

BENEFITFOCUS® Success Story

Designer Brands

Finding a trusted partner for a seamless benefits experience

Company Overview

Designer Brands is one of North America's largest designers, producers and retailers of footwear and accessories. The company operates a portfolio of retail concepts in nearly 1,000 locations under the DSW Designer Shoe Warehouse, The Shoe Company, and Shoe Warehouse brands and operates leased locations in the U.S through its Affiliated Business Group. Designer Brands designs and produces footwear and accessories through Camuto Group, a leading manufacturer selling in more than 5,400 doors worldwide. The Camuto Group owns licensing rights for the Jessica Simpson® footwear business, and footwear and handbag licenses for Lucky Brand® and Max Studio®. In partnership with a joint venture with Authentic Brands Group, Designer Brands also owns a stake in Vince Camuto®, Louise et Cie®, Sole Society®, CC Corso Como®, Enzo Angiolini® and others. More information can be found at www.designerbrands.com. Designer Brands employs more than 13,000 associates in the United States, of whom approximately 2,800 are eligible for benefits.

Challenge

The Designer Brands benefits team lives by their motto, trusted advisors providing exceptional service, support and solutions. They're passionate about making sure associates' benefits are seamless to them, so that they can concentrate on what matters most.

In 2015, they found themselves in a situation where the company was expanding rapidly, while they were operating with a lean benefits team. The point solution for benefits administration did not incorporate a platform for education or decision support tools, which made communicating benefits a challenge, especially with the changes the company was undergoing. They found that associates either weren't



INDUSTRY

Retail

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

13,000 US based (2,800 FTE)

SOLUTION

[BENEFITFOCUS® MarketPlace](#)

[Benefitfocus BenefitsPlace®](#)

[BENEFITFOCUS® Media & Animation](#)

RESULTS

Effective associate communication

70% active participation in a passive enrollment

Increased participation in voluntary benefits

“Benefitfocus helped us communicate benefits in a way that made it easy for associates to understand how our benefits program supports their individual lives.”

— Erin Penland, CEBS
Sr. Benefits Specialist,
Designer Brands

BENEFITFOCUS®

aware or didn't understand the benefits that were being offered. Onboarding new associates was difficult with a flood of questions coming in around benefits. Plus, with associates ranging from millennials to Gen X and older across a wide geographic distribution, benefits were serving as more of a disruption than a seamless experience.

Finding a better way to help 2,800+ associates understand the benefits that were being offered and communicate their value became a priority for Designer Brands. They went in search of a technology partner that could help them live their motto.

Solution

Designer Brands replaced its point solution with an all-in-one, cloud-based benefits management platform, BENEFITFOCUS® MarketPlace. Rather than settling for limited functionality, Designer Brands is now able to make the benefits selection process as well as communication seamless for both associates and the benefits team.

"The broad range of communication tools was one of the main reasons we decided to partner with Benefitfocus," said Erin Penland, CEBS, Sr. Benefits Specialist, Designer Brands. "With how quickly we were growing, we needed a platform where associates could get all of the information they needed around their benefits and our team could take advantage of new tools to drive communication efforts. Benefitfocus was the only one that checked all of our boxes."

With Benefitfocus MarketPlace, Designer Brands can personalize communication and target specific segments of their population through email. Custom videos on their specific benefit options delivered in the style and voice of Designer Brands enables more efficient communication for their diverse workforce. They also fully customize the design of their enrollment portal, so associates have a clearer understanding of their benefits options combined with the familiarity of Designer Brands.

Additionally, associates have the ability to access and enroll in their benefits on their smartphone, while the benefits team can use text messaging for a modern way to engage. As a result of leveraging all of the communication tools through Benefitfocus, Designer Brands has seen outstanding open enrollment participation. Despite having a passive open enrollment in 2019, 70 percent of associates took the active step to log in and review their benefits. And the introduction of new income protection benefits through Benefitfocus BenefitsPlace® also realized higher-than-expected adoption rates – 33 percent for accident insurance, 20 percent for critical illness and 17 percent for hospital indemnity within the first year.

Now, Designer Brands' benefits team feels they have the ability to illustrate the total value of their benefits offering, increasing awareness and appreciation for things like basic life insurance benefits or short-term disability benefits they offer associates at no cost. The benefits team can also leverage the platform to make sure associates are properly enrolled in plans. For example, they conducted an audit for DCFS enrollment and targeted communication to confirm those individuals truly intended to participate in that plan, helping those that didn't avoid wasted money. The team has even created a more positive onboarding experience using the platform by getting new hires access prior to their start date, providing them with a sense of security, cutting down on questions and improving their retention efforts.

"Our goal is to help Designer Brands associates avoid what can be 'gotcha moments' in benefits. With Benefitfocus, we can do that," said Penland.



Learn how Benefitfocus can help you achieve a seamless benefits experience through communication and data-driven tools. Contact: sales@benefitfocus.com today.