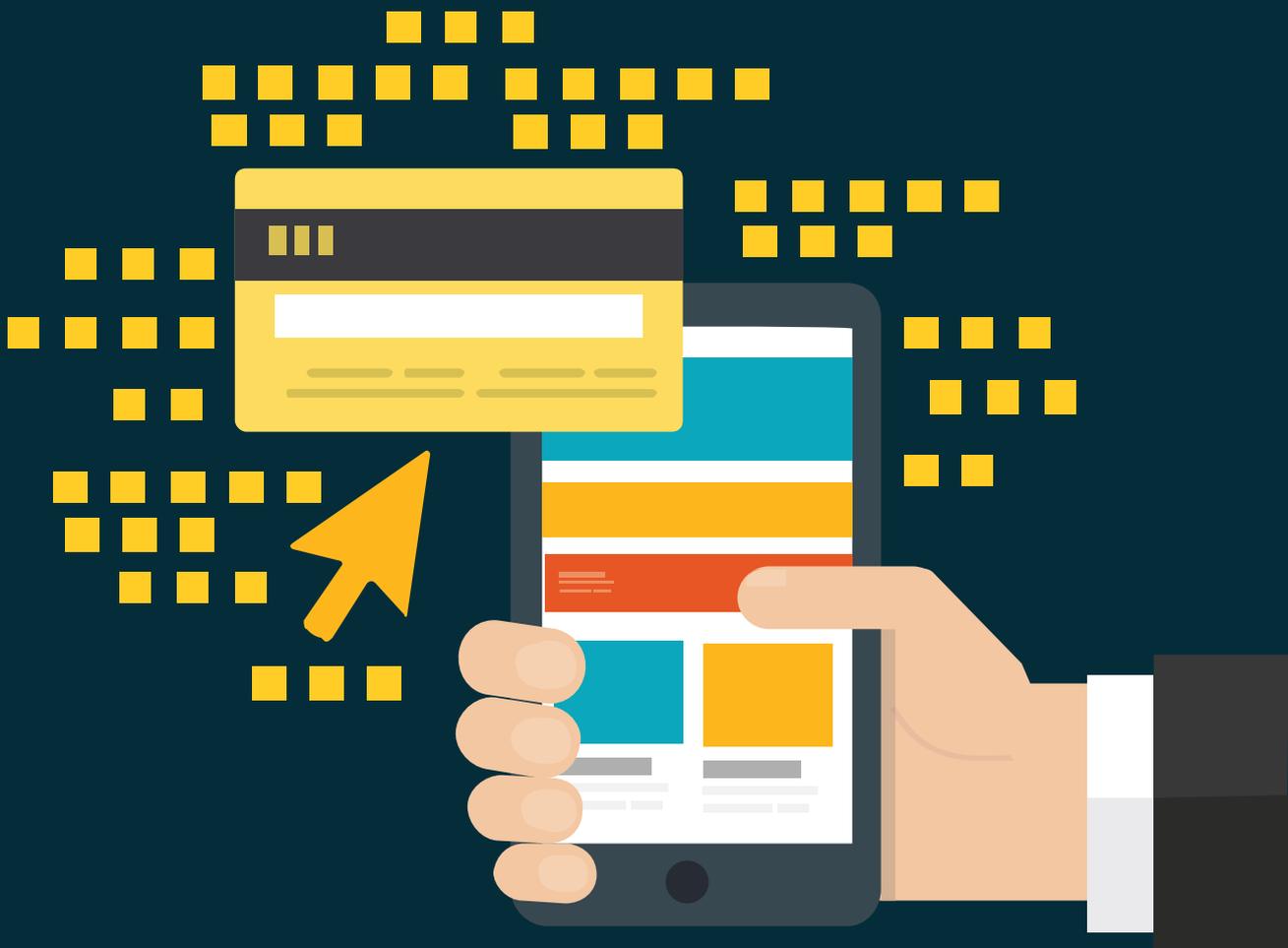




Why You Need To Engage Your Staff With Benefits



What Happens When Your Workforce is Disengaged?

Employees are a company's most valuable asset. That however assumes that the employee is actively engaged in their role and discharging their responsibilities to the best of their abilities. A disengaged employee is in fact a liability and only makes it harder for your organization to realize its objectives. The following is a look at some of the difficulties your business is likely to run into when you have one or more disengaged workers.

