

Web-Based Training Programs – Not Just Business as Usual

Hewlett-Packard is implementing aggressive ergonomic training and tracking programs as part of its corporate-wide commitments to reducing the occurrence of repetitive stress injuries.

In Hewlett-Packard's initial pre-rollout of its program to more than 800 employees, an even greater percentage of issue resolution was achieved by enabling employees to make the majority of changes themselves. HP will soon roll out Web-based assessment and training to more than 100,000 workers.

"For the first time, we have the ability to look at an ergonomic risk profile for the whole company and use that information to identify common issues and needs," says Mike Vaudreuil, HP's global ergonomics program manager.

Web-based assessment and training applications were originally conceived as faster, more consistent and more economical ways to "do what we've always done." Initially, Web-based tools were designed to achieve important but often limited functions – the assessment portion of the early Web-based tools replaced the initial workstation and task survey, which had formerly been provided by a trained evaluator. The "training" piece of the Web-based tool provided information previously covered in employee training sessions.

Another benefit, derived from the data generated by the application, flows to the ergonomics program manager and also potentially to supervisors and managers.

The program Hewlett-Packard uses, WorkWell, also allows an ergonomic program manager or a supervisor to see the status of open items for each employee in a format that is convenient for use in developing action plans.

HP recognizes the value of streamlining its ergonomic process by allowing rapid "cycling back" to update employment risk profiles and other records as conditions change, a process called *iteration*.

The Web-based ergonomic tool used by Hewlett-Packard facilitates easy and effective iteration of assessment, analysis and action. Using iteration, employers can continually gather data through Web-based assessments and reassessments; they can analyze the data and draw conclusions (for example, determining that an employee is at a high risk of injury); and they can take specific action

(locally and /or globally) – all literally at the push of a button.

The flexibility of Web-based applications makes it easy to define a unique iterative process. Companies are able to define the timeframes, messages, actions and analyses.

"Although management is ultimately responsible for providing and maintaining a safe workplace, our improvement model empowers employees to take personal responsibility for addressing their issues," says Vaudreuil.

Hewlett Packard has embraced an Ergonomic Process Model based on PDCA (Plan, Do, Check, Act). This model outlines the components that are necessary for efficiently addressing ergonomics – or any other EHS issues. Because of its flexibility, WorkWell can set up its iteration capabilities to enable HP to adhere to its proven and well-accepted PDCA Model.

The following WorkWell implementation steps used by HP clarify how HP will be turning its Ergonomic Process Model and WorkWell's iteration features into practice.

STEP 1: Complete the Web-based assessment.

STEP 2: Complete the Web-based training (workstations can be adjusted during the training).

STEP 3: Receive e-mail feedback with advice on mitigating the issues that exist.

STEP 4: Receive an e-mail with guidelines of the next steps for reducing risk. Specifically, 24 hours after completing the program, employees who are high or moderate risk, and who also have significant workstation setup issues, will be notified of the possibility to reduce their risk simply through workstation setup modifications.

STEP 5: Within one week of completing WorkWell, all employees identified as high risk are contacted to determine if they need any assistance from an EHS/ergonomics professional in understanding and acting on their identified issues.

STEP 6: Thirty days after completing the assessment, training and re-assessment, high – or moderate-risk employees receive an e-mail with a description of the issues that may be raising each employee's risk and advice on how to mitigate those risks (action). They also receive a personalized

reassessment with both workstation setup and behavioral issues (assessment).

STEP 7: If risk is reduced to low via the reassessment, the employee is removed from the iterative process.

STEP 8: If the risk is moderate or high, (analysis) 60 days after completing the initial assessment, training and re-assessment, employees receive a personalized e-mail re-assessment, again assessing for both workstation setup and behavioral issues. No recommendations are sent with this e-mail. If risk is reduced to low, the employee is removed from the iterative process.

STEP 9: If the risk remains moderate or high (assessment and analysis), 90 days after completing the assessment training and reassessment, employees receive a notice that they have unresolved issues and should expect contact from an EHS/ergonomics professional to address remaining issues.

STEP 10: Between 90 and 120 days after completing the initial assessment, high and moderate-risk employees may receive workstation evaluations (action).

STEP 11: Workstation evaluators update and employee's data manually (assessment); risk is recalculated by the application (analysis). Low-risk individuals are removed from the iterative process.

STEP 12: After 120 days since completing the assessment, training and reassessment, remaining high-risk employees receive a more detailed evaluation and other assistance from an outside resource.

Web-based applications are not solely assessment and training tools. Through the use of iteration, they offer the ability for more efficient, cost-effective and consistent ergonomic program management.

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