the key to a manager’s heart is through his or her team. One thing you must do is influence the shop floor and gain the buy-in of this workforce.

This isn’t always easy to do since sometimes there is an us-vs.-them mentality, and you need someone to vouch for you. Finding a highly influential mechanic or technician who gets what you are trying to do will help immensely with buy-in. You might have positional power from your title, but they have personal power with their group and manager. Personal power has greater influence over how people make decisions, which is what you need when you’re creating a culture.

Another bonus is that craftsmen, technicians and mechanics are unusually creative. It’s often a very underappreciated talent, but the best ergo solutions I’ve ever seen have come from the people who actually do the jobs. Learn to tap into that talent, and let them guide you with their creative ideas.

Figure 3 details the benefits of utilizing undervalued players.

Lesson 3: Play the game differently

The A’s use of sabermetrics, a technique to measure a player’s value objectively, made them stand out. Baseball recruiters had always relied on more subjective measures to determine a player’s potential, but sabermetrics made the game more objective.

Beane’s approach was widely criticized until the league saw that his theory on how to win actually worked despite radically differing from the traditional methods.

Ergonomists also need to play the game differently if they want their programs to take off. The corporate executives know how important safety and environmental programs are, yet ergonomics seems to baffle them.

As a profession, we tend to blame management for not understanding what we bring to the table. At some point we need to take responsibility

### FIGURE 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hurdle</th>
<th>Solution</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Buy-in</td>
<td>They can better influence those people in their circles that you do not have direct access to.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Budgets | • Interns cost a lot less than consultants or full-time employees.  
• Accessing in-house expertise can reduce your need for external assistance when trying to solve ergo problems. |
| Workload | • These players can act as information warehouses, spreading program information to their teams when you are not around.  
• They can teach and help you with your training workload. |

Looking the other way is costly

A recent study showed that more than 69 percent of employees had experienced at least one episode of significant back or neck pain in the last year, *Gulf Business* reported.

This means that companies are losing between 6 percent to 12 percent of their workforce to absenteeism and low productivity, according to the magazine, which covers trade and commerce in the Persian Gulf region. Paying attention to ergonomics, even things as simple as how your office workers sit, can improve their health and productivity.

“Poor ergonomics can over-stress your nervous system and throw your whole body off balance, having a huge impact on your productivity, wellness and quality of life,” Tim Garrett wrote.

For example, people with poor sitting postures, who hunch over with their heads leaning forward, breathe through their chest instead of the abdomen. This shuts down the parasympathetic nervous system (relax and repair), disturbs hormone balance, causes fatigue and can affect sleep quality and digestion. These workers will have a lower metabolism and more difficulty losing weight.

Basic ergonomics techniques like sitting with only your lower back supported with your spine in a natural S shape, adjusting your monitor so it is slightly below eye level, and making sure your forearms are parallel to the floor can help.