Deteriorating Customer Experience

The impact of employee disengagement on customer experience is enormous. It can make the difference between whether an existing customer opts to continue buying from you or chooses to move their business to a competitor. A disengaged workforce causes a flood of negative feedback which gradually destroys your brand and reputation.

Think about an event or exhibition your company participates in but where your representatives are rude, dismissive and unhelpful to enquiries. No customer will sit through poor service when they have dozens or hundreds of alternatives out there. It doesn't take numerous disengaged workers to give your business a bad name. Just one employee could undo the good efforts of everyone else.



“There are only three measurements that tell you nearly everything you need to know about your organization’s overall performance: employee engagement, customer satisfaction, and cash flow.. It goes without saying that no company, small or large, can win over the long run without energized employees who believe in the mission and understand how to achieve it.”

JACK WELCH

Higher Error Rate

A disengaged employee has poor concentration and isn't actually mentally present at their place of work. They will therefore on average make a far higher number of errors compared to their fully engaged colleagues.

When you consider that each error takes time, money and resources to correct, that can prove a huge dent on the company's efficiency. If you have multiple disengaged workers among your staff, the lost efficiency would be enormous.

Less Time Actual Working

As opposed to working, disengaged staff are more likely to spend their time in the office procrastinating, surfing the Internet, taking numerous breaks and getting distracted by gossip. This is actually one of the biggest risks of workforce disengagement. When an employee is at the workplace but isn't actually working, they'll be a distraction to other members of staff.

For example, they will want to chat with coworkers thus reducing the time even engaged employees spend working.

Rising Number of Sick Days

A disengaged employee only comes to work because they have to if they want to continue receiving a paycheck. They'll therefore take advantage of any opportunity to skip work. Expect a rising number of sick days by the disengaged worker. Each sick day means that the burden of the work they were to do has to be distributed to their already stretched colleagues.

Falling Profit

Ultimately, this is what it comes down to. Workforce disengagement will affect your bottom line and could endanger the very survival of your business. It's the result of all the negative repercussions we've covered above. Disengaged workers are less likely to drive sales or slash unnecessary business expenses. They have a diminished sense of loyalty to their employer and are indifferent on whether they meet their targets or not.



..All This Leads To One Thing. High Employee Turnover.

As is clear by now, a disengaged worker finds no pleasure in coming to work every day. The natural progression of this depth of disillusion is to find a new job that restores their desire for work. The more disengaged staff your organization has, the higher your employee turnover is likely to be.

No business should treat any worker as indispensable. There's a real cost of a high staff turnover. The company has invested time, training and money into the employee. All that will be lost if they do decide to take their skills elsewhere.

Why Workplace Benefits Are The Way To Solve Disengaged Workers

Disengaged workers can be a drag on your business and will make it that much harder for you to realize your objectives. When you have a disengaged employee, it's easy to think of contract termination as the solution. But things aren't that simple.

First, firing a worker is fraught with legal and regulatory risks especially if the reason for terminating their contract isn't compelling. Second, the fact that you hired them and retained them for as long as you have means their skill have been useful to your organization and that they were an actively engaged worker at some point.

Third, you have invested in their professional development in terms of internal and external training. All that will be lost if they leave. So you are better off reengaging the worker and should consider termination as a last resort. But how do you do it?

Workplace Benefits Can Reengage Employees

There are several techniques you could use to get your disengaged workers excited again about coming to work. Among these, workplace benefits should feature near the top of your list. That's because whereas the possible triggers for worker disengagement are incredibly diverse, plenty of them can be traced back to either problems at home or a perception by the employee that they aren't as valued as they should.

Since the business may not necessarily have the budgetary provision to accommodate an increase in the disengaged worker's pay, workplace benefits can provide the motivation needed to get them delivering at their best once again. Here are some practical examples.



“Employees who believe that management is concerned about them as a whole person – not just an employee – are more productive, more satisfied, more fulfilled. Satisfied employees mean satisfied customers, which leads to profitability.”

ANNE M. MULCAHY

What Are The Marks Of A Great Workplace Benefits Program?

There are many urban myths about workplace benefits. Workplace benefits have long been said to be the best indicators of a good, up to date employer; a good benefits program indicates that the employer is making a real effort to compete for the best employees.

