

LEVEL UP

Employee Benefits Enrollment & Engagement Playbook

Your game plan to help you and your workforce make the most of your benefits.

Benefitfocus[®]





Welcome!

It's time to level up – and transform your approach to benefits administration!

Ready to take a serious look at what you can do to improve the benefits experience of both your HR team and employees? This means evaluating benefits technology and service partners that can help you up-level your benefits processes and program performance – and make sure that your workforce's benefits and savings are working in sync.

We've created this playbook to help guide your efforts and to serve as a resource to:



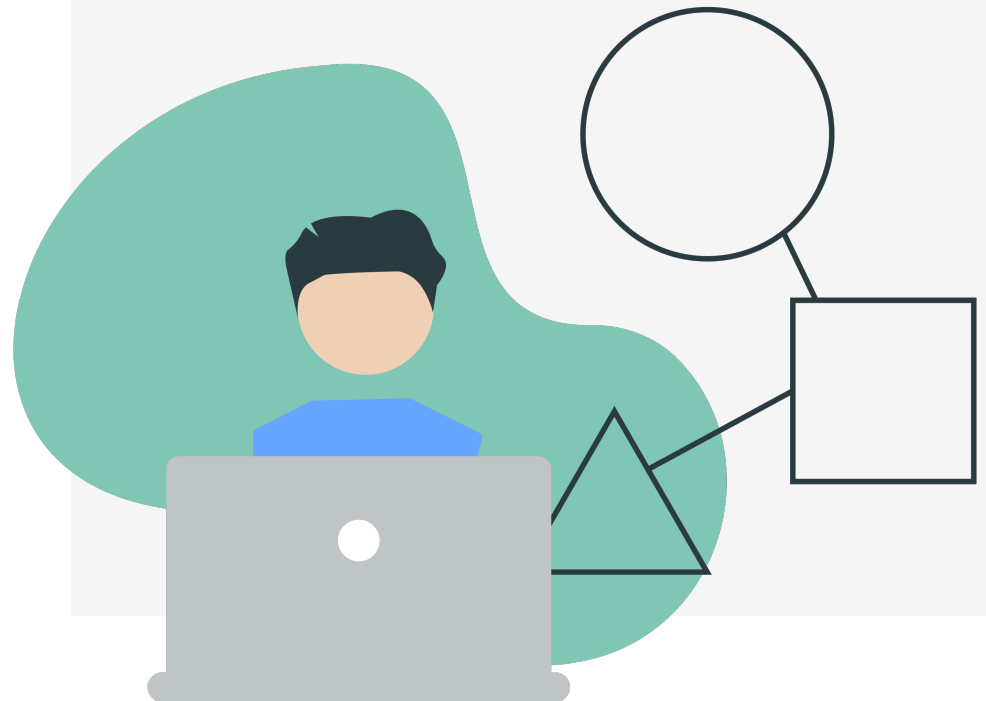
Explore best practices for employee communications that boost awareness, spark interest and drive action for ongoing benefits engagement.



Get inspired by compelling ideas tried and tested by benefits administrators at top employers to make your benefits program more fun and engaging for employees and their families.

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At-a-Glance Game Plan

Level Up

When the plan year is in full swing, employees and their families are taking advantage of their benefits and enjoying the various programs available to support their overall wellbeing, right? Not so fast.

Most HR pros would agree that despite your best efforts to offer competitive benefits, provide cool digital resources and communicate regularly about benefits, most employees still struggle to understand, choose and use their benefits, resulting in low engagement and sub-optimal outcomes. It also reveals a benefits strategy that isn't delivering on its promises.

This reality is motivating employers to “get real” about what's **not** working and adopt a fresh approach – and possibly a new benefits administration partner – to help employees (finally!) realize the value of their benefits.

And that's why we've created this step-by-step guide to help you level up and take your benefits program to new heights.

Objective:

Evaluate your approach to benefits administration and select a vendor partner that can help you shift the way employees understand, choose and use benefits – while making life easier on your HR team.



