



Steelcase

CASE STUDY  
**ONLY THE BEST**

**Humantech, Inc.**  
Ann Arbor, MI

Every company considers ergonomics when they select task seating for employees. But what happens when an ergonomics consulting firm selects seating for its 45 employees? After five years of being standardized on Herman Miller's Aeron chair, Humantech decided to review their seating standard.

**OBJECTIVES**

"We were planning a move to a new building, and for a variety of reasons decided it was time to reevaluate our seating," explained Jim Good, President. So as you might expect from the largest ergonomics consulting team in North America, they conducted a thorough ergonomics evaluation of task chairs from four different companies. "Our goal was to become as knowledgeable as possible about seating products on the market," said Jim. The company's leaders, Jim Good and Vice Presidents Mike Wynn and Josh Kerst, wanted to know that they were giving their employees the best seating technology.

"We have a dedication to all of our staff to provide them with the best possible equipment. We want them to be sitting in the best chair available. It's a practice what we preach idea. We treat our internal people with the same concern for service and quality as we do our clients."

In fact, Humantech made sure that their clients could benefit from the seating study too. They developed a universal study format that can be used with clients who want to conduct a seating ergonomics assessment for their own offices.



James Good, President (Left) and John Kerst, Vice President (Right), Humantech, Inc

## SITUATION

For their ergonomic assessment, Humantech used both objective and subjective criteria to evaluate four chairs:

- **Aeron** / Herman Miller
- **Freedom™** / Humanscale
- **7708** / Hon
- **Leap®** / Steelcase

The objective criteria were based on an industry standard called CSA Z412-00. The CSA (Canadian Standards Association) recommends dimensions and ranges of adjustability. "It was

For the subjective evaluation, Humantech called on (who else?) their own expert employees as test subjects. They selected a variety of people who reflected the range of body sizes found in the general population. The subjective evaluation collected data in two areas:

- **Comfort/Discomfort**
- **Features & Functions**

Each tester used each chair for three consecutive days and answered a series of questions. The chairs were rated in ten areas. For overall comfort, the testers rated Leap as 19.5% more comfortable than the next highest ranking chair. And for overall adjustability, Leap was rated as 25% more adjustable than the next highest ranking chair. In fact, Leap received the highest rating in nine of the ten subjective evaluation categories.

**“Of the four chairs evaluated, Leap was the only one that met absolutely all of the objective requirements.”**

determined that the CSA Z412-00 standard was the most comprehensive tool as it summarized these other standards: ISO 9241, ANSI HFES 100, and BIFMA standards.”<sup>1</sup>



Leap's back scored highest at **4.62/5**.



Leap's seat pan scored highest at **4.62/5**.



Leap's arm rest scored highest at **4.90/5**.

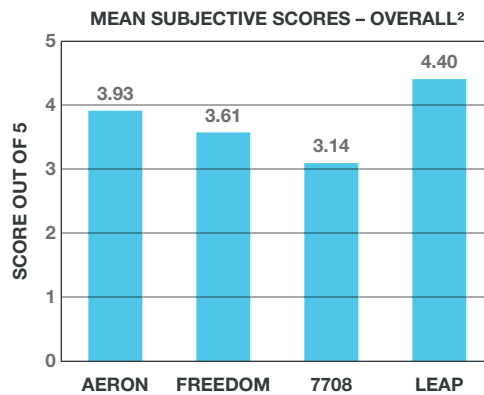
## humantech<sup>®</sup>

### HUMANTECH, INC.

A full-service human performance consulting firm specializing in occupational ergonomics. They are the largest consulting team of Board Certified Professional Ergonomists in North America. Humantech's client list, which includes many Fortune 500 companies, covers a variety of industries: aerospace, telecommunications, automotive, healthcare, call centers, pharmaceutical, consumer products, oil and heavy vehicles.

Humantech uses their unique Human Performance Ergonomics™ approach to help clients link ergonomics to improved productivity and quality.

The chart below shows a summary of the testers' responses to all questions, with 5 being the highest score possible. Leap received a mean overall score of 4.40 on the subjective survey.



Some of Leap's features that helped it win such high marks are its Live Back™ that changes shape with the users' movements to support the entire spine, the Natural Glide System™ that allows users to recline without

leaving their vision and reach comfort zones, arm adjustments, seat depth adjustment, and seat angle adjustment.

"Leap is easy to adjust, with excellent features," said Simone DeSousa, Director of Design, one of the seating testers. Another tester, Winnie Ip, Consultant, noted "Leap's arm rests are by far the best." Winnie also liked the fact that all of Leap's adjustment controls are labeled "which makes it easy to navigate." Irvine-based Ergonomics Engineer, Darren MacDonald, liked the Leap chair so much that he bought one for his home office. The opinions of these ergonomics professionals confirm that Leap is fulfilling its mission. Leap was designed based on extensive research of natural postures and how people move during the work day, to create a chair that revolutionizes ergonomic seating.

## SOLUTION

Based on the results of the ergonomic evaluation, Humantech knew their choice was clearly the Leap chair. There was another advantage to Leap that Humantech liked. One size chair that can fit everyone is a cost savings.

The proof that Leap can fit a whole range of people came from the objective part of the study, which evaluated measurements and adjustability. And it was backed up by employees' comments. One 6ft. 4in. tall male employee wrote that Leap "accommodates bigger sizes" while a 5ft. 2in. tall female employee wrote that Leap is "very well suited to a smaller person."



## RESULTS

Humantech installed Leap in both its Ann Arbor, Michigan and Irvine, California offices. End of story? Not when you're dealing with ergonomics fanatics. To compare the initial evaluation results to user satisfaction after sitting in Leap for four months, they sent out a follow-up survey to all employees. The results were consistent. On a scale of 1–5, Leap received a median score of 4.5.

The project's sponsors Jim, Josh, and Mike are happy knowing that they've given their employees the best seating technology on the market. "When they can sit down in that Leap and be comfortable ... that just really hits home."

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