

A background image showing several hands of different people stacked together in a circle, symbolizing teamwork and support. The hands are in various colors and are positioned in a way that they appear to be holding each other up.

Sustaining Ergonomic Programs During an Economic Slowdown

Agenda

- **Benefits of setting ergonomic policy**
- **Use of metrics to demonstrate ROI & achievement of ergonomic policy objectives**
- **Types of technology to expand program's reach**
- **How to stretch training dollars**



Today's Headlines

Bank of America profits plunge 68%

- CNN

Toyota, Honda Decline

After U.S. Retail Sales Tumble

- Bloomberg

**CITIGROUP
POSTS LOSS,
CUTS 11,000
JOBS**

- The Globe
and Mail

US confronts
possibility of
long, deep
recession

- AP

DOW dives 733 points

- LA Times

PepsiCo to cut 3,300 jobs

- AP

Impact on Safety Programs

- ❑ **Staff Reductions**
- ❑ **Resources - cut back**
- ❑ **Outsourcing**
- ❑ **Demand for ROI**



Workers' Compensation

- ❑ **Increased rates during high unemployment**
- ❑ **Layoffs**
- ❑ **Tension**
- ❑ **Stress**
- ❑ **More work for remaining staff**
- ❑ **RMI claims**

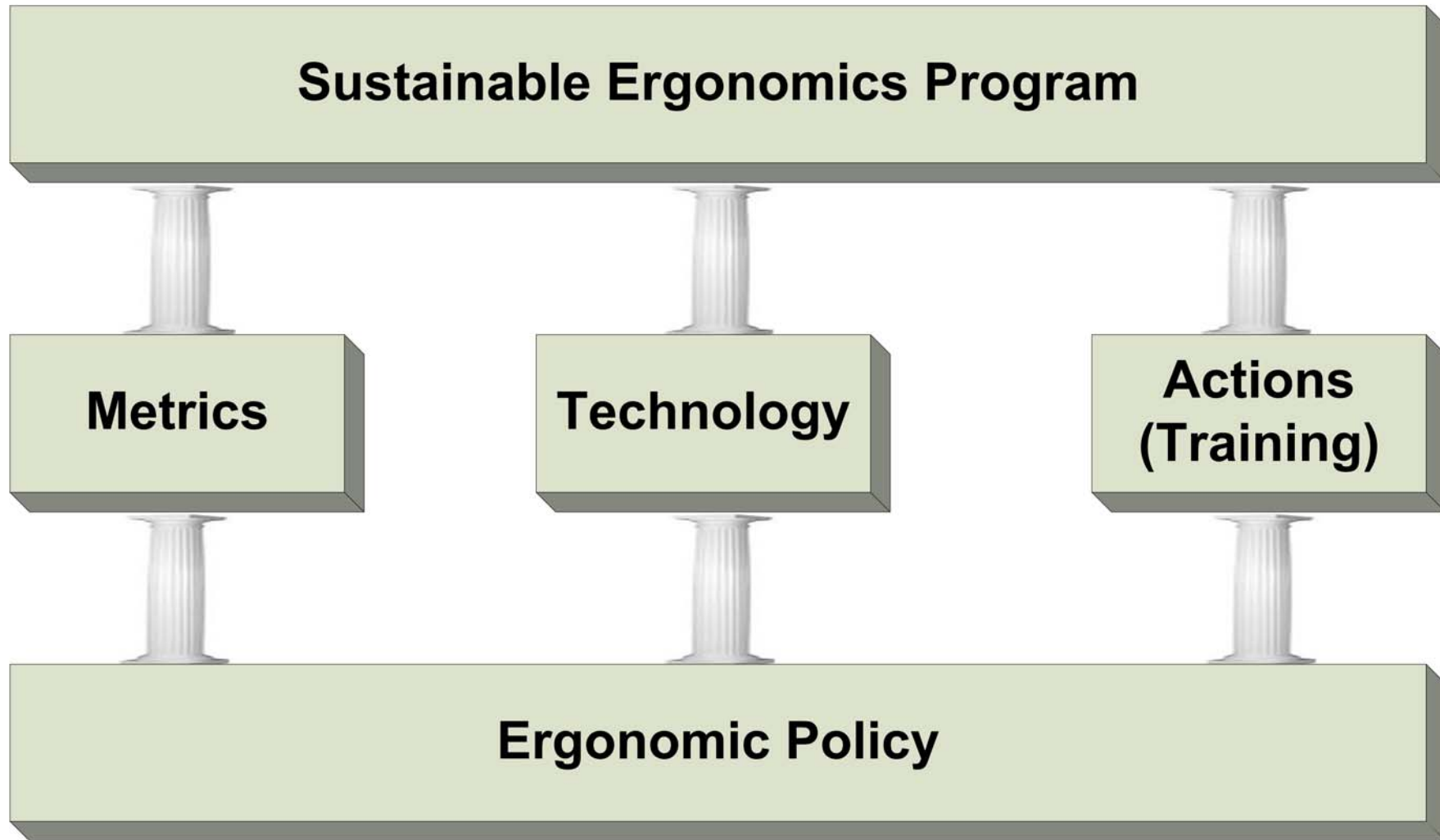


Impact on Ergo Programs

- Fewer staff dedicated to ergonomics
- Ergonomics not seen as “mandatory”
- Resources driven by compliance issues
 - ▣ OSHA 300 log
 - ▣ Focus on minimum compliance only
- Ergonomic spending is seen as discretionary



Pillars of Successful Ergonomics Programs



How Can Setting an Ergonomic Policy Help?

