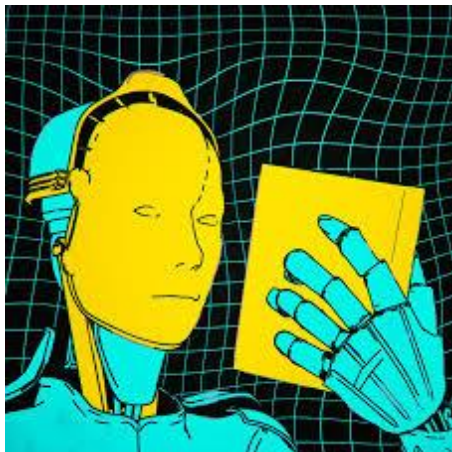




Off the Wire

May/June 2021

A Monthly Reprint of Articles of Importance to Employers Today



Editor's Note

Off the Wire is a reprint of articles for Human Resources professionals and business owners. It is published monthly and is we are always we are trying to address the needs and concerns of the business community with a focus on benefits and HR related topics.

We are interested in your feedback and welcome any comments! Also, if there are any topics that interest you, feel free to contact us directly at 206-414-4635. We will gladly do the research for you!

If you would like to view past issues, they can be found on our web site:

www.bene-corp.com

Small Businesses are Turning to Employee Benefits to Retain Talent

By Amanda Schiavo, Employee Benefit News

April 05, 2021

To combat high employee turnover, small businesses are taking steps to boost employee retention through benefits.

More than 163,000 U.S. businesses have closed since the beginning of the pandemic, according to the last Yelp Economic Average report. Over 1,000 small business owners revealed a 20% uptick in turnover rates over the past 12 months, according to a new survey from Principal Financial Group. Almost all believe the pandemic impacted the turnover.

Benefits are one way to recruit and retain top talent, yet small businesses often avoid offering employee benefits due to the cost. When considering employee benefits, small businesses rank affordability (50%) and their ability to attract and retain employees (42%) as most important, according to the Principal Financial Group survey.

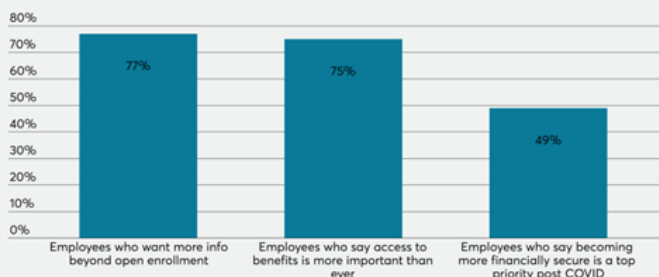
“It’s encouraging to hear from so many business owners who are taking the time to better understand why their employees are leaving so they can proactively address these concerns for current and prospective workers,” Mark West, national vice president of business solutions for Principal, said in a release. “We’re committed to working with employers to ensure we have benefit offerings that are targeted to their employee needs, especially as they evolve in the wake of COVID-19.”

More than half of the small business owners served by Principal say they want to reward their key employees with more benefits. Seventy-four percent have a plan in place to add voluntary benefits and 59% plan to add qualified retirement plans, according to the Principal data.

Financial wellness benefits and HR and legal services are also in demand among small businesses. Seventy-three percent of small business owners are working with a financial professional to deal with the economic impact of the pandemic on their business, up from 54% from 2015, the Principal data found.

“Financial professionals and the advice they can offer will be critical given the significant new legislation and programs offered to businesses this past year as a result of the pandemic,” West said. “We’re seeing increased engagement from the businesses we serve via our business solutions team as employers navigate the economic impacts of COVID-19 along with relief programs rolled out to assist them.”

What employees are looking for from their employers during and post COVID-19



Demand for virtual 401(k) education is on the rise

By Paola Peralta

April 05, 2021

There is light at the end of the remote work tunnel, but employees have adapted to virtual learning benefits, especially when it comes to their retirement readiness.

Employees turned to online retirement education and were less likely to cancel attendance in 2020 than in 2019, according to data by Schwab. One third of all participants chose to view virtual material on their own time rather than attending live online sessions — a 207% increase compared to last year.

Employers were embracing virtual tools pre-COVID, but the pandemic has made comprehensive online education a priority, says Nathan Voris, senior managing director at Schwab Workplace Financial Services.

“This has been a long time coming,” Voris says. “The reality is a lot of individuals are very comfortable learning virtually and really getting the opportunity to choose how they want to interact with a company that they do business with.”

Compared with 2019, the number of on-site meeting days in 2020 dropped almost 88% as a result of the pandemic and attendance at virtual education sessions increased 53%, according to Schwab. On-site education meetings are unlikely to return to pre-pandemic levels, Voris says.

“In-person sessions often require clients to set up multiple conference rooms and juggle peak workloads across different teams,” he says. “The virtual environment eliminates those challenges and all the time and effort that comes with them.”

Employees have shown they want information beyond plan-specific features — last year Schwab saw a 54% increase in attendance for virtual sessions on holistic personal finance topics versus a 37% increase for plan-specific topics.

“It’s not all about 401(k) optimization,” Voris says. “It’s about the full financial lives of the individual.”

Employees have prioritized their financial needs throughout the pandemic and are turning to their employer for assistance. In order to boost their financial wellness benefits, companies have considered implementing offerings such as healthcare savings accounts, emergency savings accounts and hospital indemnity insurance.

Schwab expanded its variety of online content to improve workers’ financial know-how in 2020. These included live panel discussions on timely personal finance and investing questions, “coffee talks” on trending topics such as managing finances during uncertainty and webcasts on how to save, invest and manage expenses.

“This is meeting the needs of our customers,” Voris says. “This is what they want so that’s where we’re headed.”



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If you or your employees need help understanding your company’s health benefits, contact us here at [Benecorp](https://www.bene-corp.com). We would be happy to help you find the answers you need.

Call us at (206) 414-4635

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