

# PLAN NOW FOR AN OPTIMAL EXPERIENCE LATER - TIPS FOR OPEN ENROLLMENT 2022

Many HR teams struggle with navigating the complexities of open enrollment. It is often a difficult, time-consuming, and stressful time of year but can be made less stressful if HR teams take a proactive approach to open enrollment and start planning now.

Here are some tips to help you develop a plan to succeed during open enrollment.

1

## BE ORGANIZED

Establish timelines, key deliverables, and deadlines in advance to ensure employees have time to prepare and submit their selections on time. Communicate these milestones to your vendor partners so they can share information about programs and send you pertinent materials.

2

## GIVE INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS ENOUGH TIME TO DO THEIR PART

Many components of open enrollment are managed outside of the HR department, such as payroll (deduction files) and finance (carrier bills). These departments might have their own projects that run concurrent to open enrollment, so be sure to include them early in the planning process.

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## ADOPT A HYBRID OPEN ENROLLMENT STRATEGY

As more companies now operate with a remote or partially remote workforce, it's important to adopt a hybrid open enrollment strategy. Virtual open enrollment events are convenient and cost effective, while in-person meetings for employees who are on site can be done while still adhering to COVID-19 safety protocols. Make sure all virtual systems are updated and fit your needs based on the past year's feedback.

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## DON'T UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF COMMUNICATION

Communicate early, often, clearly, and concisely to let employees know that open enrollment is coming and what they'll need to know. Leverage multiple communication channels, like emails, Teams, or Zoom to reach all employees. And share reminders throughout the process so employees don't forget about important dates.

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## GET ACQUAINTED AND COMPLY WITH CURRENT HIPAA, ACA, AND OTHER PERTINENT REGULATIONS

Compliance should be at the forefront of your open enrollment strategy to help protect your company and allow you to understand how changes to legislation might impact benefit offerings to your employees.

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## EDUCATE YOUR EMPLOYEES AND PROVIDE Q&A SESSIONS

No matter how much you've invested in a communication plan and executing it, employees will always have questions. If you start with a company-wide information session, it's helpful to keep an open-door policy and be easy to reach. Availability is especially important with workforces that are split between remote locations and in the office.

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## CENTRALIZE RESOURCES

With geographically distributed workforces and employees spanning various generations, it's important to make sure you have written materials centralized in an internal database. Think about how generational differences might affect preferences in the resources you create and how you distribute them.

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## STREAMLINE OPEN ENROLLMENT

Go digital and move your company's open enrollment online. Using a benefits administration platform cuts down on HR's administrative burden and simplifies the process for employees. Digital platforms also make it easier to keep track of materials, timelines, and updates.

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## BUILD A HOLISTIC BENEFITS PACKAGE AND EVALUATE COSTS

In a competitive market where employers want to retain and attract top talent, benefits offerings need to be enticing. As you consider expanding offerings to add benefits, such as tuition reimbursement, loan assistance, fertility, and childcare, talk with your broker to make sure you're well informed and put the most attractive plan together for current and future employees.

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## CLEARLY COMMUNICATE ANY CHANGES TO PLAN OFFERINGS

Contact your carriers as early as possible to get information about any changes to coverage for the coming year. Communicate this information to your employees and be ready to answer questions they might have about any changes.

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## REMIND EMPLOYEES ABOUT HOW LIFE CHANGES CAN IMPACT ELECTION DECISIONS

Remind employees that life changes and health needs, such as family planning, major medical procedures, and dental work are variables they should consider when picking benefits. Having the foresight to think about these factors can prevent employees from incurring unexpected, costly out-of-pocket expenses.

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## CHECK FORMS FOR ERRORS

You've finally made it to the point where you're ready to submit forms to carriers. Create a buffer for yourself between the deadline you give to employees and the benefit provider's hard deadline so you can take the time to review materials, identify issues, and reach out to employees for corrections prior to submitting final forms.

Our team is ready to be your trusted partner and help build a benefits strategy that aligns with your company's culture and overarching goals. Connect with us to learn about how we can help you execute the right employee benefits strategy, beyond open enrollment season.