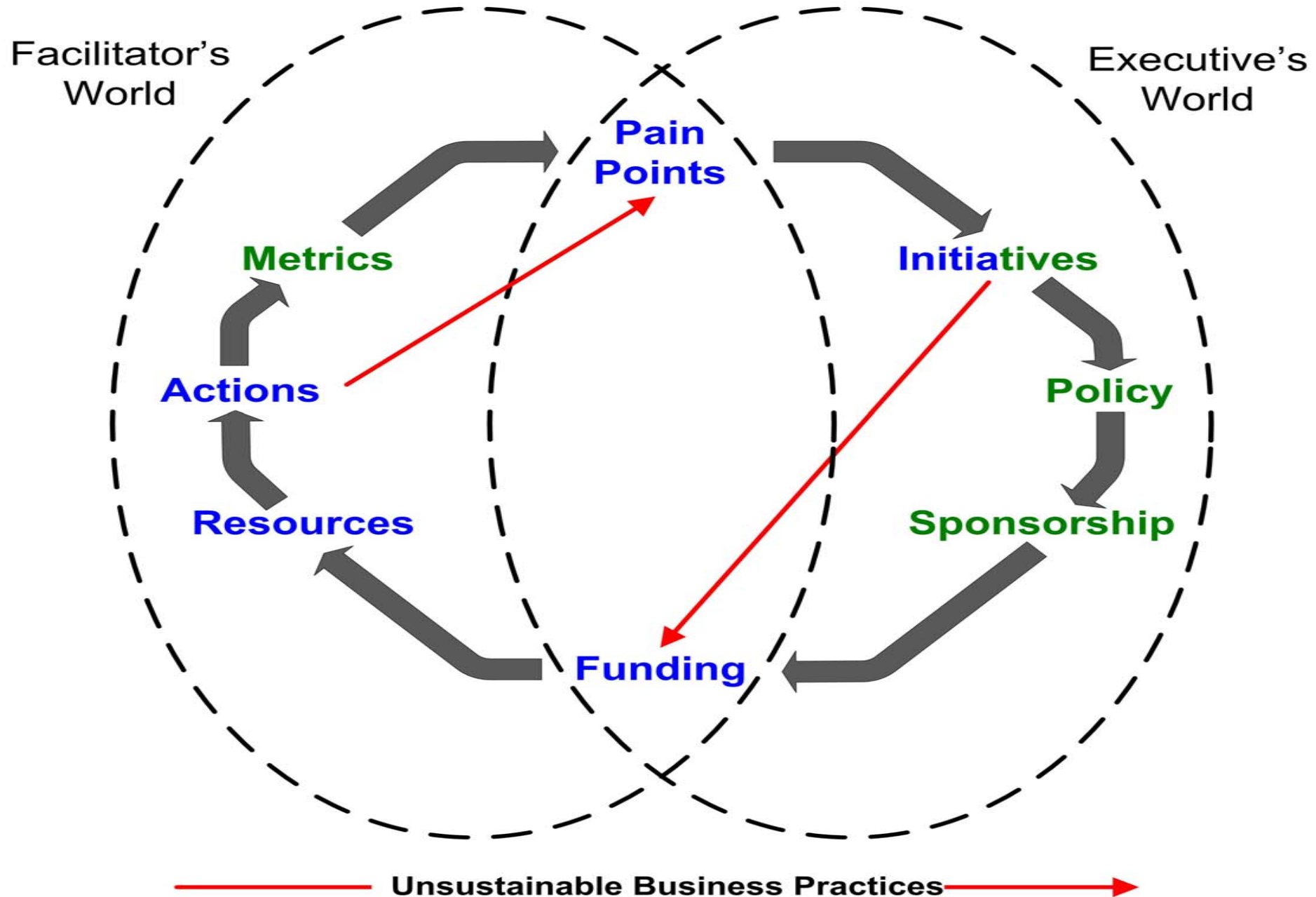
- **Enables organization to focus on its pain points**
- **Helps to garner executive sponsorship**
- **Aligns ergonomic activities with organization's objectives**
- **Keeps ergonomics off the budget chopping block**
- **Allows the company to focus resources on areas that have the most *proven* benefits**
- **Having a policy allows you to show positive results that support the program**



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Ergonomics Circle of Sustainability



What is the Organization's Pain?

- ❑ **High workers' comp rates**
- ❑ **Excessive absenteeism**
- ❑ **Low productivity**
- ❑ **Decrease in morale**
- ❑ **High turnover**
- ❑ **Purchase of ergonomic equipment that does not appear to be working**
- ❑ **Poor workstation design**



What are the Organization's Ergonomic Initiatives?

- **Ergonomics consultation in design**
- **Proactive ergonomics worksite evaluations**
- **Reactive ergonomics evaluations**
 - **Pain & Discomfort**
 - **Workers' comp**
- **Employee Training**
- **Identification and reduction of leading indicators**
 - **Risk factors**
 - **Pain & Discomfort**
- **Identification of departmental trending across the organization**
 - **Identification of high risk activities**
- **Employee feedback**
 - **Open communication**
 - **Early reporting**

Setting an ergonomic policy

- **What is the organization's pain?**
- **What are the organization's ergonomic initiatives?**
 - **Goals & Objectives**
 - **Cost vs. Effectiveness**
- **Policy also drives procedures**
 - **If its written it gets done**
 - **Allows you to focus on most important areas**
 - **Identify thresholds that drive specific activities**
 - **Set timelines**



