

## **Webinar Summary: Post Recession Ergonomics: The Computer Based Worker**

**Presented by:** Gene Kay. ErgoAdvocate

**Summary by:** Claire Brisland

The focus of this webinar was the delivery method of ergonomic services in an office environment. Gene Kay notes that ergonomic staffing has decreased in many companies, leaving more work for less people. If this is the case, then it is more important than ever for ergonomists to determine how they can deliver services as efficiently as possible.

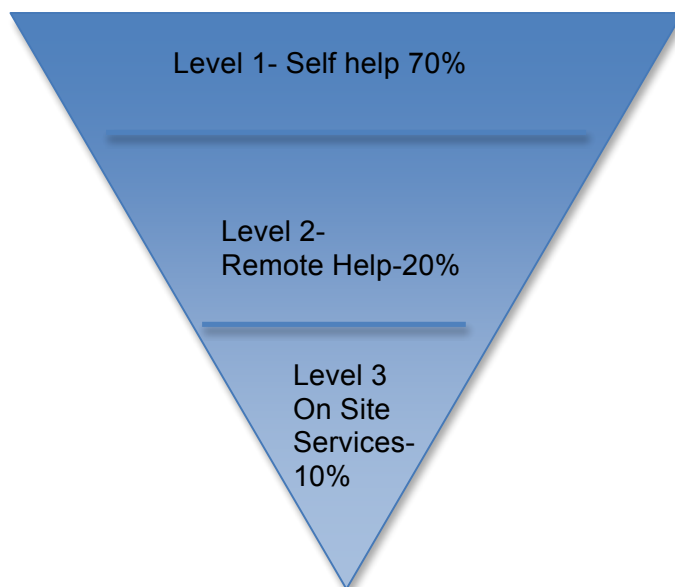
In the case of large companies, many offices are located in various locations, which makes it difficult to provide personal 1:1 services to every employee. Kay sets up a strategy to reach as many employees as possible.

The traditional way of providing services was to send ergonomists out to provide training, job assessments and survey injuries. Kay argues that this level of service is not sustainable due to distances, manpower requirements, time, cost and issues with retention of information by clients.

With technology, new methods of information services are available and can be used to the advantage of ergonomics service providers.

Kay offers a three-pronged approach to ergonomic service delivery to counter act the negatives of traditional ergonomic service delivery.

Three pronged approach:



**Level 1:** Provide an online office ergonomic tool that employees can access and self assess their workstation. This tool should be easy to find, easy to use and answer the majority of questions that employees have.

**Comment:** The Options Online Ergonomic Tool fits the criteria for an online office ergonomic tool that people can work through to answer basic office ergonomics questions. There needs to be accountability that clients are understanding and applying the material accessed online, this was not mentioned in the webinar.

**Level 2:** At this level Kay suggests that ergonomists provide remote support through phone or photo sharing online. It is suggested that for employees that do not have their questions answered in Level 1, the ergonomist can make contact with clients remotely to answer questions.

**Comment:** Kay suggests that ergonomists can provide telephone support to clients or photo share over the internet to solve problems. I think more advanced tools such as Skype, or interactive meeting software would be more effective and less frustrating to provide support remotely.

**Level 3:** At this level, a personal consult with an ergonomist occurs. Kay suggests that this level of service should be saved for complex cases where solutions may be more complicated. This is where the ergonomists expert service is required for problem resolution.

### **Summary:**

A three-pronged program is an interesting approach to ergonomics service delivery. This methodology is primarily aimed at ergonomists working in, or with, large companies with many remote offices.

Kay did not provide any statistics of knowledge retention or effectiveness of information given to clients using a self-paced web based program. To think that 70% of the population would access the software tool and work through may be overly optimistic. Employers may require some evidence that employees are understanding and retaining the online information that is presented to them.

### **Application for Options:**

Having clients preview the Options Online Office Tool, before a consultant visits their workstation may be a potential methodology to adapt. This way the client can preview ergonomic concepts and do a base level assessment of their workstation. This way the ergonomist is available to troubleshoot complex problems when on site with client.

It would appear there is a need to provide training to employees that may be located in many different offices in a company. Employers also require that this training be effective and understandable for their employees.