

HOW-TO GUIDE:

Engaging Parents this Open Enrollment Season





For parents, protecting their families is top of mind.

How can HR leaders engage them with their latest benefits offerings?

Open enrollment season presents a critical opportunity to prepare working parents for the unpredictable challenges of the future with benefits that will help them protect their families, fight burnout, and stay productive. But any HR leader knows that adding benefits is only half the battle: encouraging employees, and especially working parents, to engage and interact with their benefits is a different story.

In this guide, you'll learn:

- How to build engagement into your company culture
- Why segmentation matters for inspiring enrollment
- How to vary your communications and content
- Plus, templates for getting started!

Table of contents

- Introduction** **4**
 - Competition for talent has never been greater **4**
 - Telehealth and digital services expand access to care **4**
 - Open enrollment is an opportunity to get ahead, but how? **5**
 - Put on your marketing hat

- 01.** **6**
 - Build engagement into your company culture**
 - “You asked, we delivered” 6
 - Roundtables and AMAs 6
 - Get executive buy-in 7
 - Collect and distribute internal resources 7

- 02.** **Segmentation and content curation is key** **8**
 - Determine your audience segments and characteristics 8
 - Build out communications personas 8
 - Value propositions and messaging frameworks 9
 - Creating content 10

- 03.** **Vary your types of communication and content** **11**
 - What types of communications should you use and when 11

- 04.** **Templates** **14**
 - Template: Working Parent Persona 14
 - Template: Messaging Framework 15

Competition for talent has never been greater

Parents aren't typically making decisions in a vacuum: they read the news, talk to friends and colleagues, and stay aware of market trends. The **"she-cession"** and the **"great resignation"** already have HR leaders' heads spinning, and retaining women and parents in the workplace has never been a greater priority.

That's led to intense competition for talent, especially for highly competitive roles like engineering and product marketing. Women and parents, whether planning a family or raising their kids, **are searching for the best benefits packages when evaluating roles and opportunities**. As new apps and services emerge every day, employees, and especially parents, are looking to their employers to provide more meaningful benefits to help them manage through tough times and adapt to the new normal.

Telehealth and digital services expand access to care

The pandemic proved that virtual care and digital health are essential services, especially for parents and families. Restricted access to healthcare exacerbated the **shortage of family physicians, OB-GYNs, and mental health providers** across the country, making it exceedingly difficult for parents to get the care they needed. Telehealth, however, helped parents access care immediately, without risking exposure or waiting potentially months for an appointment.

Mercer's annual **"National Survey of Employer Sponsored Health Plans"** found that HR teams are prioritizing benefits and services for mental and behavioral health, in addition to offering telehealth components to improve access to care. Telehealth has become the focal point for many of these new offerings. Virtual care can lower upfront costs, ensure access to care regardless of geographic location (which is even more important in the age of hybrid work,) and offers conveniently accessible appointments at times that work for working parents.

Open enrollment is an opportunity to get ahead, but how?

You've probably added new benefits since last year. Maybe you incorporated a new mental health service to help prevent burnout, or maybe you added a telehealth vendor to give parents access to care outside of working hours.

A graphic consisting of a light orange circle with a white horizontal line across its middle. The number '65%' is written in a bold, teal font, with the top half of the number inside the circle and the bottom half below the line.

of employees that they do not fully comprehend the value of their company-provided health benefits

A graphic consisting of a light orange circle with a white horizontal line across its middle. The number '53%' is written in a bold, teal font, with the top half of the number inside the circle and the bottom half below the line.

of organizations struggle to communicate their benefits options to employees

Evaluating vendors, onboarding, and preparing for launch is often a daunting task. Educating your employees about their new benefits, and moreover, getting them to engage to the point that they're effective, is a different beast. You know the benefits you've implemented can make a difference in their lives, but even if you lead a horse to water, you can't always make it drink.

Put on your marketing hat

As we've all learned this past year, being an HR leader has become several jobs in one. When it comes to getting members to engage with new benefits, you have to put on your marketing hat and sell the value of each new vendor. You need to understand your audience, create content for them to engage with, and communicate the value of the benefit in language that makes sense to them. Let's dive into some simple strategies you can use to up your internal comms game this open enrollment season.



SECTION 01

Build engagement into your company culture

Involving working parents in the process to identify and evaluate new benefits solutions can help motivate them to engage down the road. Giving them a sense of ownership over the process and including their opinions when evaluating vendors can do wonders for enrollments.