Actions resulting from Policy

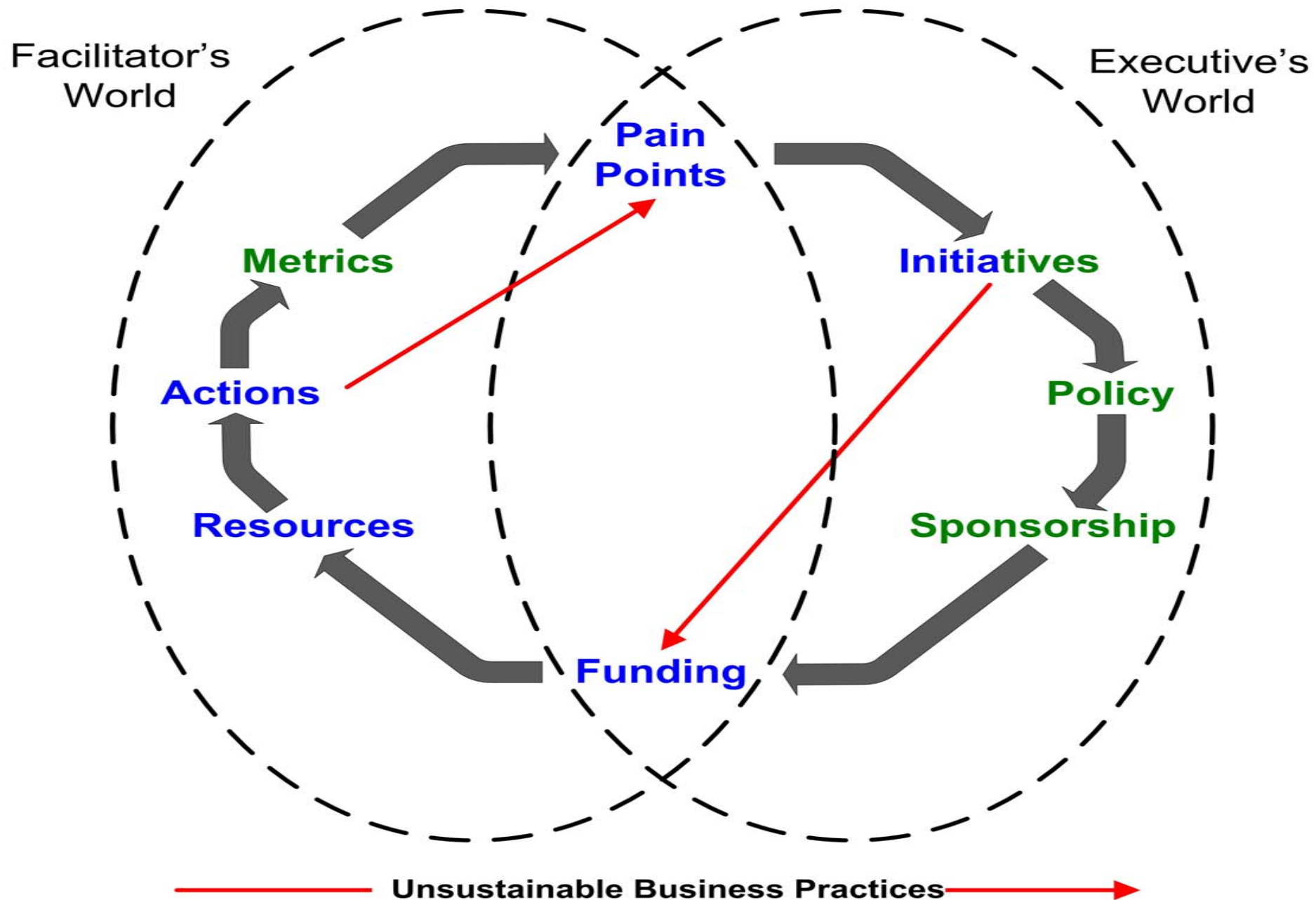
- **Training schedule**
 - **Annual**
 - **Semi-annual**
 - **One on one**
- **Evaluation thresholds**
 - **How many preventative per month/qtr**
- **Follow-up thresholds**
 - **In-person follow-up**
 - **Telephonic follow-up**
 - **Electronic methods for follow-up**
- **Clear communication of employee responsibilities**

