

2021 HR and Benefits Trends

How You Can Get Ahead of the Curve

In 2021, operating virtually has become increasingly prevalent, and there are several trends that have been accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic which we expect to continue to reshape the HR, benefits and consumer experience spaces this year. Here are a few we recommend employers and HR professionals consider when developing their benefits strategy to enhance the employee experience.

TREND 1

AI as your everyday assistant

80% of emerging technologies are expected to have AI foundations this year.¹

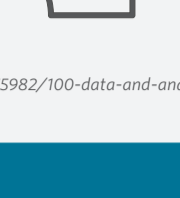
Myth: AI can completely replace full tasks and even jobs.

Truth: AI works best in conjunction with human effort and can help you work and live smarter.

When it comes to benefits, AI-based technology and tools can...



For HR professionals: Help them manage data more effectively.



For employees: Improve their benefits decision-making and enrollment experience.

¹Gartner, 2018 - <https://www.gartner.com/en/documents/3875982/100-data-and-analytics-predictions-through-2022>

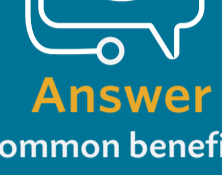
TREND 2

The rise of chatbots



85% of customer interactions were predicted to be handled without human agents by 2021.¹

How can chatbots help in the benefits world?



Answer common benefits questions.



Reduce hold times with service agents.



Route employees to information quickly.

But remember, a human touch will always be needed to...



- Respond to complex benefits questions.
- Respond empathetically in sensitive situations.

¹Chatbots Life, 2019 - <https://chatbotlife.com>

TREND 3

Emotional Intelligence as your greatest asset



2/3 of employees reported more stress in June 2020, during the pandemic, compared to June 2019.¹

Many employees are stressed during the pandemic from juggling multiple responsibilities like...



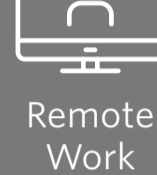
Family Health



Childcare



Homeschool



Remote Work

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

is employers' greatest asset during this challenging time for employees.

Create thoughtful and empathetic experiences around...



Benefits



Enrollment



Employee Engagement

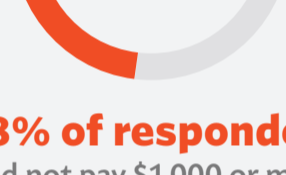
to help reduce employee stress.

¹CVS Health, 2020 - <https://cvshhealth.com/news-and-insights/articles/most-adults-are-experiencing-more-stress-same-time-last-year-new-report>

TREND 4

Financial security a top concern

A 2020 survey found:



48% of respondents could not pay \$1,000 or more for out-of-pocket expenses without relying on credit or debt if they were to experience a major health incident.¹



61% of respondents expected their share of medical costs to increase within the next year.¹

What does this mean?

Employees need to make smart benefits decisions based on both their healthcare needs and financial resources.

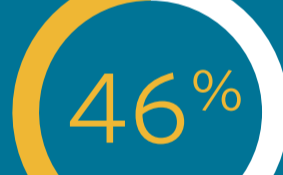
What can help employees do this?

Engaging and intuitive benefits decision support tools.

¹Aflac, 2020 - https://www.aflac.com/docs/awr/pdf/2020-overview/aflac_awr_2020_executive_summary.pdf

TREND 5

Cybersecurity concerns back on the rise



46% of global businesses have encountered a cybersecurity scare since shifting to a remote work model.¹

Seeking new benefits and enrollment technology this year?



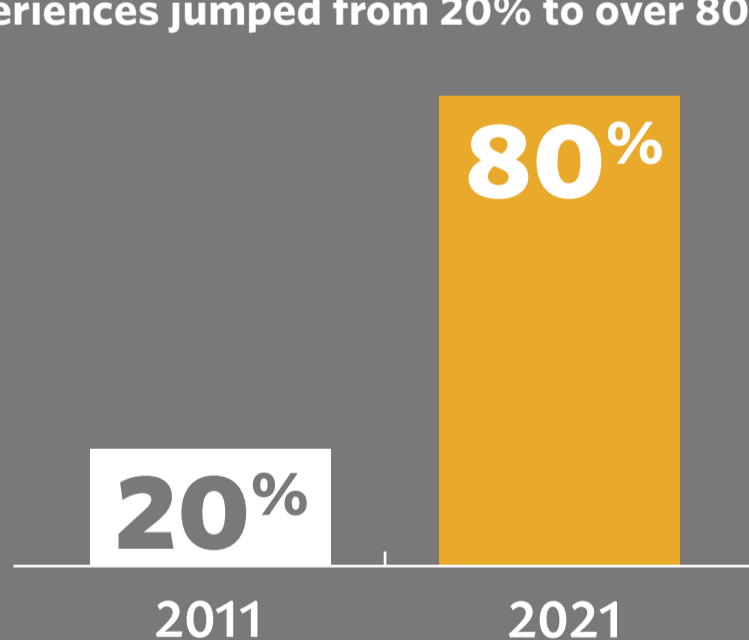
Make cybersecurity a top priority in your search. Your employees' sensitive information and PHI is at risk.

¹Barracuda, 2020 - <https://blog.barracuda.com/2020/05/06/surge-in-security-concerns-due-to-remote-working-during-covid-19-crisis/>

TREND 6

Improving the omnichannel experience

Over the last 10 years, businesses investing in omnichannel experiences jumped from 20% to over 80%.¹



But delivering an effective omnichannel experience is more than just making an experience accessible via different platforms.



Mobile



Desktop



Phone

It's also about recognizing that employees interact with each of these channels...

in **different ways**

at **different times**

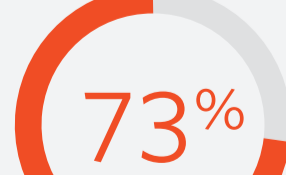
for **different needs**

...and designing the experience on each channel accordingly.

¹PWC, 2020 - <https://www.pwc.com/us/en/retail-consumer/publications/assets/pwc-retailing-2020.pdf>

TREND 7

Mobile benefits and enrollment experiences



Mobile devices are expected to make up almost **73% of e-commerce sales** by the end of this year.¹



If a website isn't mobile-friendly, **50% of people** stop visiting it.²

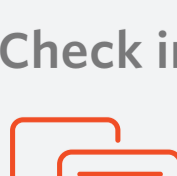
Enrolling in benefits online shouldn't be any different from online shopping.

Reevaluate



your mobile benefits and enrollment experience.

Check in



with your benefits technology vendor to learn more about their mobile experience and strategy for this year.

Remember



easy anytime, anywhere access to benefits will be essential for employees this year.

¹Statista, 2018 - <https://www.statista.com/chart/13139/estimated-worldwide-mobile-e-commerce-sales/>
²Think With Google, 2020 - <https://trueist.co/blog/ux-statistics/>