

Benefits Enrollment:

Reframing the Employee Experience



As the annual enrollment experience adapts to address shifted perspectives and priorities, take this opportunity to pause and re-evaluate how we approach our people.

Employees are madly juggling work and family life — the lines are blurred, and there is a struggle for balance. As we continue to experience shifting priorities at work and at home, create a future state where employees are energized and benefits are valued.

Open enrollment is the one time of year when every organization has an audience ready to hear about benefits. It's critical to deploy creative and thoughtful communication strategies that cut through the clutter and ensure employees understand the value of your total rewards package — as well as how their benefits can provide needed support, security and resources. **This open enrollment, reframe your message, and consider new ways to reach people where they are.**

Employees are looking to you to reset for relevance. Coming off mute on what they believe in and empowering the workforce to deliver on an agile and meaningful agenda goes beyond work. In fact, according to Mercer's 2022 Global Talent Trends Study, "delivering on total well-being strategies — mental, social, physical and financial — is the # 1 ranked priority for C-suite executives." Relatable organizations actively encourage healthy, rewarding and sustainable work behaviors and offer personalized support during moments that matter.

Organizations working in partnership with employees to create equitable, transparent and rewarding relationships strengthen the employment deal, and elevate the employee value proposition (EVP). They are focusing on harnessing the collective energy of their people by ensuring employees are bound by a common purpose and are able to bring their best self to work in human-centric work environments, supported by a relatable HR function.

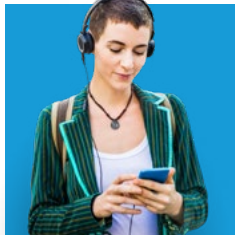
What we know

According to Mercer's 2022 Global Talent Trends Study, over two-thirds of respondents plan to enhance health and benefit offerings in 2023 to strengthen the EVP, to improve attraction and retention, or better meet employee needs.

As companies recognize the effectiveness of remote working and flexible hours, anytime anywhere operations are now the norm. Not only must employers rethink health plan designs and benefits programs to propel accessibility, equity and inclusion, this enrollment season must have a renewed emphasis on total well-being, preventive care, mental health and employee support.

People no longer want to work for a company; they want to work with a company. As we continue to practice resiliency and flexibility, we look to reframe the employee experience (EX) to support the future of work.

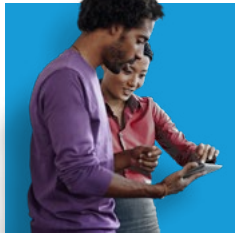
The top 3 changes companies can make to reframe the EX during this year's open enrollment:



Zoom in on digital tools.

Expand digital, anytime access to simple, yet meaningful benefits information.

With people now working from home (or wherever they have a good Wi-Fi connection), employers need to be creative in getting enrollment information into the hands of their workforce. Help employees experience your benefits and focus on their health in the same ways that they engage in the consumer world — via smart phones, tablets and laptops. Open enrollment is a great time to rethink your media and communication channels. Also, consider the timing, and energize the look and feel of your communication pieces.

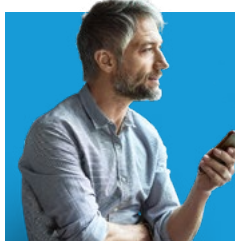


Engage in two-way communications.

Reframe the narrative, creating targeted, transparent and authentic two-way communications.

Do you know what's top of mind for your employees leading into this enrollment season? What about managers, the new link to the workforce? Or leaders — what keeps them up at night? Using pulse technology or some other sensing mechanism can be a great way to uncover and address those burning questions.

Consider hosting live sessions where leaders are available to answer questions. Implement virtual office hours through a platform like the Mercer Virtual Benefits Fair, where employees and family members can learn about benefits and participate in live chats and webinars with HR and plan provider partners.



Focus.

Address health disparities to close the gaps for those underserved and under-represented by providing specialized total health support and multi-lingual communications.

Many employers are moving away from a “one size fits all” communication approach. Instead, messages, images and stories can be tailored and directed to employees in a variety of ways — related to participation in plans and programs, age, life-style preferences, or buying patterns.

Another way to focus on employees is to deliver communications that are relatable and useful. Self-recorded testimonials, interactive decision tools and branding that embodies the heart of the organization all create the opportunity for employees to feel a personal connection.

A picture is worth a thousand words.

Understanding benefits is not easy. Think about how you can tell the story with visuals. The use of icons, videos, gamification, images and infographics can help simplify complex concepts around how plans, like a Health Savings Account, work.



Get started



Develop a strategy.

It's important to be strategic about your communication efforts. Just putting "stuff" out there doesn't make it helpful. Having a strategic communication plan can give you the clarity and focus to engage your employees differently in their health and benefits. Employers are asking their workforce to take on more and more responsibility for making good decisions. Your strategy will help define what that looks like and how you'll help employees do this.



Craft the story.

Hone your messaging and visuals to stand out and motivate action. Personalize information through storytelling to help employees and their families see how a particular benefit or decision will lead to a better outcome. Make it simple. Make it actionable. Make it transparent.



Activate your plan.

Carefully consider timing, based on enrollment deadlines, the current pulse of your employees, and amount of change coming. Allow for ample time to provide meaningful resources that help employees choose the benefits best for them.

Be sure to cascade your messages, leveraging leaders and influencers to engage through modern media like podcasts and video.



Listen, measure, then adapt.

Build channels so employees can ask questions, get answers, and provide feedback on your efforts. This feedback informs communication going forward and will help you adjust your plan as you guide employees to choose and use their benefits effectively. Benefits communications is a picture YOU can help frame — and reframe — as needed.

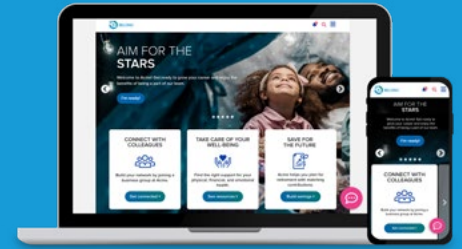
Mercer offers a suite of consulting services and digital tools to help transform your employee experience, accelerate digital implementation, communicate with employees and support change. To learn more, reach out to your Mercer consultant or contact us.

Sources:

Mercer's 2022 Global Talent Trends Study

Mercer 2023 Health & Benefit strategies Survey National Results Large Employers (500-4,999)

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Transform your employee experience with Mercer Belong[®]

Open enrollment is an opportune time to showcase your employee experience through consumer-grade communications and tools. Today's digital world offers consumers simple, personalized experiences that effortlessly and instantly meet specific needs. Yet at work, numerous apps and platforms often compete and overlap, leaving employees unsure of where to go, and frustrated by a disconnected experience. In an ultra-competitive labor market, it has never been more important to maximize the results of your investment in the employee experience.

Mercer Belong is a forward-thinking engagement platform that helps employees make sense of it all. Belong gives you a powerful and effective way to connect with your employees about their rewards, careers and well-being. With its Socrates.ai-powered virtual assistant, Belong transforms each interaction into the easy, personalized, consumer-grade experience your employees have come to expect.

Learn more

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