Setting an ergonomic policy

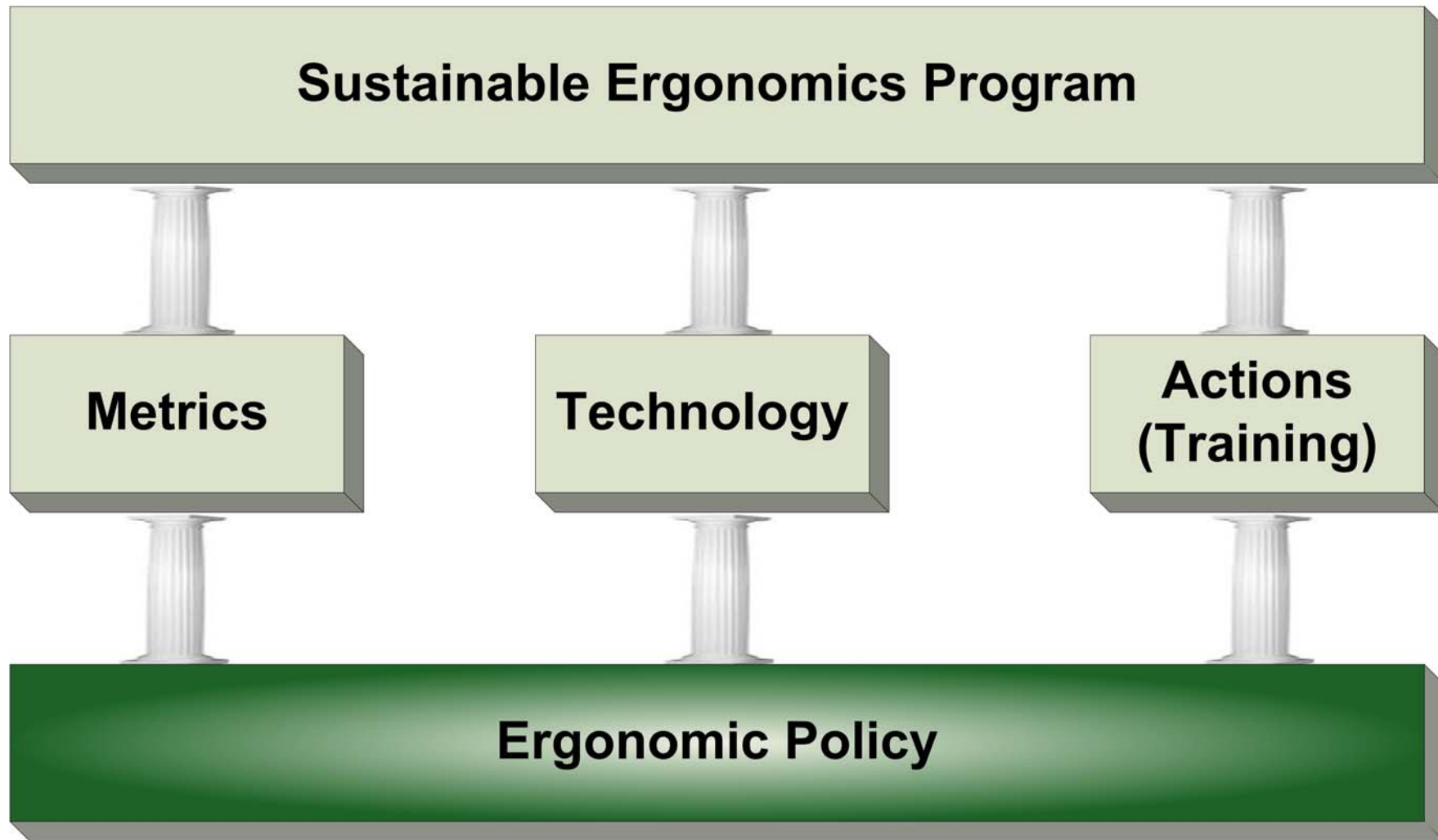
- **Identify Organization's Pain**
- **Ergonomic Initiatives – Goals and Objectives**
- **Policy – Sponsorship - Funding**
- **Actions**
- **Metrics - Results**



Ergonomics Circle of Sustainability



Pillars of Successful Ergonomics Programs



Why Metrics?

- ❑ **Aids in achievement of ergonomic policy objectives**
- ❑ **Leading indicators (as opposed to lagging indicators) show immediate value**
- ❑ **Trending identifies ongoing areas of high risk**
- ❑ **Demonstrates ROI**



Meaningful Metrics

Align your collection of metrics with your ergonomic program goals – examples:

- ❑ **To reduce the filing of repetitive motion related W/C claims**
- ❑ **To put each employee through a basic ergonomic awareness training**
- ❑ **To reduce ergonomic risk factors in the call center by 60% or more**
- ❑ **To reduce reported pain & discomfort by 75% or more**



Leading vs. Lagging Indicators

- ❑ **Lagging indicators – collected after injury**
 - ❑ **WC claims**
 - ❑ **Lost time**
 - ❑ **Medical costs, disability payments**
 - ❑ **Injury and illness rates**
- ❑ **Leading indicators – collected before injury**
 - ❑ **Risk factors**
 - ❑ **Pain and discomfort**
 - ❑ **Training participation**
 - ❑ **Productivity indicators**



Data Classification

□ Capture data by:

- Department
- Location
- Job Function
- Environment
 - Seated
 - Lab
- Type of evaluation
 - WC
 - Preventative with discomfort
 - Preventative no discomfort
 - New hire (union / non-union)



Data Classification

- **Use for trending – Examples:**
- **Which departments or job functions have the highest ergonomic risk?**
- **Is there a correlation between ergonomic training and risk factor reduction?**
- **Of the products provided, which have shown to have produced a reduction in discomfort?**
- **Trending identifies the “Low Hanging Fruit”**

Avoiding Data Overload

- **Keep data points as generalized as possible while still maintaining enough detail for trending**
- **Use risk factor categories such as physical, environmental instead of detailed categories such as wrist extension, extensive reaching**
- **Use areas of the body such as upper extremity, lower extremity, back instead of specific body parts**
- **Use product categories instead of product types (chairs, input devices instead of Criterion chair or RollerMouse)**
- **The more detail you track, the more data you must collect and input – strike a reasonable balance**