Steps:

Determine whether your approach to benefits administration supports your benefits strategy.

Identify your benefits administration pain points.

Review the qualities to look for in a benefits technology and service partner.

Select the functionality and services that meet your needs.



Resources:

Open enrollment data:

Your Assess for Success 1Q output

Other program and communications performance data

Level-up task force:

- HR teammates
- Internal stakeholders (i.e., IT team, executives)
- Benefits technology & service vendor(s)



Wins:

Streamline administrative processes that are currently slowing your team down.

Reclaim time and energy to focus on more strategic work.

Strengthen your benefits communication plans for the upcoming year.

Simplify and enhance the benefits experience for employees and their families.

Enable employees to get more value from their benefits across health and wealth.

70% of employers believe employees **underutilize the services, benefits and programs** they make available.

[The Hartford's 2022 Future of Benefits Study](#)



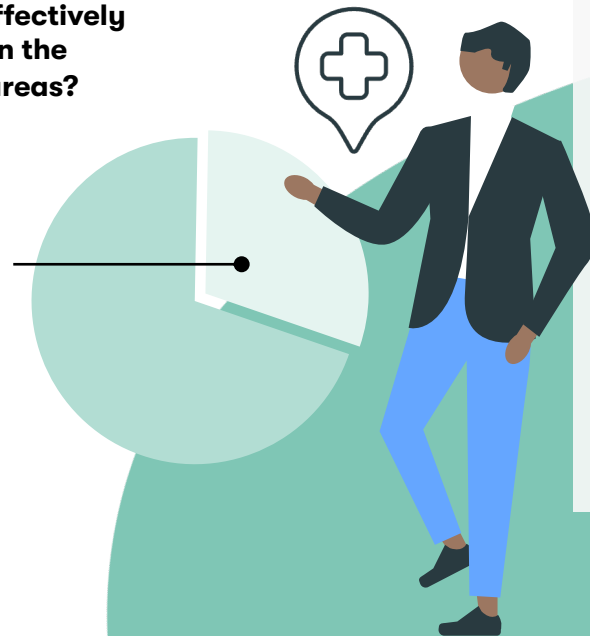
Does Your Approach to Benefits Administration Support Your Strategy?

Benefit leaders are committed to supporting a wide range of employee needs. But since benefits programs don't live in a vacuum, HR teams must use their benefits strategy as a north star to strike a balance between employee needs, budget constraints and other, bigger-picture organizational initiatives.

If your benefits administration process is standing in the way of success – by draining resources, preventing HR staff from “walking the talk” or creating a disconnected employee benefits experience – that’s a surefire sign it’s time to level up and transform your approach.

Ask yourself: Is benefits administration stopping you from effectively meeting your goals in the following strategic areas?

Thirty-one (31) percent of compensation costs go toward benefits.



[Bureau of Labor Statistics](#)



Enhancing the employee experience

Delivering a positive benefits experience is a cornerstone of the organizational initiative to attract and retain employees at a time when workers have high expectations for benefit value and frictionless processes.



Promoting diversity, equity and inclusion

Offering flexible, personalized benefits and communications that meet the myriad needs of a multi-cultural, multi-generational and geographically diverse workforce is a big culture “win” that also impacts employees’ lives.



Supporting a remote/hybrid workforce

Ensuring consistency across benefits programs, communications, educational materials and activities is essential to keeping a dispersed, mobile workforce connected around shared values that impact benefits participation and engagement.



Bolstering employees’ mental health

Providing employees with the workforce culture, benefits, resources and tools they need to maintain their whole-person wellbeing – and manage any mental health issues – has become a primary focus at the highest levels of organizational leadership.



Becoming a data-driven organization

Measuring program effectiveness and driving positive behavior change for lower costs and improved outcomes are just two of the ways data insights can drive success, making analytics a top strategic priority.

What Are Your Benefits Administration Pain Points?

