WAYS TO ADD VALUE THROUGH EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATION
An employee’s benefits are a significant part of their compensation, but do employees really understand the benefits they offer? Helping employees understand their benefits starts with effective communication and employee engagement.

While helping employees grasp the value of their benefits is a key part of communication, the value shouldn’t end there. Using research Trustmark conducted with an outside firm, we’ve compiled 8 ways to add value for employers and their employees through communication.
81% of companies believe it’s important for employees to understand their benefits but only 58% actually do.\(^2\)

What do employers say?

A carrier that provides education on how voluntary benefits can supplement their healthcare is the No. 1 driver of future purchases for employers.\(^1\)
Pre-communication

Surveys have found that one of the most effective communication strategies for benefits is to provide year-round communication.³ This means communication shouldn’t be limited to time of enrollment. Employers should find ways to regularly communicate with employees through tools like emails, group meetings or flyers around the office. This helps drive the results employers want from their benefits program while helping to educate employees.
Employees who enroll with an insurance representative in person tend to be the most satisfied with their enrollment experience. In fact, in Trustmark’s research 90 percent indicated they were either very satisfied or extremely satisfied. One-on-one communication allows employees to ask questions and understand how their benefits relate directly to their individual situation. This leads to more informed decision-making during enrollment and better employee appreciation of benefits.
Lunch ‘n learns are a more casual setting for employees to learn about their benefits. A group setting like this can supplement one-on-one communication as an opportunity for employees to get answers to questions they may have been hesitant to ask in a one-on-one setting. Or, it can provide an opportunity to hear other helpful questions the employee may not have even thought of prior to the lunch ‘n learn.

More than one out of five employees uses advice from coworkers as a resource during enrollment. Lunch ‘n learns can provide an open environment to learn and share information.
Employers can spend all kinds of time and resources trying to communicate with employees. In fact, internal staff are the most likely resource to be responsible for benefits education. By enrolling in voluntary benefits, employers get access to professional communication experts who can communicate with employees and help them enroll in their benefits at no additional cost to an employer’s bottom line.
Key corporate messages

A lot can get lost in the hustle and bustle of the workday and making time to communicate with employees isn’t always easy. But, when you pair important messaging from the employer with benefits information, you have an opportunity to inform employees while also addressing issues that affect the business such as 401(k) participation or wellness.
It’s not uncommon that the quality of a benefits program comes second in determining employee satisfaction to the quality of the communication. Employees are more than 50 percent more likely to indicate satisfaction with an inferior benefits program paired with quality communication than with a superior benefits program with ineffective communication. Needless to say, employee communication has tremendous potential to add value by increasing benefits satisfaction.
Employee retention

Offering the right benefits helps with employee retention; 60% of employees indicated they would be less likely to stay with their company if they stopped offering voluntary benefits. But, the loyalty that comes from offering benefits only comes if employees are aware and informed of all their options. Communication helps employees understand the benefits available to them and, in turn, translates into more loyal employees.
Onboarding and ongoing communications

Year-round communication also helps with onboarding new employees and getting them up to speed quickly by providing multiple messages on an ongoing basis. In terms of understanding both their benefits and workplace initiatives, regular use of effective communication tools makes it easy for new hires to get adjusted to their workplace and hit the ground running.
1 Trustmark Connell Group Research. 2015.
4 Effective employee communication drives financial results. Watson Wyatt.