

Five HR and Employee Benefits Solutions to Make Your Business Run More Smoothly

Your employee benefits broker can provide your business with more than just medical insurance for your employees—including resources that help the employer as well as the employee. This article outlines five of the top human resource and employee benefits solutions you may not have realized you can access through your insurance broker.

These products and services are designed to simplify your management responsibilities and improve employee satisfaction and retention.

1) Payroll Processing

Many businesses don't have the resources to handle payroll processing in house. Payroll processing can be a daunting task with keeping up with tax regulation changes, collecting and depositing taxes and deductions, and finding and maintaining employees with payroll skills. This is a service that some insurance brokers can provide to ease this burden for you and ensure your payroll processing is accurate and efficient.

2) Open Enrollment

Open enrollment is a complex process and is another challenge for a lot of businesses. Your insurance broker should support you in your enrollment process. For example, we handle open enrollment for employee benefits for many of our clients and utilize webinar-hosted open enrollment to ease the process and keep costs low. By utilizing the webinar service, we are able to easily accommodate the varying schedules of our clients' employees. We offer multiple webinars at different times of the day and week and give the employees

the option to attend the meeting that best fits their schedule. This allows all employees the option to participate as needed with minimal disruption to the work week.

3) Total Compensation Statements

Providing your employees with a total compensation statement is an effective way of clearly communicating the total value of their benefits and compensation package. Some of the items that are typically included on the statement include salary/hourly rate, medical benefits coverage (including the amounts paid by the employer and the employee), paid leave, life and disability insurance, and retirement benefits. The contribution the employer makes on behalf of the employee is significant, but generally the employee only sees and focuses on what comes out of their paycheck. The total compensation statement helps the employee to understand how much the employer pays on their behalf beyond their salary and demonstrates the employer is looking out for the employee's best interest.

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Implementation example: We have a client who is providing a superior level of employee benefits where they are carrying 80 percent of the cost for the employees. They offer three plans for their employees to choose from, all of which are great options. However, each year as slight cost increases have been implemented for the employees, the employer has received a lot of negative feedback from the employees who are frustrated with the cost increases. The employees don't realize their share is only 20 percent of the whole cost of the benefits. We implemented the total compensation statements for the employer. It was very helpful for the employees to be able to see the whole picture of the cost of the benefits and what the employer is paying on their behalf. Providing this information to the employees has helped them to understand that the employer really does have a vested interest in the well being of their employees.

4) Key Man Life / Buy-Sell Agreements

Your broker can also help you implement buy-sell agreements and key man life insurance policies to ensure the continuity of your business. Buy-sell agreements, also known as business continuation or buyout agreements, provide the financial means for the surviving business partner to purchase the other partner's interest in the business. Key man insurance is life insurance that covers the key individuals in your business. Key man life is typically recommended for business owners and specific employees who are crucial to the successful operation of the business. The business is the beneficiary of the policy and can use the policy proceeds to cover expenses

until a replacement person is hired. If needed, the policy proceeds can also be used to pay off debts, distribute funds to investors, pay severance to employees, and close the business.

5) Health Care Reform

Health care reform is ever changing. Just recently there has been another postponement of some of the regulations that were due to take effect January 1, 2014. Many of the large employers (50+ employees) who were in a major rush a few months ago to get in compliance with health reform halted their efforts when the date was extended for another year. Others who hadn't begun preparing at all simply breathed a sigh of relief believing they can procrastinate even longer. My advice to all employers is to not get caught up in that way of thinking. Prepare now. Though dates have been postponed, health care reform is still the law of the land, and it is still going to happen--just at a different date. We are actively working with our clients right now to make sure they have the right plan of action so they are prepared without looming deadlines. Don't stop the progress you were making.

When choosing an insurance broker it is important that you choose an advisor with the right resources to support your business. Your broker should be someone you consider part of your team and who furthers the success of your business. Part of the Leavitt Group advantage I offer to my clients is the team approach we have that brings together a variety of resources to meet the unique needs of each client.

Steve Balltrip joined the Leavitt Group in 2012 and has over five years of experience in the insurance industry. He is licensed in property and casualty, life, and health, with his main focus being employee benefits. In addition to working with clients in the Leavitt Group's Atlanta office, Steve provides employee benefit products and services to the clients of the Leavitt Group's National Restaurant Division. Steve strongly believes one of his greatest assets with the Leavitt Group is his ability to bring together the resources he needs to support his clients. He appreciates the team approach and the network of professionals he is able to rely on as part of his affiliation with the Leavitt Group.

Prior to working in insurance, Steve was employed with the Burger King corporate office and was a Burger King franchisee. He grew up in Knoxville, Tennessee, and attended the University of Tennessee.

To learn more about how the HR and employee benefits products and services we provide, please contact your Leavitt Group consultant.