Ready, set...go!

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COEH Summer Institute

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- **Discuss organizational readiness for changes in an ergonomics program or intervention**
- **Assessing organizational readiness**
- **Benefits and challenges of change**
- **Case studies of ergonomic programs that were ‘not ready’ and ‘ready’**

Let's see if we are ready...

Break into groups

- **Objective:**
 - Everyone in your group must get from the island to the shore
- Determine what you need to know to decide if you are 'ready' to perform this task

What were some of your 'readiness' questions?

- **Why did they contact you?**
- **How motivated are the management and employees to change?**
- **Who are the ‘champions’ and ‘leaders’ on the team?**
- **Are there clear goals, objectives, and ways to measure success?**

Assessing organizational readiness (continued)

- Is the 'climate' right?
- Can everyone 'swim'?
 - Is everyone on board?
- What obstacles are in the way?
- Are there mechanisms in place that will allow the efforts to be sustainable?

- **Changes in ergonomics program or intervention can lead to:**
 - **Improved efficiencies**
 - Improved productivity
 - Reduction in cycle time
 - Cost savings
 - **Reduction in ergonomics risks or injuries**
 - **Employee satisfaction**
 - **Fostering a culture that promotes/ embraces change**

Challenges of change

- **Changes in ergonomics program or intervention can be challenging because:**
 - **Fear of:**
 - Unknown
 - Failure
 - Potential risks
 - **May disagree about the need for change and best course of action**
 - **Lack of trust**
 - Costs may exceed gains
 - May not understand 'why'
 - **Requires effort**
 - **Lack of participation, leadership, or clear objectives/ goals**

Case study of ergonomics program that was 'not ready'

- Help requested by an employee in a mail distribution center to come identify risks and solutions
 - Supervisor was supportive
 - Management was not!

Current DOE Mission Relevance

Bioenergy

Biogeochemistry

Carbon Cycling

Office & Manufacturing Work Environments

**60% staff in computer-
intensive office settings**

**40% staff in hand-
intensive
production tasks
(2 shifts)**

- **Equipment/instruments designed for small batches used for high throughput operation**
- **Culture:**
 - **Understanding Efficiency vs. Speed**
- **High force hand-intensive tasks**

We are striving to determine
how much is too much

Was this easy... no way!

History of Ergonomics at JGI (Dec 2005-Current)

Recordable Injury History

By Calendar Year

Engineering designs and solutions

Early intervention

Targets employees
with discomfort
Includes bi-weekly
review meeting

Proactive Efforts

Labs and offices
Monitoring
Walk-about
Comfort surveys

Safety Culture Working Group

Promotion
Awareness
Communication

Training/education

Risk targeted classes
Stretch break programs
Potty training
Website resources

Relaxation/Rejuvenation Room

Ergonomics Demo Room

Work tool and practices

Ergo Points
Required Practices

Top 3 High Risk Factor Tasks (Pre-2007)

Thermal Cycler Loading

Peeling Seals

Freezer Rack Lifting

Top 3 High Risk Factor Tasks (Now-2010)

Pipetting

Capping/uncapping

Vortexing

Employee Driven Designs

Best Practices= Do's and Don'ts

JGI Wins the Ergo Cup Again!

FOR...the Ergonomic Program Improvement Initiatives category: **“Empowering Employees in Ergonomics,”** which focused on the employee-driven elements of the JGI Ergonomics Program.

- **Healthy to have discussions about readiness and obstacles**
- **Have plans to address obstacles**
 - **Involve 'nay sayers'**
- **Sell, sell, and sell some more**
 - **Communicate**
 - **Advertise**

**If you think an ergonomics
program may be ready to
start, change, or improve....**

**consider
participatory
ergonomics**

Key Elements of Successful Participatory Ergonomics Program

- **Employee involvement**
- **Getting the employees involved to identify problems and suggest solutions**
- **Management commitment**

- **Establish defined processes and roles**
- **Allow for flexibility in doing tasks (one size does not fit all)**
- **Align with existing programs/ efforts**

How NOT to do employee participation

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**“Let’s form a committee to create a task force
to develop a team to determine the fastest
way to deal with the problem.”**

Benefits of implementation

- **Increased productivity**
- **Improved quality of work**
- **Improvement in employee morale**
- **Cost savings both in possible reduction in injury-related and production costs**
- **Time savings**

- Risk of short term increase of injuries
- Buy-in from management
- Up front costs associated with training and education
- Time
- Requires risk
- Change, and the uncertainty of change

A moment about change...

People don't resist change...they resist being changed!

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"It's an ergonomic keyboard. Once you learn how to use it, it will increase your speed by six percent!"

How to get started?

- **Assess where you are currently**
- **Determine who should be trained and train them on how to identify risks, preventions and control methods.**
- **Involve employees**
- **Identify problem areas**
- **Develop and try solutions**
- **Clearly define roles and responsibilities**
- **Determine priorities for change**
- **Do you have managements buy-in and commitment?**

A moment on management commitment...

Lack of commitment will be very obvious to employees

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**“We couldn’t afford faster computers,
so we just made them *sound* faster.”**

Employees and supervisors should have basic knowledge

- **Ergonomic-related risk factors and symptoms**
- **Ways to identify and assess hazards specific to job tasks**
- **Safe use of tools, equipment and materials**
- **Understanding of safe work practices and processes**
- **Mechanisms for reporting concerns or ideas**

Is there any proof participatory ergonomics works?

- What does the research say?

Reduction in injuries and workers compensation costs

Employees with back pain involvement in establishing job modifications

Resources/ References:
Occupational Health & Safety Agency for Healthcare in British Columbia

Thank you!

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