

Benefits optimization:

Why focusing on benefit communication and enrollment matters



The advantages of voluntary benefits for both employers and employees is clear, yet enrollment remains low and can be overwhelming. Benefits enrollment strategies can bridge the gap — supporting communication and improving employee engagement and loyalty.

Why enrollment strategy matters

4 in 10 employers say voluntary benefits are an important part of their overall benefits strategy. Yet, most workers still lack sufficient knowledge about their benefits.



1 in 4 workers feel open enrollment is overwhelming and not very helpful

Many workers wish they had more resources and greater support during the open enrollment process.



41% want decision-support tools



40% want on-site support



32% want access to a financial advisor

Employers with the most success at improving benefits decision-making are more likely to:



Implement a strategy to increase participation



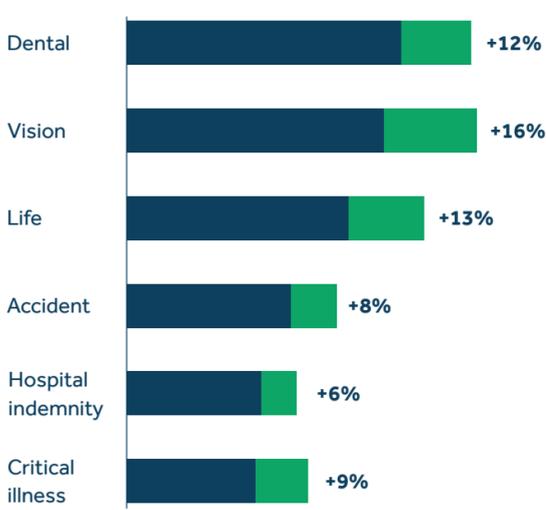
Set participation targets



Monitor participation rates

Employers with a voluntary benefits strategy report higher participation than average:

Average participation rate difference between all employers and those who had a voluntary benefits strategy in 2018



■ All employers ■ Have a voluntary benefits strategy

Communication is key

When it comes to communication about benefits enrollment, timing and method matter.

While there's no one-size-fits-all solution, offering a variety of options through an multichannel strategy drives satisfaction.



2 in 3 workers want more targeted, personalized benefits communication.



Workers want at least **one month's notice** for enrollment and prefer to be notified by **email**.



79% of employees who are highly satisfied with their benefits enrollment experience report that they want to stay with their employer **5 years or more**.

- ✓ **Having a positive enrollment experience**
- ✓ **Leads to higher confidence in benefits decisions**
- ✓ **Which positively impacts perceived benefits value**
- ✓ **And contributes to stronger loyalty**

Things to consider when optimizing benefits communication and enrollment strategies:

Effective communication

Simplified language:

Provide materials in layperson's terms and encourage employees to ask questions.

Advance notice: Send information about benefits and open enrollment 1–2 months in advance. This allows for enhanced enrollment communication and sends a strong message to employees that their employer wants them to take the time needed to decide what's right for them.

Multichannel: Given employees' different needs and preferences, an omnichannel approach is likely the most effective way to reach all employee segments where they are.

Digitize the enrollment experience

Digital enrollment: Consider a digital benefits enrollment platform that makes the benefits selection process feel as simple and intuitive as online shopping.

Engaging tools: Provide access to decision support or modeling tools that invite employees to consider a brief real-world example and its implications for them and their dependents.

Personalized recommendations: Beyond simply a digital tool, information that is tailored to employees based on their responses to key questions will likely engage them and make the experience relevant.

Optimize benefits program with voluntary products

Diverse benefits for a diverse workforce: Be sure your voluntary offerings are inclusive of employees of different ages, races, genders, etc.

Take a holistic approach: Examine how voluntary benefits offerings can support your employees while helping manage costs, particularly supplemental health benefits in relation to medical coverage.

Educate year-round: While open enrollment must take place in the fall, consider spacing out informative benefits communication — especially around voluntary benefits — throughout the year so employees have a better chance to absorb it.