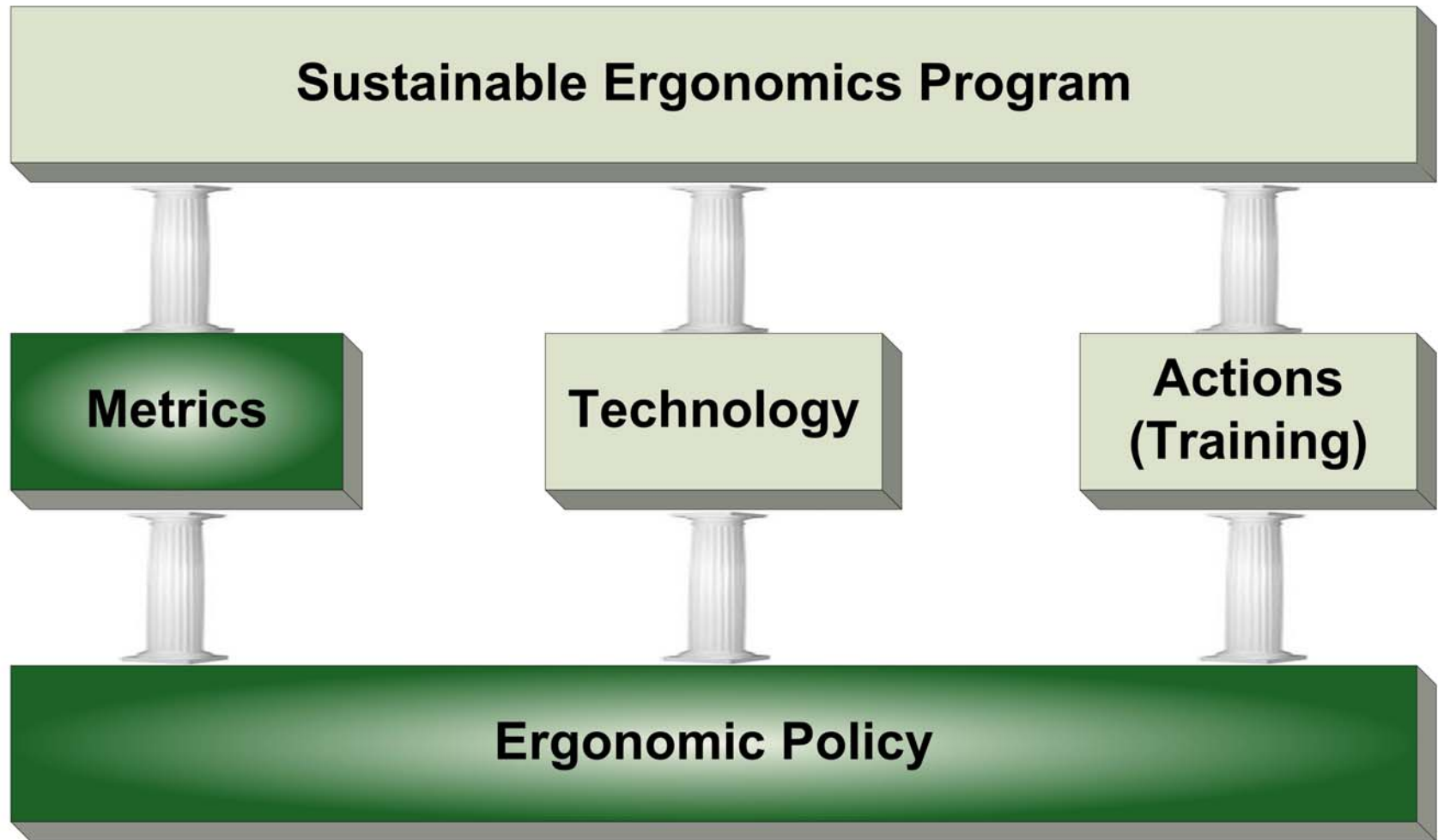
Metrics for ROI

- **How does the data save your organization money?**
- **Estimate tangible and intangible savings**
 - **Reduced W/C claims**
 - **Increased productivity = decreased labor costs**
 - **Increased worker comfort = reduced turnover**
 - **Improved processes = reduced waste**

Success with Metrics

- ❑ **Be sure they prove your policy objectives**
- ❑ **Be sure they address your organization's pain points**
- ❑ **Classify your data to help identify “Low Hanging Fruit”**
- ❑ **Make them easy to measure, collect, and incorporate into your existing processes**
- ❑ **Publish them widely & give credit to those who helped to support their collection**

Pillars of Successful Ergonomics Programs



Technology – a Cautionary Tale

- ❑ **Jumping into technology too quickly**
- ❑ **Not understanding what technology means to your company**
- ❑ **Making impulse decisions- quick fixes due to pressure to “get things done”**
- ❑ **Research shows up to 70% of IT projects are unfinished or unused**

Technology Options

- ❑ **Online training and assessment**
- ❑ **Ergonomics process management**
- ❑ **Email & survey management**
- ❑ **Assessment report generation**
- ❑ **Product management & reporting**
- ❑ **Metrics tracking & reporting**
- ❑ **Status reporting**
- ❑ **Unified reporting of both on-line and in-person evaluations**

How do you evaluate technology?

- ❑ **Capabilities – what can it do?**
- ❑ **Cost vs. effectiveness**
- ❑ **Effort and resources to implement and sustain**
- ❑ **Does it support your ergonomics policy?**
- ❑ **Does it easily incorporate into and help to manage your ergonomics process?**
- ❑ **Will it force you to eliminate a critical part of your process?**
- ❑ **Will it cause duplication of effort?**
- ❑ **Does it help to keep your evaluators in the field, or does it chain them to a desk?**

Cost vs. Effectiveness

- ❑ **Online Training**
- ❑ **Online Assessment**
- ❑ **Home grown systems**
- ❑ **Data Capture Tools**
- ❑ **“Mixed Mode” approach**
 - ❑ **Use on-line assessment tools to help identify high risk situations, then send in your trained staff**
- ❑ **High effectiveness combined with low cost is the goal**



Online Training

□ Online training

□ Pros:

- Easy to administer
- Self-paced
- Can be used for large populations

□ Cons:

- Expensive
- Employees may not be engaged or may not respond
- Response are based on employee's understanding
- Limited populations (seated workstations only)

Online Self-Assessment

□ Online self-assessment

□ Pros:

