

# Planning a **Successful** Ergonomics Initiative

By Anita Goehringer, MS, CIE

**Well-crafted plan, strategic implementation—home run!**

In today's business environment, it's hard to imagine a company who has not integrated some aspect of ergonomics into their organization. There are no rules—only guidance to help build the ergonomics structure. The guidelines make no promises that your ergonomics initiative will be a success once constructed. What makes it work comes from taking a hard look at your organization, its operations and culture, and making a decision to embrace ergonomics as a process, and not a program. Programs typically last as long as the person assigned to manage them, while a process becomes a part of the company's culture—it's way of doing good business. If executed well, the ergonomics process outlasts any coordinator or manager and is not dependent on one or few key individuals to make it happen. It is fully integrated into every facet of the company and runs in tandem with all operations and processes.»

**“Professional associations have long debated over where ergonomics best fits, and who should ‘lead the charge’ in an organization. Is it safety, industrial engineering, industrial hygiene, production, occupational health...? The answer?—yes!”**

**—Anita Goehringer,  
MS, CIE**

A well-crafted plan defines the structure, goals, objectives, measurement metrics, responsibilities, and actions of the ergonomics initiative—the game plan, so to speak. It answers the questions, “Do we have management buy-in? Where do we start? Who’s going to lead? What are the critical components? How will they fit in with other safety and health initiatives? What is the timeline? How will we measure success?”

The strategy of implementation puts elements of the plan and fundamentals of the operations together. Combine an ergo-savvy leader with well-informed managers, motivated supervisors, participative employees, a little psychology, some engineering principles, and lots of creative energy, and voilà, you have the makings of a successful ergonomics “team.”

### **Lessons learned on the playing field**

Health and performance are critical issues in the work equation for both the employees and their companies. Many companies that have aggressively and successfully applied ergonomics in their workplaces have been enlightened—and frustrated—with certain facts:

- *Ergonomics can not survive alone;*
- *The ramifications of ergonomics do not affect just one aspect of business operations;*
- *Ergonomics is not a “cut and dried” science;*
- *People are different; and*
- *Just when you think you have ergonomics mastered, problems occur in other areas.*





Poor ergonomics can affect all aspects of business including health, safety, production, quality, and human relations. Contrary to what some may think, ergonomics intervention does not require magical powers. It does require:

**Teamwork**—Use your internal resources where they can make the greatest contribution. Listen to the experts (your employees).

**Forethought**—Prioritization of efforts means everything. Spend your time and effort on the most important issues.

**Hard work**—Nothing is as easy as it may first appear.

**Open-mindedness**—Just because “It’s always been done that way” does not mean it has to stay that way!

**Patience**—Success takes time. All changes are not quick fixes.

**Persistence**—Pardon the quote, “If at first you don’t succeed, try, try again!”

### A collective effort

Ergonomics is more than just a buzzword. It’s a melting pot of disciplines, that when assembled and working in unison, provide a tremendous advantage in today’s business operations. Professional associations have long debated over where ergonomics best fits, and who should “lead the charge” in an organization. Is it safety, industrial engineering, industrial hygiene, production, occupational health. . . ?


The answer?—yes!

Regardless of who, or what department takes on the primary task of planning, organizing, and executing the ergonomics initiative, the results are realized throughout the organization in terms of medical costs, safety and health concerns, productivity, operation efficiency, work quality, employee morale, turnover, and absenteeism to name a few areas. Simply put, when people feel good, they can work as efficiently and productively as possible.

### A winning strategy

What is your company’s ergonomics strategy? Are you on the sidelines or in the game? Your winning strategy is to establish/evaluate your plan, assess challenges and opportunities, define your course, build ergonomics skills, apply tactics that best fit your organization, justify change based on multidisciplinary impact, and measure to show maximum results.

Ahh, there’s nothing like the thrill of a good game...

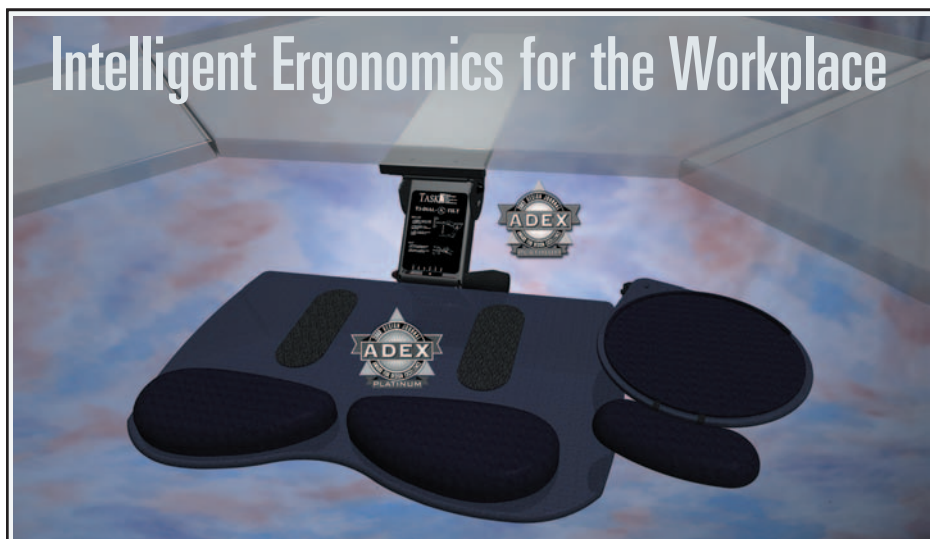
**Coming Next Issue: *The Ergonomics Champion*:** Every Company needs One! Every successful ergonomics initiative needs someone to lead the charge. Are you up for the challenge? In the next issue, Anita Goehringer reveals what it takes to be the best ergonomics leader for your organization. 

Anita R. Goehringer is Executive Director of The Ergonomics Center. Contact Anita at [goehringer@theergonomicscenter.com](mailto:goehringer@theergonomicscenter.com), and 919.515.2052.

### Learn more:

The Ergonomics Center  
[www.theergonomicscenter.com](http://www.theergonomicscenter.com)

[www.ergosolutionsmag.com/ergoplan](http://www.ergosolutionsmag.com/ergoplan)



**T2 Dial-A-Tilt:** Smooth operating dial with easy to read gage for effortless tilt positioning. Innovative Lift and Lock for height positioning. Rail mountable for easy storage under desktop.

**Micro Figure Keyboard Platform:** Universal, non-handed platform designed to support all keyboards and laptops. It features modular plug-in accessories and Forearm Gel supports.

Both products are recipients of ADEX Platinum Awards for design excellence.

**TASK2**

**Innovation. Precision. Style.**  
800-592-ERGO | [ergo@task2.com](mailto:ergo@task2.com) | [www.Task2.com](http://www.Task2.com)