

Developing a Benefits Communication Program

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The process of creating and delivering a manageable and effective benefit communication program at John Doe, Inc. can be a time-consuming undertaking, but by following some helpful tips and best practices, you can streamline the success of your program.

Know what benefits your organization provides and how they work by:

- Making an inventory of dates, contracts and other administrative information for all contracts and plans
- Creating or utilizing a comparison of benefits features and costs for each plan you offer
- Understanding your benefits documents from varying perspectives such as the company lawyer, a judge and jury, employees, employees' beneficiaries and the press

Know how your employees feel about your benefit program by:

- Asking them and letting them know you are sincere in wanting to find out their needs
- Analyzing reports from your providers
- Studying actuarial and provider research

Understand benefits communication responsibilities and organize yourself by:

- Developing a plan that includes required as well as additional optional communications that may be helpful
- Keeping employees and beneficiaries informed of changes to their benefits, and explaining confusing terms and features of the plans

Prepare your benefits communication plan of action by:

- Determining who will prepare your benefit communications and the costs involved with each
- Constructing a data sheet to be used for planning, preparing and delivering your communications
- Designating responsibilities for preparing each communication and being sure to consider both internal and external assistance

Sell your communication plan to your manager by:

- Determining HR and other benefit staff productivity loss due to employees not understanding their benefits and the lack of clear communication on benefit information
- Setting measurable objectives for how much money and time your communications will save
- Presenting your communications plan and implementation schedule
- Prioritizing compliance with government regulations and clarification of complicated issues, procedures and terms

Select, prepare and distribute communications to fit corporate objectives and employee needs by:

- Targeting specific communications to segments of employees who would most profit from specific features of a benefit
- Deciding what methods of communications will be most appropriate for relaying messages to employees
- Determining who will manage the production process of writing, editing and designing communications

Evaluate the effectiveness of your benefits communications by:

- Surveying employees and providing feedback surveys
- Establishing and monitoring indicators of behavior after communications are distributed
- Revising your communications to meet realistic goals and expectations, your employees' needs, your communication plan objectives and your organization's requirements