A good benefits program also means the employer is focusing on delivering genuine values for their employees, financially and otherwise. For a nice change, the urban myths are right. There's a lot more to these workplace benefits programs, though.

Workplace benefits programs basics

A good benefits program has a few unmistakable characteristics:

The program is well-structured:

This means there are multiple benefits in a well-integrated program. You may have day-care, a gym, a wellness program, employee discounts, and more.

The program is well-suited to the needs of employees:

In every sector, employees have a range of unique needs. A sales team, for example, may need a good range of benefits for their travel needs. Shift workers may need anything from a good reliable schedule to manage their times to onsite facilities for doing multiple shift work.

Every benefit has a dollar value:

You can actually calculate how much a benefits program is worth by doing a few checks on the costs of paying for these services yourself.

Incentives program features:

Built in to many workplace benefits programs (at least the competently designed ones) are incentives. These benefits are accessible, productive, and also deliver values:

Productivity bonuses:

Great for employees, providing a cash incentive. Productivity is usually set at clear goals.

Performance bonuses:

Real kick-starters for top employees, competitive productivity is a great incentive, and some performance bonuses pay exceptionally well.

Built-in overtime:

This is common in high turnover roles where productivity needs to be constantly in top gear. The overtime pays well and also helps to manage the workload, reducing stress on staff.

Onsite facilities:

These facilities may include a gym, parking, staff lounge, and other amenities. They're great environments, and add an excellent range of direct values for employees.

Staff discounts:

These discounts can be excellent, and very valuable. Some workplaces offer high discounts on high-value products and services, so always check these out.

A Good Workplace Benefits Program Means A Good Employer

If you look at the various features listed as parts of a good workplace benefits program, you'll notice one thing in particular: All of these benefits fit in well with the nature of the work being done, as well as adding value for employees.

These features are based on an employer's knowledge of employee needs. Good benefits programs are typically "evolved", designed to meet both employee and workplace needs. The best benefits programs are truly excellent. They are major drivers for employees.

For employers, the benefits programs are also very important. These top quality benefits programs are also excellent for employee retention. That's critically important in a highly mobile modern workplace, where people may come and go, very expensively, and add operational stresses to a business.

If you've ever worked in a high staff turnover business, you'll know that turnover simply adds to the workload and reduces business efficiency. Competent employers really do fully understand the value of their benefits programs. So a good benefits program means your employer is fully in touch with employee needs.

Valuing Workplace Benefits Programs

The most effective way to value workplace benefits programs is to simply establish the metrics and assess performance, worth and impact.

- Check the current market value of the benefits – Some benefits programs become out of date, and may not be as valuable as they seem.
- Consider the life and work values in terms of benefits you really need – Does the benefits program stack up as fitting in with your specific needs?

What are the leading workplace benefits offerings that companies choose?

The competition to attract and retain the best talent out there is more intense than ever before. When people consider changing jobs, remuneration is certainly at the top of their list. However, the additional benefits that a potential employer offers can be just as compelling.

A [Glassdoor survey](#) confirmed what most human resources managers already knew. First, 3 in 5 respondents gave strong consideration to workplace benefits when weighing a job offer. A staggering 4 in 5 preferred additional benefits over a bigger salary. Little wonder therefore that companies are using workplace benefits to get an edge over the competition in the battle for top talent. Here's a look at the major benefits companies offer today...

Medical Assistance

Health insurance is the thing most people have in mind when they're talking about workplace benefits. Even when an employer offers numerous other attractive perks, few employees will give them consideration if health insurance isn't on the table. And it makes sense. While Australia has an excellent healthcare system, there are still some procedures and expenses that employers can cover to make their staff happier and healthier.

Flexible Work Hours

In the past, flexible work hours was the preserve of budding startups that were desperate to attract smart people on a shoe-string budget. Nowadays though, even mega banks and big oil corporations do have some provision for flexible working hours.

Traditionally, parents in general have been the main advocates of flexible hours. This has however rapidly changed in recent years as Millennials have become the dominant generation in the work environment. Millennials are firm believers in work-life balance and many in this demographic won't hesitate to pick a job with flexible hours over one with much higher pay.

