17 | GM chief says sales are holding up (CNNMoney.com) | | |
| F | Ford Motor Company | 7.83 | +0.13 |
| INTC | Intel Corporation | 23.70 | +0.60 |
| Aug 17 | New challenges for EMC after VMware IPO (Thomson Financial News Europe Focus) | | |
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