- Provides general principles
- Provides data on individuals
- Can be used for large populations

□ Cons:

- Expensive
- Employees report inaccuracies
- Too much data
- Can be too generalized
- Limited populations (seated workstations only)
- Surveys can be too long

“Home-grown process”

- **Examples:**
 - **Spreadsheets to track evaluation data**
 - **Email reminders**
 - **Ergo tips**
 - **Websites with on-line content**

Home-grown Process

- **Pros:**
 - **Inexpensive**
 - **Customized to your program**
 - **In-house assistance**
 - **Contributors tend to be strong advocates**
- **Cons:**
 - **Features may not be fully integrated**
 - **Takes a long time to make changes**
 - **Ambition beyond capability**
 - **There may not be dedicated time for development**
 - **IT not always cooperative**

Data Capture Tool

- **Pros:**
 - ▣ **Integrated with all program components**
 - ▣ **Customized**
 - ▣ **Designed for the ergo professional**
- **Cons:**
 - ▣ **Better for the large scale programs to track data**
 - ▣ **Requires a comprehensive ergonomic approach**
- **Important:**
 - ▣ **Conduct a thorough “proof of fit” analysis**

What can technology do for you

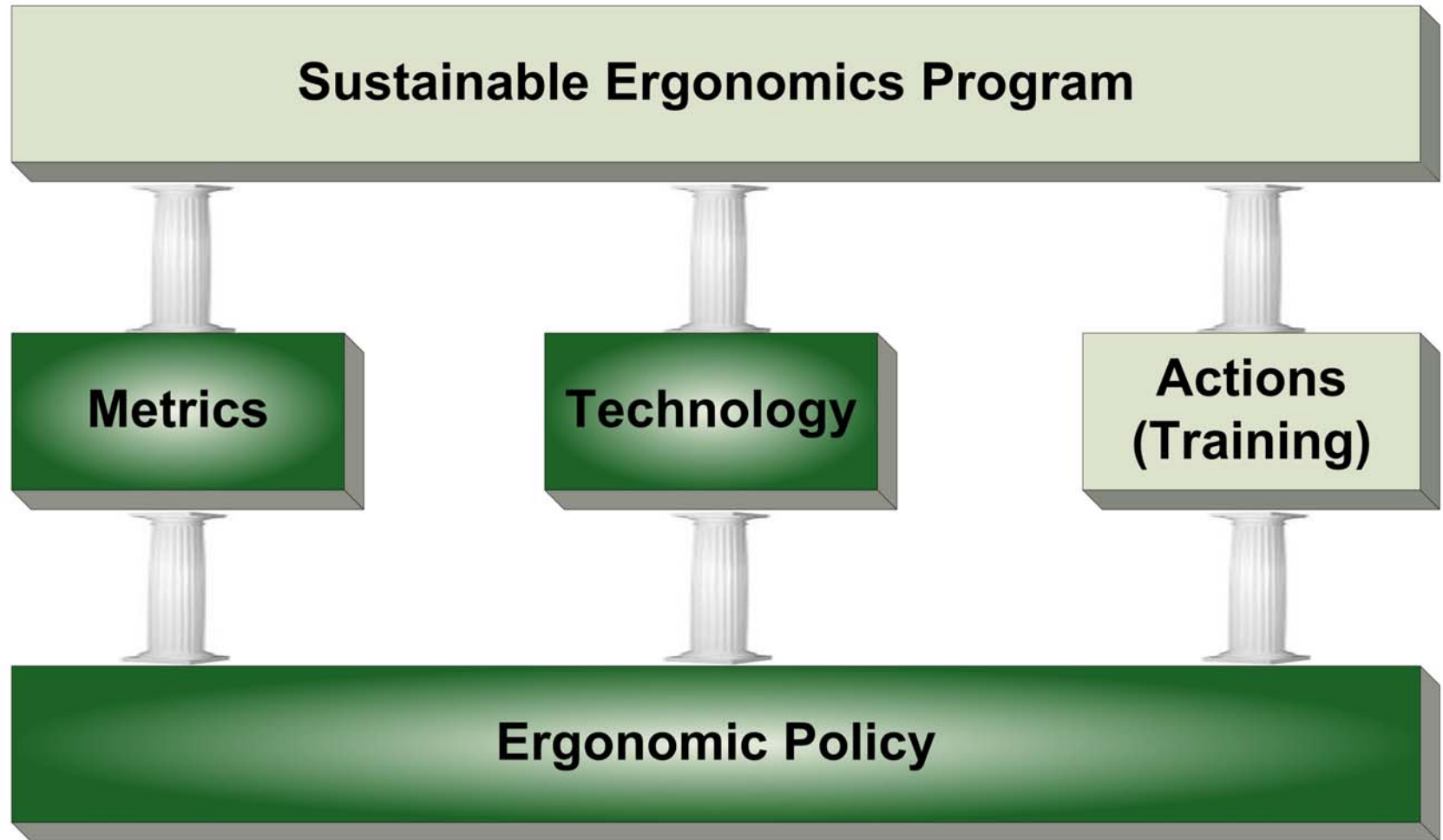
- ❑ **Save you time!**
- ❑ **Aid in delegation of tasks**
- ❑ **Track/manage the process**
- ❑ **Send out emails**
- ❑ **Keep track of scheduling**
- ❑ **Manage products**
- ❑ **Aid with the creation of assessment reports**
- ❑ **Generate metrics**
- ❑ **Standardize the way ergonomics is conducted**

