

BENEFITS insights

Developing a Benefits Communication Program

The process of creating and delivering a manageable and effective benefit communication program can be a time-consuming undertaking, but by following some helpful tips and best practices, you can streamline the success of your program.

Know what benefits your organization provides and how they work:

- Make an inventory of dates, contracts and other administrative information for all contracts and plans.
- Create or utilize a comparison of benefits features and costs for each plan you offer.
- Consider your benefits documents from varying perspectives, such as the company lawyer, a judge and jury, employees, employees' beneficiaries and the press.

Know how your employees feel about your benefit program:

- Ask them how they feel and let them know you are sincere in your desire to know and meet their needs.
- Analyze reports from your providers.
- Study actuarial and provider research.

Understand benefits communication responsibilities and organize yourself:

- Develop a plan that includes required, as well as optional communications that may be helpful.
- Keep employees and beneficiaries informed of changes to their benefits, and explain confusing terms and features of the plans.

Prepare your benefits communication plan of action:

- Determine who will prepare your benefit communications and the costs involved..
- Construct a data sheet to be used for planning, preparing and delivering your communications.
- Designate responsibilities for the preparation of each communication. Be sure to consider both internal and external assistance.

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Sell your communication plan to your manager:

- Determine HR and other benefit staff productivity loss due to employee confusion about their benefits resulting from a lack of clear communication of benefit information.
- Set measurable objectives for how much money and time your communications will save.
- Present your communications plan and implementation schedule
- Prioritize compliance with government regulations and clarification of complicated issues, procedures and terms.

Select, prepare and distribute communications to fit corporate objectives and employee needs:

- Target segments of employees who would most profit from specific features of a benefit by sending tailored communications.
- Decide what type of communication will be most appropriate for relaying messages to employees.
- Determine who will manage the production process of writing, editing and designing communications.

Evaluate the effectiveness of your benefits communications:

- Survey employees and provide feedback surveys.
- Establish and monitor indicators of behavior after communications are distributed.
- Revise your communications to meet realistic goals and expectations, your employees' needs, your communication plan objectives and your organization's requirements.



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