“You asked, we delivered”

There isn't a stronger, more compelling headline than “based on your feedback.” Adding benefits or piloting programs based on feedback from your employees shows them that not only does your organization care about their needs, you're willing to address and invest in them. For parents, that can be the difference-maker in inspiring them to join, or stay, with your organization long term.

Roundtables and AMAs

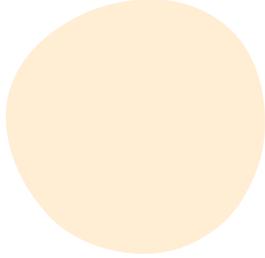
Before open enrollment officially begins, setting up roundtable discussions with employee resource groups, or holding informal ask me anything (AMA) sessions about a specific topic, is a great way to inspire employees to get more involved. It can provide a forum for employees to get answers to questions, voice their concerns, and ultimately, build a foundation of research for your team to act upon. During this process, you might identify employees who can serve as evangelists for your benefits and put a human face to the new programs and policies you're rolling out. After all, there's no stronger form of marketing than **word of mouth from friends, coworkers, and family**.

Get executive buy-in

If you're adding a new benefit for parents like Maven, line up an executive sponsor or advocate. See if they're willing to participate in an upcoming webinar, roundtable discussion, or company meeting, or if they can offer their story as a part of a larger content campaign. Not only does an executive endorsement provide another powerful story of why this benefit helps, it also shows that engaging with benefits is *acceptable and encouraged*.

Collect and distribute internal resources

Although open enrollment is when most benefits communications are conducted, employees are ideally engaging with their benefits all-year round. Creating a simple internal hub, e.g. a wiki page, that can link to all your different communications, resources, and more, can help employees find what they need when they need it.



SECTION 02

Segmentation and content curation is key



The most important part about marketing to your employees is understanding the different audiences and demographics within your organization. The early days of the pandemic showed us that parents need more support than ever before. Now that we're over a year into the new normal, bringing on new benefits for high priority items like mental health requires thoughtful communications strategies.

Determine your audience segments and characteristics

When it comes to inspiring parents and families to engage with new benefits, you need to ensure you understand their needs, and moreover, meet them where they are. Effective communications begin with what marketers like to call audience segmentation: breaking down the population of your employees into groups based on needs, preferences, and similarities. In fact, your employee resource groups likely reflect these factors to some degree. You can break these groups down using a combination of statistics (e.g., demographics, salary, geographic location) and look for similarities in behavior between them.

Build out communications personas

Just as a sales team builds buyer personas, your HR team can build out “comms personas” that describe the needs, motivations, and preferences of a group of employees you're reaching out to. For parents, you might want to build out several archetypes based on their needs. For example, parents working remotely, with children under 12 years old, or by ethnic background. Validate these personas with a combination of interviews and data, and use them to build out different value propositions that matter to each persona. See the appendix for our template.

WHAT DOES A PERSONA LOOK LIKE?



Rhonda

Traits:

- 38, lives in New York, NY
- Mother of one
- Interested in fertility benefits

Needs:

- Coverage for rounds of IVF
- Mental health support for burnout
- Flexibility to attend various appointments

Motivators:

- Expensive and emotionally draining fertility treatments
- Parenting a young child
- Managing mental health and burnout



Keith

Traits:

- 41, lives in Waltham, MA
- Single father of one by adoption
- Balancing remote school and work

Needs:

- Reimbursements for adoption-related expenses
- Parenting support and career coaching
- Mental health resources

Motivators:

- Figuring out how to raise a child
- Coping with stigma and loneliness
- Navigating hybrid work and parenthood



Jace

Traits:

- 28, lives in Denver, CO
- Pursuing surrogacy with partner
- Navigating reimbursements and insurance

Needs:

- Information about clinics, gestational carriers, and agencies
- Reimbursements for expensive fertility treatments
- Emotional support throughout the process

Motivators:

- Staying productive at work
- Supporting his partner at home
- Financial stability amid expensive procedures

Value propositions and messaging frameworks

With personas, you can craft stronger messages and headlines that will grab your employees' attention, rather than deploying the same message company-wide. Starting with value propositions, you can create messaging frameworks for audiences that will help guide any future communications, from email to webinars and more.

A messaging framework is like a plot synopsis for your campaign: it helps you whittle down what to say and when. There's no set way to create one, other than that you should include key messaging, evidence, and phrases tailored to your audience. See the appendix for our template.