Low Cost Technology Options

- **Using Email**
 - **Surveys – discomfort, follow-up**
 - **Reminders – ergo tips**
 - **Template notices – to supervisors, procurement**
- **Website ergo tips**
- **SharePoint web portal for report delivery**
- **Links to vendor websites with product info, ergo information**
- **Standardized Product List**
- **Home grown tracking**



Pillars of Successful Ergonomics Programs



Effective In-house Training

- **Organization's pain should dictate training topics**
 - **High incidence**
 - **First report of injury**
 - **Symptom surveys**
- **Observation of workplace risk factors**
 - **Walk-throughs**
 - **Immediate educational opportunities**
 - **Expediting of corrective actions**
- **Provide information on value of training**
 - **Studies that support training in reducing MSDs**

Stretching Training and Resource Dollars

- **Train employees first**
 - ▣ **Educate on neutral postures**
 - ▣ **Equipment adjustments**
 - ▣ **Encourage team resolution**
- **Use Ergo Team – Train-the-Trainer**
- **Use Manager/Supervisors**
- **Provide Ergo Tip Cards**
- **Use website to offer ergo information**
 - ▣ **Quizzes**
 - ▣ **Link to vendor information periodically**



Stretching Training and Resource Dollars

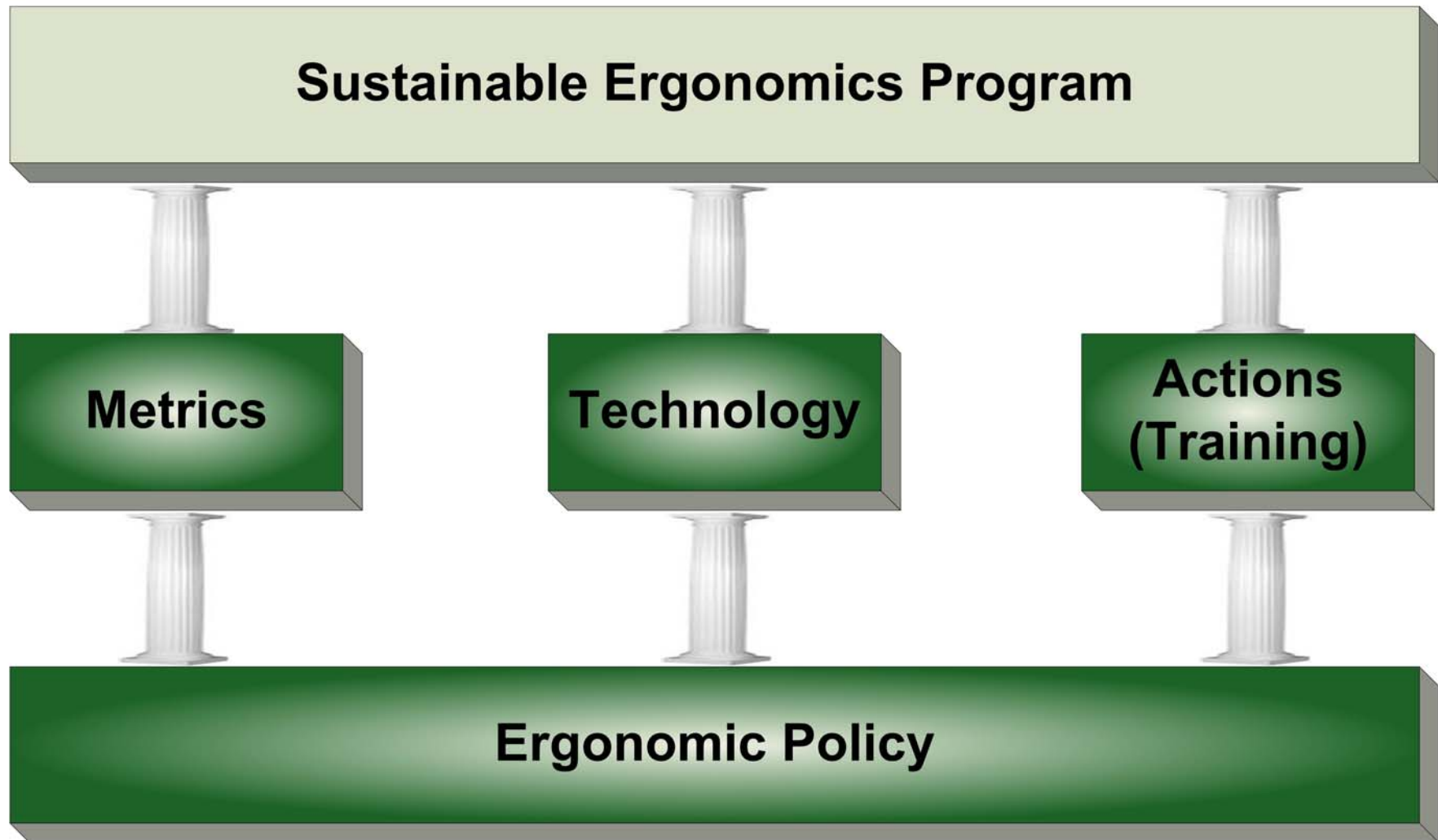
- **Provide e-tips through email**
- **Use employee surveys to identify and prioritize high risk groups and train them first**
- **Use on-site evaluation to provide counsel/education**
- **Use health fairs to offer ergo instruction**
- **Use all of your ergonomic encounters to reinforce the “ergonomic message”**

Free Training Resources

- **Vendor lunch & learn**
- **Manufacturer videos on ergonomic tips**
 - ▣ **Chair adjustments**
 - ▣ **Keyboard and mouse programmability**
 - ▣ **Keyboard tray adjustment**
- **Vendor product showcase**
 - ▣ **Chair adjustment workshops**



