

Put Workplace Benefits Back Into Focus This Fall

HR Executive | Craig Rubino | September 25, 2026

Fall is the perfect opportunity for a benefits check-in. Each year, the return from Labor Day brings the realization that year-end is closer than it seems. As employees settle back into regular routines, employers have an opportunity to refocus attention on workplace benefits before open enrollment and year-end deadlines arrive. For many organizations, improving benefits engagement has become increasingly important, as financial wellbeing plays a significant role in employee productivity, satisfaction and retention.

Morgan Stanley at Work's State of the Workplace Study puts that into perspective. Nearly four out of five (79%) employees believe their company should do more to help them understand and enhance their financial benefits, and 91% would consider switching jobs for benefits that help them reach their financial goals.

Bottom line: Employees want more tailored support. So, employers can use early this time of year as a timely window to spotlight key financial benefits and get ahead of employee questions.

3 Steps To Put Workplace Benefits Back Into Focus

Here are three actionable steps employers can take:

1. Connect benefits to the employee experience

Financial benefits have become a core component of the employee experience but can be overlooked amid conflicting priorities. When more than half of employees say financial stress negatively impacts their work and personal lives, employers have an opportunity to show how workplace benefits can help them manage financial burden. Benefits education that shows employees how to get a handle on financial pressures and plan for longer-term goals can make those resources feel much more relevant—and effective. That's where a focused fall engagement effort can be especially powerful.

Over time, broader awareness of existing benefits can help employees make more informed financial decisions, appreciate the resources already in place and support stronger retention.

2. Simplify communications before open enrollment

Even the best benefits communications can go unnoticed when employees are juggling year-end priorities. Organizations can make it easier for employees to engage by making materials more digestible and actionable. That could mean simplifying complex topics like equity compensation so eligible employees understand the benefit and know what to expect when an award vests, or turning a lengthy open enrollment guide into a short checklist that highlights deadlines.

Getting started with communications early allows for a continuous drip of information and more chances to connect with employees:

- September: raise awareness of key financial benefits
- October: open enrollment education
- November: key deadlines
- December: year-end planning opportunities

Clear communication with a steady cadence can make the process feel less overwhelming and help employees make decisions with greater confidence.

3. Use data to focus the message

Benefits data can help HR leaders pinpoint where employees may need more support. By looking at participation trends across the benefits suite, combined with employee feedback, organizations can better understand which benefits are being overlooked and where education can have the greatest impact. From there, benefits leaders can create more tailored education that helps employees understand how to make the most of the benefits already available to them.

For example, if employees are flooding HR inboxes with equity compensation and non-qualified deferred compensation questions, consistent communications can help show how those benefits work together and fit into a broader financial picture. If employees are seeking more support with long-term financial planning, employers can offer access to financial professionals. This data can help employers provide more targeted resources that address employees' specific needs.

A Seasonal Reset

Benefits engagement becomes most impactful as an ongoing effort, and fall is a timely moment to bring benefits education back to the forefront as employees revisit their financial goals and prepare for year-end decisions.