Creating content

When you've established how messaging might differ between personas and audiences (and it's okay if there's minimal difference) you can start building your content. We'll cover the different types of content you can create in the next section, but there are a few guiding principles we recommend, especially when sharing information for a notoriously busy group of employees like working parents.

Start with empathy

Show that you understand the trials and tribulations of being a working parent in the new normal. Start with a relatable story, like when your child walks in on a meeting, or having to pause your day to pick them up from school, and use that to lead them in.

Get to the point

Don't spend too much time talking about how proud you are of onboarding a new vendor, or how difficult it was picking through different options. Get to the point, regardless of the channel, so parents know what they're in for.

Show, don't tell

Show the value of the service using data, examples, or anecdotes. Use data to support your claims, and strive to tell a story that clearly illustrates how it could be useful to them.



SECTION 03

Vary your types of communication and content



Varying your types of communications, and differentiating content for each channel, can help encourage employees to interact with and learn more about your benefits. From emails and slack messages, to newsletters and webinars, there are several different ways you can engage parents in your workplace, just as you would engage any other employee. The key difference is the messaging and content.

What types of communications should you use and when?

Use of internal communications channels has increased exponentially since the pandemic began, as companies relied on digital comms to keep in touch with each other. Internal messaging apps like Slack and video communications tools like Zoom took off, but many companies also adopted internal wikis, created company-wide newsletters, and hosted webinars or virtual events to share information with employees and keep them engaged.

When it comes to marketing, each channel has its own purpose, pros, and cons.

| Type of communication | When to use | Pros | Cons |
|--|--|---|---|
|  Face-to-face/ Virtual Meetings | Open enrollment events Trainings to explain new benefits Q&A sessions | Genuine interaction with employees Opportunity to engage one-on-one | Time consuming Tough to command attention, especially virtually |
|  Email | New benefits announcement with links to enrollment sites Sharing event recordings Reminders and follow ups | Digestible and accessible Can push towards a call to action | Easy to skim/ignore Needs a good pitch to be convincing |
|  Newsletter | Announcements Event reminders Driving traffic to different content | Recurring, builds expectation Can discuss several topics at once | Requires more time investment than email Engagement depends on effort |
|  Webinar | Deep-dives on specific topics or questions Partnering with new or legacy vendors Information on new services | Highlight relevant statistics and research Q&As with hosts and guests Can share recordings afterwards | Need to create interesting content/invite guests Time consuming, scheduling difficulties |
|  Direct Mailer | Reminders about important dates Incentives for enrollment | Can reach household decision makers Visually engaging | Costly for creation and shipping Easily discarded, hard to measure impact |

Clearcut calls to action

Within each channel and tactic, you should use the messaging frameworks you created to guide what to say and how to say it. No matter what, every piece of communication should have a clear call to action for employees to follow, and the content within should lead towards it. If you host a webinar with a vendor about this great new benefit, and the call to action is to enroll, the webinar should make a compelling case for doing so.

Getting parents to engage with new benefits, whether it's mental healthcare or fitness classes, requires a concerted effort among all your different marketing channels, with messaging that addresses their needs, and information that's readily available and relevant to their questions.

Benefits communications tend to be as complex as your plan

Maven is a simple, comprehensive platform covering all your family benefit needs. Our platform provides parents with 24/7 access to guidance, support, and care from providers spanning over 30 different family and women's health specialties.

Consolidating fertility, maternity, and parenting benefits into one, easy-to-use platform that your employees will love can help improve health outcomes, reduce costs, and increase your ROI. And because Maven's Care Advocates are trained in your benefits plan, they can help guide parents to in-network providers, as well as other benefits in your ecosystem.

Finally, during the implementation process, Maven partners with you to create a multi-faceted communications plan to educate employees about Maven and encourage them to get started. To find out how Maven can help make your open enrollment process easier, [contact us today](#).



 MAVEN

SECTION 04

Template: Working Parent Persona

Use this template to get started outlining an example persona.

NAME:

AGE:

PATH TO PARENTHOOD:

Traits

-
-
-
-

Needs

-
-
-
-

Motivators

-
-
-
-

Template: Messaging Framework

Use this template to get started on a messaging framework for a new benefit.

NAME:

AGE:

PATH TO PARENTHOOD:

| |
|--|
| Product/Benefit |
| Target Segment/ Persona |
| Value proposition statement |
| Main Challenges |
| Messaging Pillars |