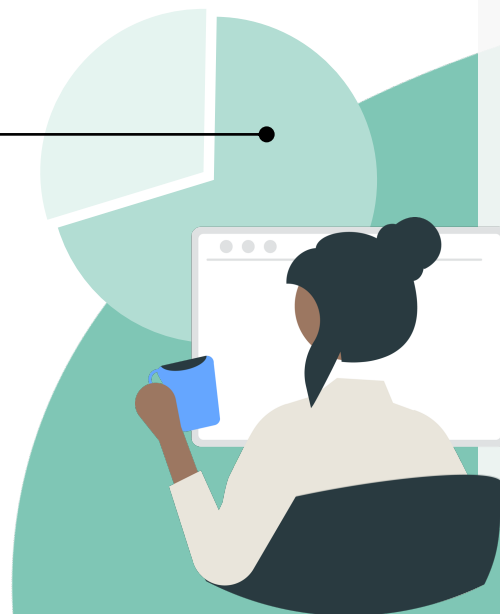
HR teams work tirelessly with multiple benefits vendors across multiple platforms and multiple sources of data. The complexity of benefits administration is wearing! In fact, stress and burnout among HR professions today are at unprecedented levels, indicating that if there was ever a time to change the way you work – and leverage new technologies and vendor partnerships – that time is now.

Understanding your pain points and their underlying causes is an important step in the transformative leveling up process. That way, you can find relief where you need it most!

HR teams spend over **70%** of time on administrative tasks¹ and **73%** say they don't have the tools and resources to do their job well².

¹GNA Partners

²Workvivo



Some common pain points to get you thinking:



Tactical overload

When the benefits team is burdened with tedious and time-consuming tasks, they're unable to focus on higher-value strategic initiatives like improving the employee experience.



Doing "more with less"

SOS! Smaller teams, tightening budgets, competing priorities and higher expectations from employees and the C-suite mean the pressure is on – and something's got to give. Make sure that's not your team's peace of mind.



Lacking internal expertise

Managing specialized areas like ACA compliance, COBRA administration, billing and reporting takes time and attention to details that are best left to dedicated partners.



Ho-hum communications metrics

It's frustrating and arguably a waste of resources when benefit communications don't result in engagement, time and time again.



Lack of program data & insights

You need (but don't have!) access to data to understand what's driving health care costs, identify risks and opportunities for improvement, adjust your strategy and measure results.



Low ROI

Despite your best efforts to support their journey, employees struggle to understand, choose and use their benefits, resulting in disappointing outcomes.

Qualities to Look for in a Benefits Technology and Service Partner

With the right benefits administration partner, you can provide employees with a more holistic experience that connects health, retirement and savings – while at the same time making life easier on your HR team. Here are the fundamental qualities to look for:



Technology Delivery

Cloud-based, Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) delivery models provide a configurable, scalable solution that can be easily tailored to your organization's unique requirements, while also delivering new features and functionality on a regular basis to address evolving business needs.



Benefits Expertise

Extensive knowledge and experience serving clients similar to your organization, as well as clients across a wide array of industries and business types. And with dedicated support teams across product development and customer service specializing in employee benefits.



User Experience

User-focused design that creates an intuitive environment for employees and administrators to complete benefits-related tasks.



Network

Established data integrations with specialized applications, including your current payroll and HRIS systems, along with an expansive array of health insurance and other benefit carriers that will enable your organization to offer a competitive benefits package without adding administrative burden.



Data Insight

Business intelligence tools that provide actionable insight into your organization's benefits program and inform strategic decisions around plan design, employee engagement, cost control and more.



Mobile Access

Full mobile enrollment and benefits management capabilities – optimized for both smartphones and tablets – to bring the level of convenience that your employees have come to expect as modern-day consumers.



Support

Dedicated support center that employees can rely on to answer questions pertaining to enrollment, life event changes and other benefits-related inquiries.



Implementation & Service

World-class implementation and customer support model that ensures a consistent and seamless experience for ongoing support along with reliable transparency, rapid issue resolution and opportunities to share feedback for improvement.