Pillars of Successful Ergonomics Programs



Other Options to Empower your Ergonomics Program

- **Use your data to build a case for being involved in new design**
 - ▣ **New buildings**
 - ▣ **Department moves**
 - ▣ **Retrofits**
- **Use information to identify smart bulk product purchases**
 - ▣ **Negotiate bulk prices**
- **Inventory your unused ergonomic product**
 - ▣ **Create a “green” ergonomic initiative**
 - ▣ **Create a “share your resources” program**



Other Options to Empower your Ergonomics Program

- **American with Disabilities Act changes**
 - **Definition of disability expanded, the focus is on employers providing more reasonable accommodations to workers**
 - **Ergonomics is a vital accommodation tool in getting workers back on the job**
 - **www.ada.gov**
- **U.S. Green Building Council**
 - **Points towards LEED certification for ergonomic program development (Innovation and Design)**
 - **www.usgbc.com**



Goals

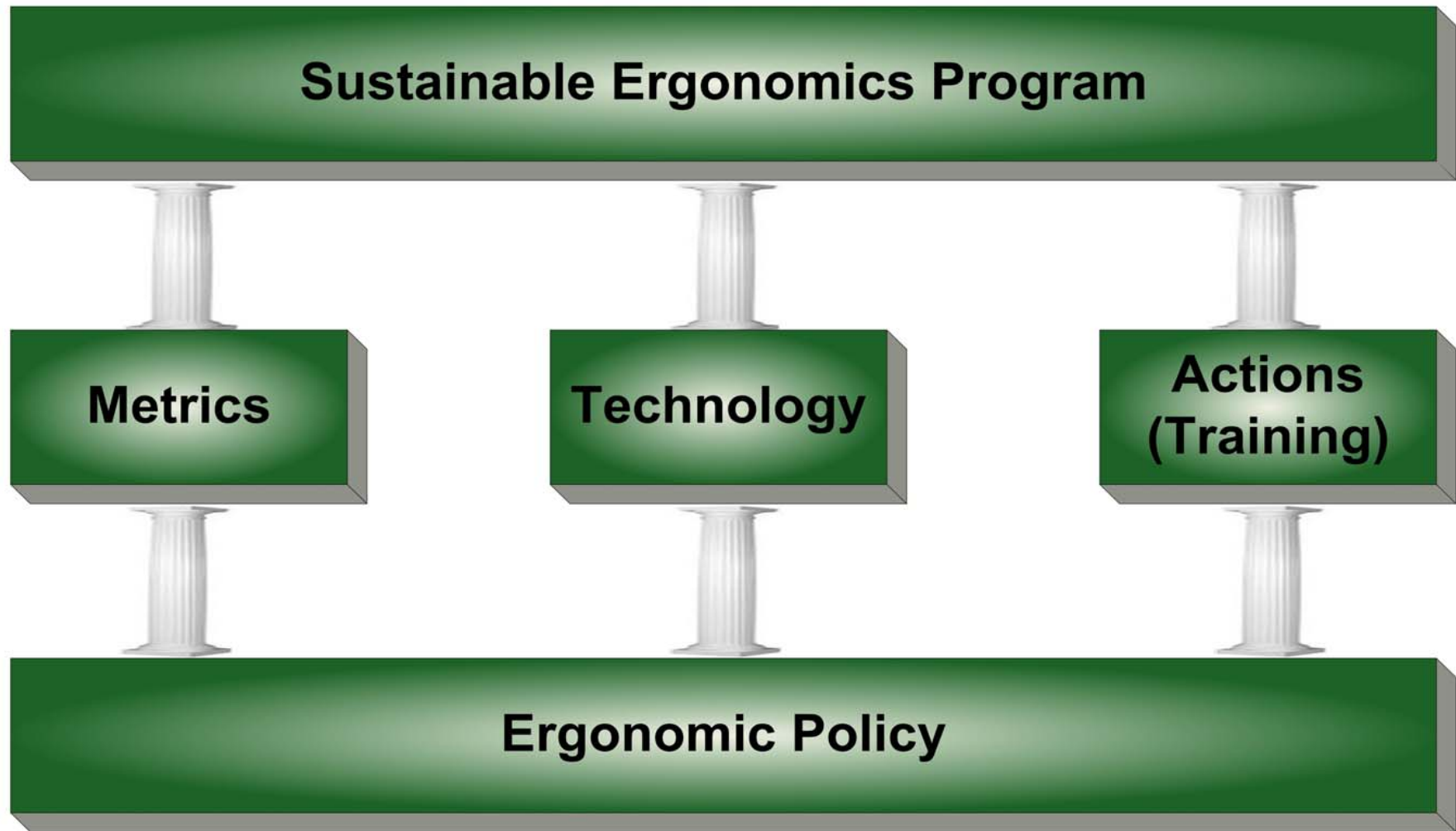
- **In difficult economic times, make sure your program is showing its value and worth**



Summary

- **Benefits of setting ergonomic policy**
- **Use of metrics to demonstrate ROI & achievement of ergonomic policy objectives**
- **Types of technology to expand program's reach**
- **How to stretch training dollars and resources**

Pillars of Successful Ergonomics Programs



The Future?

How would you address the issue of ergonomic hazards, which are responsible for one-third of all workplace injuries?"

AFL-CIO Questionnaire on workplace safety

- ***“I would reinstate OSHA's ergonomics rule and make sure that we create a policy that supports workers.”***
 - **Presidential Candidate Barack Obama, 07/11/08**

Presentation Update

The most up-to-date version of this presentation can be found at:

<http://www.pelletierinc.com/presentations.html>