

A new age of benefits engagement

How the workforce's expectations are changing — and what employers can proactively do to meet them

Why benefits engagement matters

Today's workforce is focused on more than simply receiving a paycheck. With work and life blending together, they're also looking for happiness and personal satisfaction from their jobs — and they're more willing to change employers to find it.

As expected, this evolving outlook in work and life brings new expectations about the role employers play in their employees' financial and overall wellbeing. Doing so means not only enhancing their current benefit offerings, but also better communicating how they are relevant to employees' lives.

MetLife has spent nearly two decades researching the connection between employees' financial health and employer benefits, as well as how benefits increase job satisfaction, productivity, and loyalty while decreasing employee stress. More productive, loyal and happy employees? Sounds great, but the path to getting there goes beyond providing benefits. Our research also reveals that employers need to improve employee engagement.



In this report, you'll learn:

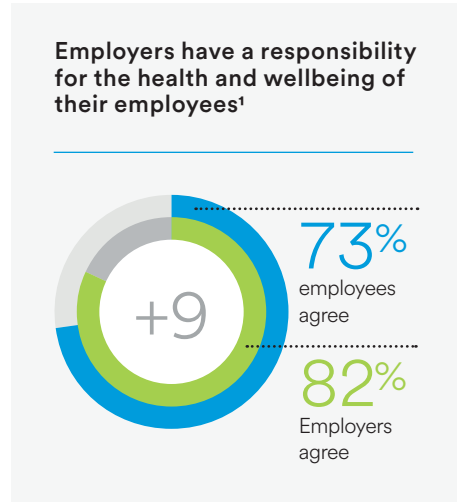
- That employees strongly believe that their employers bear significant responsibility for their financial and health wellbeing — and that most employers agree.
- Why employees leave many benefits on the table.
- The importance of delivering the right message about benefits at the right time.
- Six tips for improving benefits communications and streamlining enrollment you may not have tried before.

The changing role of benefits

This is not your parents' workforce. With happiness, flexibility and personal fulfillment as priorities, employees are now more apt to change jobs, switch career paths or start businesses of their own.

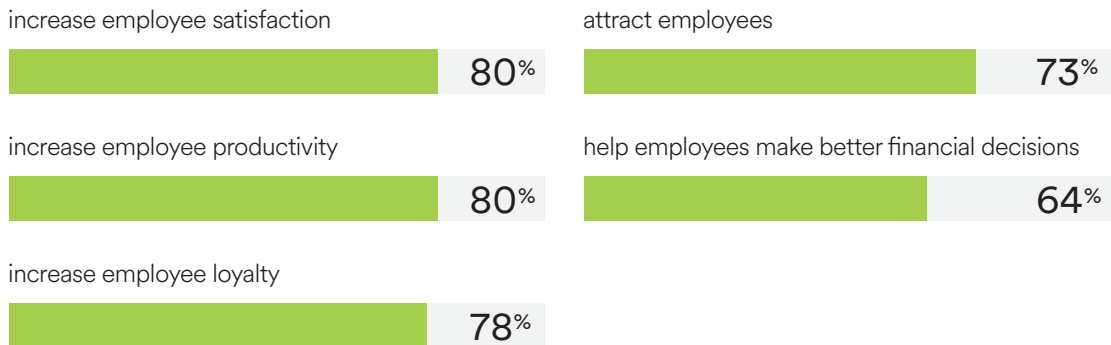
The workforce is increasingly multigenerational and each generation has its own needs. But even within generations, employees want benefits that recognize their unique circumstances. Therefore, salary, family structures, educational levels and company tenure all come into play.

58% of employees are looking for customized benefits.¹



For most employers, this new expectation is an opportunity. Cultivating a benefits plan that addresses employees' diverse circumstances and gives them choices pays off for employers by improving productivity, loyalty and employee satisfaction.

Employers see the benefits of benefits:¹



Mind the communication gap

Employees want financial security, and many employers are helping to provide it via their benefits packages. Yet, many employees still don't enroll. As it turns out, clearly communicating benefits to employees is just as important as providing the benefits themselves.



More than 2/3

of employees report that they were confused about some or all of their benefits.¹



More than 1/3

of employees say they don't recognize the value of supplemental benefits.¹



74% of employers

say that their benefits communications are easy to understand (vs. 60% of employees who agree).¹

The result of this communication gap? Many employees are leaving valuable benefits on the table. They're also unknowingly turning down resources that could help them reduce their financial stress, avoid money trouble and improve their overall financial and health wellbeing.

The solution is to provide employees with more help as they're navigating the benefits process. The good news: Even in an era of crowdsourced everything, employees say that they trust their employers when it comes to benefits guidance and expertise.¹



Breaking down benefits barriers

At the end of the day, employees and employers want the same thing: to understand how benefits help and then make the best use of them. So how can employers educate their employees about what's offered — and ensure they fully participate?

What employees said:²



They can't navigate the information explosion:

"I know there are things I'm not participating in, but I won't bother hunting for that information on the convoluted website."



They don't have time or energy to dig in:

"I do not have a lot of time to find out about benefits options, so I will just re-enroll in the same choices as last year."



They don't know who to turn to with questions:

"I have no idea whom to call with benefits questions. It would be nice to be reminded when enrollment is coming up."



They don't know it so assume they don't need it:

"I know these benefits are available, but I don't think it's worth the money to pay for the potential something might happen in the far future."

