

Members in Action

Shannon Poppe

ASTD-Lincoln VP of Communications



I currently own and operate a consulting company called **Desktop Ergonomics**. In an effort to help local employers ensure a healthy office environment, I provide office workstation assessments, which include observation of essential job tasks, photo documentation, identification of risk factors, and recommendations for adjusting current workstation (keyboard height, monitor placement, etc.) or purchase of new equipment. This low-cost service can save companies hundreds or thousands of direct and indirect costs, including sick leave and lost productivity.

Workstation assessments are essential for new hires, employees who work on a computer throughout most of the day, and employees who are experiencing symptoms of musculoskeletal disorders (repetitive stress, i.e., tendonitis, carpal tunnel syndrome, etc). Workstations can be adjusted using straightforward, low-cost techniques and often, a workstation can be altered without cost simply using existing equipment. In addition to workstation assessments, I provide training for supervisors or safety committee members on how to recognize risk factors and assess employee workstations. I have several contacts at local office supply vendors on speed dial in an effort to find the best fit product at the lowest cost.

The mission of my company is to help reduce health costs... one workstation at a time.

I also work for the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Environmental Health and Safety Department. I am an Ergonomics and Safety Specialist and have been providing ergonomic assessments, back safety and ergonomics training, and product recommendation to the Lincoln campus for over six years. I hold a Master's degree in Leadership Education and am currently serving my second position on the ASTD-Lincoln Board. I have been a member of ASTD-Lincoln for approximately three years. In 2006, I was the Director of Marketing and for 2007, I will serve as the Vice President of Communications.



Typical employee workstation

Desktop Ergonomics



Workstation Assessment = \$100

Products purchased for employee = \$125



Reducing risk factors, worker comp costs, and lost productivity =

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My role as an independent consultant and a safety specialist allows me to be involved in training and development with a diverse client base. In general, my career focuses more on one-on-one training, as I sit down and discuss workstations and postures/habits with each employee. I feel this provides a more personal level of training, as the focus is solely on that person and how to adjust their workstation.

The most rewarding aspect of my work is making a difference to a person's comfort level at work. After spending approximately 30 minutes with an employee, I provide suggestions for a more cohesive workspace for them. This undoubtedly improves employee comfort and in return provides me with the satisfaction of helping others. I believe the management support of office ergonomics and improvements to workstations shows a dedication to focusing on their greatest asset: their employees.

ASTD-Lincoln has provided me an abundance of leadership, training, and marketing skills that helped me launch my consulting business in 2006. Just participating on the Big Event Committee for Disney was an eye-opener. The coordination and energy needed by the committee and volunteers really emphasizes how an event as big as Disney can be achieved when the right skills and communication are coordinated within a group seeking the same goal. The networking with ASTD-Lincoln is unbelievable... it seems someone always knows someone who you should contact to help you improve your training and development skills, find a product or service, or to market your company. It is a never-ending virtual rolodex.

Shannon Poppe is an independent consultant and owner of Desktop Ergonomics. She is also a Safety and Ergonomics Specialist for the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Shannon can be reached at (402) 430-4845 or info@desktopergo.com.