Select the Functionality and Services that Meet Your Needs

Armed with insights you just uncovered, take a hard look at the capabilities of your existing benefits administration solution and decide if you're satisfied. You may need to level up with a new partner that offers a more comprehensive range of functionality and services.

Support the key drivers of administrative complexity

The right partner brings together technology and a culture of service excellence to simplify administration, drive efficiencies and enable organizations to focus on what's most important.

They can help you by fully managing:

- ✓ Employee communications
- ✓ Reporting
- ✓ ACA reporting
- ✓ COBRA administration
- ✓ Billing
- ✓ Consumer accounts
- ✓ Voluntary benefits



Enable employees to get more value from their benefits across health and personal finances

Expect your partner to make it easy for employees to make smarter decisions about their benefits through a connected experience across health, retirement and household savings by giving them access to:

- ✓ Personalized, centralized benefits hub
- ✓ Top-rated mobile app for convenient on-the-go access
- ✓ Simple enrollment experience with data-driven decision support
- ✓ Targeted communications to nudge employees to their next-best action
- ✓ Integrated care navigation – included as a standard feature
- ✓ Service center for call, email and 24/7 chat support



Help you harness the power of data

Look for a partner who can help you evaluate your program effectiveness and take action for improved outcomes and lower costs through user-friendly:

Analytics tools and services to help you:

- ✓ Understand what's driving your health care costs
- ✓ Identify risks and opportunities for improvement
- ✓ Adjust your benefit strategy
- ✓ Measure results

Plus, additional services that attack specific areas of your health plan – such as claim errors leading to overpayments – and take proactive, cost-saving measures on your behalf

Top 5 List

The Top 5 Signs Your Employees Are Struggling to Understand, Choose and Use Their Benefits

1 They say so

People may not share this feedback directly with their HR department, but they'll admit their confusion when asked. Forty-one (41) percent of American workers surveyed by Voya Financial in January 2023 said they do not fully understand any of the employee benefits they selected during their most recent open enrollment period.¹

2 Passive enrollment is high

Eighty-nine (89) percent of employees in another Voya survey said they just pick the same health plan from the prior year – especially those currently enrolled in a PPO vs. HDHP (94 percent vs. 80 percent, respectively).² A passive enrollment process can explain this inertia to some extent, but – spoiler alert! – you'll see in the next two signs the compelling evidence that many people are aren't selecting the right level of coverage for their needs.

3 Employees spend too much on health benefits...

When people don't know how to optimize their health care dollars by considering out-of-pocket costs and opportunities to save for future costs, they run the risk of overspending on coverage. One oft-cited academic study demonstrated this, finding that nearly two-thirds (61 percent) of employees chose the wrong plan for their needs: the average employee could have saved \$372 per year by choosing a more financially efficient plan.

4 ...and they underinvest in retirement

At a time when employees' financial wellbeing is under the spotlight, McKinsey reports that as many as 80 percent of U.S. pre-retiree households are financially unprepared for a secure retirement. The Insured Retirement Institute finds that an estimated 33 percent of workers save less than 5 percent of their income for their retirement, when they should invest 15 to 20 percent, including any employer match, to maintain a comfortable standard of living in their later years.

5 Your programs under-deliver

Despite a significant investment in guidance, navigation, transparency and chronic condition programs, most organizations see engagement rates in the low single digits. In fact, almost three quarters (70 percent) of employers in a study by The Hartford believe employees underutilize the services, benefits and programs they make available.

¹Voya Financial survey conducted January 3-4, 2023, on the Ipsos eNation omnibus online platform among 1,005 adults aged 18+ in the U.S.

²Voya Financial survey conducted September 2-6, 2020, in partnership with Russell Research, among 315 U.S. Consumers currently enrolled in an employer-sponsored health plan. For research-related inquiries, email info at russellresearch.com.



Benefitfocus acts as an extension of your benefits team to help you achieve your goals, whether you're looking to increase engagement and satisfaction, empower your employees to choose the best plan for their needs or successfully introduce new benefits.

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