The answer is in improving employee understanding and simplifying the enrollment process. The two work hand-in-hand. Providing better, more clear and relevant benefits communications allows employees to fully understand what's available. Streamlined enrollment ensures that they can put that knowledge to use — and take advantage of all that's offered to them.



[Watch the video](#)

to learn how to meet employees needs during benefits enrollment. Or, go to your browser and type: bit.ly/MetLifeVideoOE

In addition to having the right enrollment conditions in place, here are six ways to improve benefits communications and boost employee engagement in the process:

1

Simplify the hunt for information. Avoid overwhelming employees with a firehose of details. Instead, empower them with learning tools and complementary resources.



2

Break information down into easily digestible pieces. Everyone is crunched for time. When it comes to highlighting specific benefits, employers should cut to the chase: How does the product improve an employee's life? Focus on the value rather than features.

Nearly

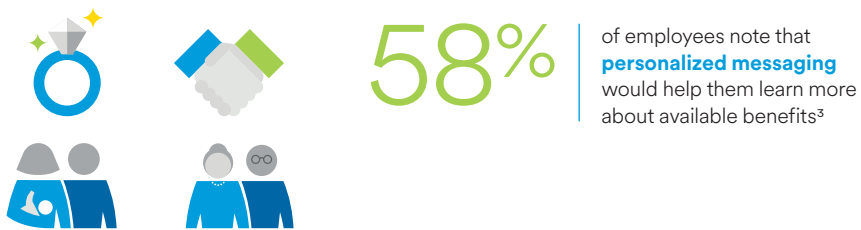


employees say the language is clear when it highlights the role of the benefits' in one's life.³

3

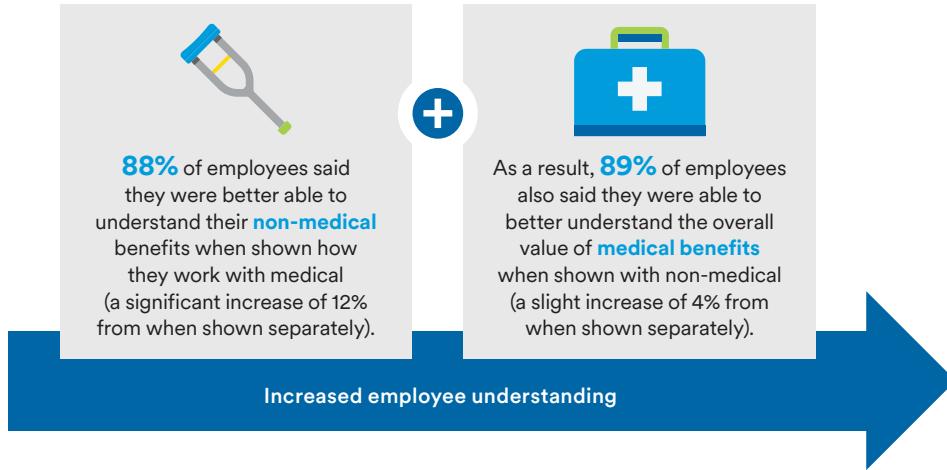
Personalize benefits content and tools. Employers can provide communication around specific life events or life stages, such as pending retirement, having children or just starting a career.

Life events



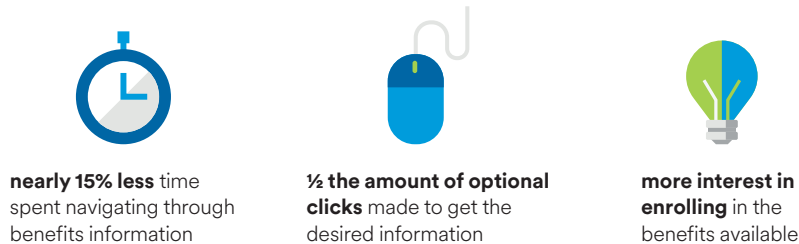
4

Connect medical and non-medical. Find ways to show employees how medical and non-medical benefits work together. In MetLife’s research, 89% of enrolled employees overall reported that they had a better understanding of the value of their medical benefits when they were presented in conjunction with their non-medical benefits.³



5

Offer a simple, guided online experience. A self-serve process can lead to underutilized benefits. Instead provide employees with a streamlined, step-by-step enrollment process that leads to more relevant and actionable information. A MetLife enrollment simulation showed that such a process reduced the time people spent enrolling, and employees showed more interest overall in their benefits.³



6

Make sure employees get the right support and guidance. Enrollment and communication firms can help you execute all of the above, ensuring that employees get the right support at the right time. MetLife’s data shows that working with a firm can increase benefits engagement by two to five times.⁴



It’s time to engage

In this new world of work, benefits are more important than ever. Benefits reduce employee stress, and boost productivity and retention, helping employees’ meet their goals — and employers meet theirs. Connect with a MetLife benefits expert to learn more about how you can improve benefits communication and streamline your enrollment.

1. 15th Annual MetLife Employee Benefit Trends Survey, April 2017.
2. 2016 MetLife research conducted with HR decision-makers and employee focus groups at four companies in the transportation, higher education, mass media, and manufacturing industries.
3. Insights are based on 2017 MetLife research learnings that looked at various simulated open enrollment experiences.
4. MetLife Internal Data, 2017.

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