Flexible hours can take many forms including telecommuting once a week, taking every other Monday off or letting employees choose their clock-in and clock-out times as long as they meet their minimum hours and targets for the week.

Life Insurance

The death of a working parent can drastically deteriorate the living standards and future prospects of a family. The loss of a steady source of income would throw the family's finances into disarray. A group life insurance therefore gives employees peace of mind knowing that their families' needs will be taken care of in the event that they pass away.

Search giant Google has perhaps the most lucrative life insurance benefit in the market today.

If a Google employee dies, their spouse will receive half of the deceased employee's pay for the next 10 years. Few companies can match that but there are many other low cost options that employers can tap into to provide a group life insurance cover for their workers. By paying as little as \$500 per healthy employee per year, companies can provide a benefit that could lure in good talent.

But Most Importantly? Wellness Programs

Employers are increasingly coming to the realization that the physical and mental health of their employees has a direct impact on worker productivity. That's why wellness programs are now a common feature in a workplace benefits package.

The nature of the wellness program varies from one company to the next. It may include an onsite fitness facility, discounted or free gym membership, meditation classes, yoga classes, fitness gear reimbursement or free health-conscious snacks. But it should go so much further than that. Financial wellness programs are one of the most innovative notions around benefits.

An attractive workplace financial wellness package can make the difference between hiring great people or losing them to the competition. Boost your company's profile by making sure your employee contracts include the above benefits in some shape or form.

The Challenges Organizations Face When It Comes to Employee Benefits

Any enterprise that hopes to attract and retain the best talent in the market must offer attractive benefits over and beyond just remuneration. Most benefits are voluntarily given i.e. the employer is under no legal obligation to do so. Benefits seek to cushion workers from certain harsh realities of life and are therefore a great way of getting people excited to work for you. Nevertheless, identifying and rolling out an employee benefits program isn't a cake walk. You are bound to run into challenges. We cover some of the major ones below.

Cost

Workplace benefits may be offered as a perk to employees but that doesn't mean they are free. Someone has to pay for every benefit and in this case, it's the employer. How much you choose to spend on providing employee benefits will have an impact on your business' cash flows, expansion plans, investment options, profit margins and hiring goals.

Other than the cost of the benefit itself, it may be necessary to contract a third party to manage the program or hire additional HR staff for the same purpose. Some businesses even opt to share the cost of the benefit with their employee.

Staying Current

While majority of benefits are provided by the business voluntarily, there are those that may be mandated by the law. Nevertheless, even for the ones offered voluntarily, they must operate within the laid down legal framework.

But laws and regulations are never static. Think about the changes the Affordable Care Act had on provision of benefits for employers with more than 50 full-time staff. HR teams must therefore work closely with legal teams to keep abreast of evolving market dynamics.

Explaining Benefits to Employees

Giving someone a valuable, expensive gift won't have the desired impact if the recipient doesn't understand the gift and how it's of use to them. With the average employer offering numerous benefits to their staff, employees will often have difficulty understanding how they can make the most of the complex package.

It's up to HR staff to explain how it all works. Sometimes, it may be necessary to seek the assistance of an external expert (such an insurance broker) to clarify the more technical aspects.

Catering to Multiple Demographics

Different demographics have different needs and priorities. The things that are important to someone in their 40s aren't necessarily the same as the priorities of a 20-something year old. Creating a benefits package that takes this diversity into account and still delivers something that is appealing to all ages is extremely tough.

Whereas health and retirement plans have universal appeal, some section of your workforce may treasure flexible working hours and telecommuting. The best approach therefore is to talk to your employees and craft a benefits plan that is as inclusive as possible.

Making Objective Decisions

A HR manager plays a mediatory role. They have to balance between protecting the interests of the organization and being an advocate for employees to retain the best talent. It can sometimes be difficult to make a decision that satisfies both the employer and the employee.

For instance, if the HR team notices that a worker is costing the organization plenty of money in medical expenses and is also performing below expectations, they have to make the difficult decision of firing them.

Understanding the challenges of workplace benefits plans will help you prepare the strategies required to overcome them.



It's Time To Upgrade Your Employee Value Proposition.

Flare's integrated suite of products automates your manual onboarding & HR processes, freeing you up to focus more on people and less on paper. Our financial benefits and perks products create the next evolution of employee engagement.

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