

It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year: Open Enrollment Season is Here!!

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It's the most wonderful time of the year. What time of the year is that you might ask, Christmas?

No, it's open enrollment time.

When open enrollment time rolls around, you need to do three things: prepare, prepare and prepare. The better prepared you are, the smoother the open enrollment process will be for you and your participants.

Today's work force has diverse needs and you need to develop a strategy that works for your organization and employees. Consider what worked (or didn't work) last year and build upon that going forward.

The first step would be determining your open enrollment approach. Will it be paper based or an automated web based enrollment process? While more companies are moving to a web based open enrollment, this method does not work for all employers. For example, employees of a manufacturing firm may not have access to a computer during business hours and some employees may not have access to a computer at home.

An automated web based open enrollment process can reduce the time spent on open enrollment. It allows easier access for families to review the enrollment options and many enrollment errors can be avoided with the proper validation tools. Often an automated web based system can reconcile directly with the payroll department.

Communication is crucial. Your message should be simple, concise and consistent and be presented in such a way that your employees see the value of the benefits you offer. Open enrollment offers you the opportunity to remind your employees of programs available such as: smoking cessation programs, nutritional counseling, discounted gym memberships, etc.

Communication is key to a successful open enrollment. Employee meetings, webinars, brochures and newsletters are just a few ways to keep open enrollment front and center in your employees minds and don't forget to include any required compliance notifications. Good Luck!

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