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Beyond Compliance: Make Every Communication Count



Effective retirement plan communications serve a dual purpose: they fulfill Department of Labor (DOL) requirements, and they also engage, educate, motivate, and empower your plan participants. Optimizing your communications entails connecting with employees on a personal level,

encouraging informed decisions, and fostering active engagement with their retirement plans and financial future. Effective communication builds trust and confidence in the retirement plan benefits, enhancing the employer's reputation.

Break down your content into digestible pieces to increase engagement. Offer helpful tools such as checklists, guides, decision trees, and action plans to simplify complex tasks into actionable steps and checkpoints.

Storytelling is a powerful medium. Building a communication strategy around storytelling can make information more relatable and memorable. A 2021 study in Cell Reports found that narrative stimuli synchronize heart rates among individuals, supporting the ability of stories to connect people in ways other modes of communication cannot.

Personalize, personalize, personalize. Customize messaging to employee demographic and psychographic profiles. The topics, voice, language, and examples you use can all help create common touchpoints and build trust. Whenever you issue a communication, segment messaging across relevant dimensions, whether by generational cohort, stage of career development, or retirement timeline.

Timing is everything. Provide behavioral nudges with personalized communications aligned with critical decision points, such as alerts regarding contribution increases during



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annual salary reviews or educational content on catch-up contributions for employees nearing or over 50 years old. This empowers employees to make informed decisions at crucial moments in their retirement planning journey. Additionally, timing messages with milestone events like work anniversaries or birthdays can enhance their impact. Use email delivery times when workers are most likely to engage and integrate calendars for reminders about deadlines or plan-related events.

Diversify your delivery methods. Utilize various media formats—videos, podcasts, infographics, webinars, and in-person events—to cater to diverse learning preferences and meet participants where they are. Tailor content to each medium's strengths and regularly evaluate their effectiveness to adapt strategies for maximum impact and inclusivity.

Refine through feedback. Conduct routine communication audits and gather employee feedback to assess effectiveness and pinpoint areas for improvement. Establish key performance indicators to quantitatively measure engagement levels and message impact, enabling a data-driven approach to continuous enhancement.

Retirement plan communications serve as a vital bridge between employers and participants. When executed effectively, they facilitate better decision-making and empower employees to take charge of their retirement planning, leading to a more financially secure and engaged workforce, ultimately benefiting the whole organization.

Sources

[https://www.cell.com/cell-reports/fulltext/S2211-1247\(21\)01139-6](https://www.cell.com/cell-reports/fulltext/S2211-1247(21)01139-6)

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