



Remote Ergonomics: Successful Safety Strategies for a Changing Workforce



PACIFIC
SOUTHWEST
SAFETY &
HEALTH
CONFERENCE
& EXPOSITION

October 2011




San Diego

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Agenda



My Primary Purpose will be to provide you with information you can use tomorrow

- **Considerations:**
 - Human Resources, OSHA, Safety, Workers' Compensation, Health Care, and Other
- **Cost Savings and Productivity Gains**
- **Best Practices and "Tools of the Trade"**
- **Getting Started**
- **Q&A**

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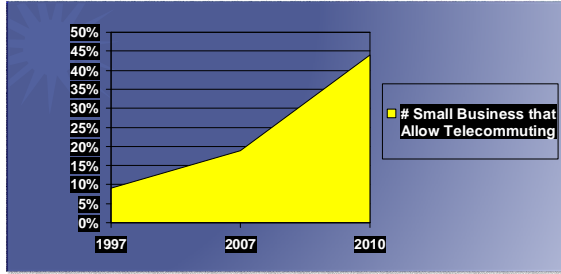
Definitions

- **Telework**
To work from home or another remote location, either for an employer or through self employment
- **Employee Teleworker**
A regular employee (full or part time) who works remotely at least one day per month during normal business hours.
- **Contract Teleworker**
An individual who works on a contract basis for an employer or is self-employed and who works remotely at least one day per month during normal business hours.

Titles also include: telecommuters, mobile workers, nomad workers, web commuters, e-workers, agile workers, remote workers, and...

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Teleworker Stats



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CA productivity and cost savings

- If California's adopts similar standards for State workers... savings of \$1.5 billion annually
 - \$170 million in real estate costs
 - \$800 million in increased productivity
 - \$500 million in absenteeism and turnover costs

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US Productivity and cost savings

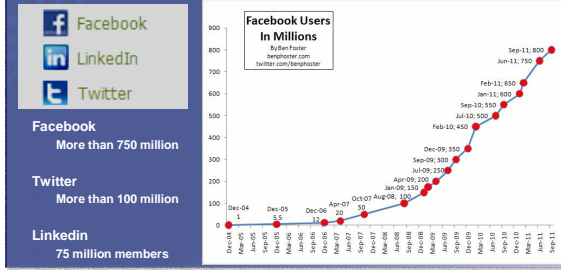
- 40% of American workers can work from home some of the time... 79% would choose to if the opportunity were given to them.
- If this group worked from home 50% of time... a company of 100 would gain \$576,000 per year
- **Business would:**
 - gain \$235 billion in increased productivity
 - save \$124 billion per year in office costs
 - save \$46 billion in reduced absenteeism
 - save \$31 billion in reduced turnover

Employee telecommuters in the U.S. increased 39 percent, from 12.4 million in 2006 to 17.2 million in 2008

34 million Americans (1/4 of the workforce), work outside of the traditional office setting at least once a month.

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Social media and networking



Operational and cultural fit

- Company location
- Nature of the work
- Overhead expenses
- Productivity
- Management
- IT issues
- Customer expectations
- Time served vs. Work performed
- “Green” Environmental consciousness
- Family consciousness
- Employee wellness
- Employee morale
- Recruit/retain

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Management and oversight

- Clearly define expectations
- Train and support managers
- Establish performance measurements
- Communicate and provide feedback
- Use technology
 - To communicate (Skype, IM, on-line meetings)
 - Track productivity and performance
 - Monitor work quality

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Wage and hour issues

- Exempt vs. Non-exempt
- Tracking hours worked – including overtime
- Meal periods
- Laws in the state where the employee works prevail

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Security and Confidentiality

- **Authentication**
 - Require passwords with a high-difficulty level
 - Set passwords to change often
- **Data transmission**
 - Achieve secure data transmission through an encrypted Virtual Private Network (VPN)
 - Ensure that all data is encrypted and no outside party can decipher it
- **Workspace security**
 - Train employees on proper procedures for locking computer when leaving workspace
 - Require employees to work from home only on the secure server, no public HotSpots

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Workers' compensation

- Employer is mostly likely liable for injuries that occur at home or remotely
- "Daily" oversight of teleworkers is difficult
- With mobile devices... houses, cars, subways, libraries, bars, airports, parks, beach, etc.
- Email when on vacation... home ill, or at kid's b-day party?
- 24/7 global economy

The lines between work and personal time are now permanently blurred

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Workers' compensation best practices

- Choose employees carefully for telework
- Email or use online system for work assignments
- Fixed work hours and lunch breaks
- Injury prevention training (safety and ergonomics)
- Hazard inspection/correction process (safety)
- Medical provider network – employees should know where to go for medical care (safety)
- Early reporting process "on the job injuries" (safety)

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OSHA/Safety/Ergonomics - regulations

- OSHA will not hold companies responsible for the safety in “home offices”
- OSHA directive drafted in 2000:
 - http://www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owadisp.show_document?p_table=directives&p_id=2254
- OSHA will not conduct inspections of employees' home offices
- OSHA will not hold employers liable for employees' home offices, and does not expect employers to inspect the home offices of their employees.
- If OSHA receives a complaint about a home office...
- OSHA will only conduct inspections of other home-based worksites, such as home manufacturing operations (complaint or referral)...

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OSHA/Safety/Ergonomics – recordkeeping

- OSHA: Employers who are required to keep records of work-related injuries and illnesses
- For employees who telecommute from home, the employee's home is not an establishment
- Cal OSHA: same rules apply

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OSHA/Safety/Ergonomics – best practices

- Injury prevention training
- Hazard inspection/correction process (ergonomics)
- Medical provider network – employees should know where to go for medical care
- Early reporting process for injuries “on the job”

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Telework Safety – setting up a home office

- Home is considered place of work
- Meet the same safety standards
- Dedicated workspace specifically set up to support the nature of work being performed:
 - Workstation
 - Work area free from clutter (good housekeeping)
 - Ergonomically adequate work area
 - Adequate lighting
 - Electrical system – adequate to handle demands

Home Office Checklist for Telework

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Physical discomfort at the computer

- A computer user experiencing discomfort pulls off task 5 minutes out of every 15 minutes to oxygenate the soft tissue due to stress
- This physical discomfort adds up fast!
 - Lost time/day/employee: **2.67 hrs**
 - Lost time/week/employee: **13+ hrs**

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Minutes add up

- 13.3 hours/week x 4 weeks = 53.3 hours of lost production/employee/month*
 - Cost of lost production for 1 employee:
 - \$15/hr x 53.3 hours = \$799.50/month
 - \$25/hr x 53.3 hours = \$1,332.50/month
 - \$50/hr x 53.3 hours = \$2,665/month
- * (20 min. per hour) x (8 hours) x (5 days) x (4 weeks)

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Injury – claim process

Where to intervene



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What about early intervention

- New hire orientation
- Safety and ergonomic surveys
- Training of employees
- Peer observations and feedback
- Various other methodologies

Is there a way to measure effectiveness of interventions, and/or to determine interventions other than \$ of claims

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Analytics and survey intervention

- Reduction of ergo requests
- Increased self awareness, education, and training (integrated)
- Other interventions can be implemented/targeted
- ...

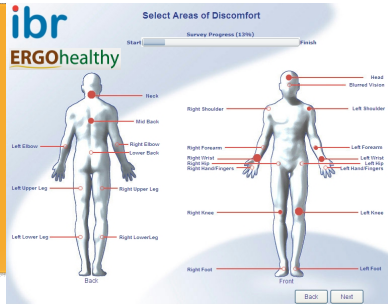
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Sample intervention

- Personal Profile
- Discomfort
- Work Environment
- Equipment
- Posture
- Interactive Training
- Self Assessment (check discomfort after interventions)



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Benefits

- Definable improvement metrics
 - 62% reduction in reported discomfort
 - 39% reduction in claims for ergonomic injuries
- Significant exposure and hazard reduction
- Data gathering tool to develop long-term safety interventions

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Additional benefits

- worker optimization
- increased productivity
- efficiency gains
- significant savings
- lower cost & cost containment
- reduce claims
- employee retention
- risk mitigation

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Employee benefits

- self-empowered to improve physical comfort
- less physical stress due to improved posture
- happier
- improved morale
- higher productivity
- fewer claims
- education/training

Telework evaluations – evolution

- 2000 to 2006 – first efforts
- 2007 to 2008 – development of online capabilities
- 2009 to Current – Multiple online options



Why remote assessments

- Is there a need or desire to conduct ergo evaluations remotely? (Yes)
- Will this work for traditional office, remote office, remote workers? (Yes)
- Does this work for preventative and/or post-injury? (Yes)
- Will this improve productivity and efficiency? (Yes)
- Are there initiatives and/or efforts in place? (Some, but not consistent among providers)

Questions from employers

- Are we in compliance with the safety rules of my State?
- Are we required to do anything special for OSHA?
- Can ergonomics improve effectiveness and productivity?
- Can effective ergonomics prevent musculoskeletal injuries?
- Can ergonomics assessments improve injury outcomes for office workers?
- Will this save my company money?
- Will this have a positive impact on WC insurance costs?

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Answers

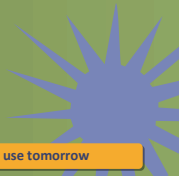
- Eco-friendly process
- Compliance State and Federal OSHA regulations
- Improvements in effectiveness, productivity, and morale
- Improvements in posture and work environments resulting in reduced potential for musculoskeletal injuries
- Faster return to work and reduced injury costs for workers' compensation injury cases
- Insurance cost savings potential (credits) and improved impression on workers' compensation carriers

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Summary and QA



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