

BENEFIT PLAN ADMINISTRATION

**There is a simple way to look at this: you do it, we do it, or they do it.
Sometimes it's all three.**

If you do it, you are responsible for all aspects of employee onboarding, with discussions, form completion, and data input. Then you must keep it current, apprise employees and have them apprise you of changes in status, ongoing events, etc. A lot of work, with time that may be better employed in other more profitable activities...like actually engaging with employees.

If we do it, we take some of the burden by handling all the benefits enrollment and follow-up, COBRA notifications (both at hire and termination), putting together employee bundles and benefit booklets. We have a system which does allow benefits data input, pricing on plans and a web site that shows employees what they have and how to use it.

There are organizations looking for a more sophisticated solution, and hope that “they” will do it. This is becoming a fast growing industry, with a lot of competition from new arrivals and from those traditional service providers that offer this on a stand-alone basis or have added it to their existing systems. ADP. Paychex. Zenefits – which is being joined by Maxwell Health, Namely and others in a chase for investor dollars. Then there are the Professional Employer Organizations (PEOs) that are constantly calling. TriNet. ADP TotalSource. Insperty. Alongside all of these those are a number of names you have not seen, but have been operating behind the scenes for many years and doing it well. They offer services on their own, they package their programs with other companies, and those with whom they work even customize the basic package.

When “they do it” there are three basic “systems” that are under consideration:

- 1) Payroll
- 2) HRIS
- 3) Benefits Management

We subdivide these systems into more discrete organizational pieces:

- 1) Payroll and HRIS
- 2) Payroll and Benefits Management
- 3) HRIS and Benefits Management
- 4) Payroll, HRIS, and Benefits Management
- 5) Payroll, HRIS and Benefits Management with full professional HR support

What's the Point?

It's obvious, actually, but has been elusive for so long many thought it couldn't be done. Technology couldn't capture it, or there weren't enough resources devoted to its capture. Now it exists, and there is a new generation of employees who value the experience.

Interactive systems. Mobile technology. Information and knowledge at your fingertips. It all makes sense – and it should. It is the promise technology always makes. We can do it better, faster, cheaper and still keep you in control through the use of sophisticated tools.

Where does it Miss the Point?

There's an inherent flaw in any system that purports to do it all – for little, for less, for nothing. They assume the human element is no longer vital, or possibly not even necessary, to function. Yet they are dealing with people's hopes, lives and dreams when dealing with benefit plans. Certainly, efficiencies can be wrought and newer products bought on line without assistance. But what about those times when assistance is needed? Does knowledge equal wisdom?

We Get the Point

It's a matter of being tech enabled rather than tech dependent. Blending systems and process. Brokers and consultants have been seeking the same things as their client all these years. Some of our new competitors may say otherwise, and maybe that is sometimes, or often, true. Quality consultants, the ones who put the needs of employees and employers first, disagree.

The key, then, is to find a broker or consultant who both understands and embraces change. Experienced professionals certainly understand (or should) that the only constant is change. One look at the dizzying stream of new and changing federal and state law is convincing.

This, the organization you trust with helping you make the right and strategic decisions for your organization and its most important asset – your employees – should stand ready to assist, and get assistance themselves by incorporating these new and valuable tools in their practice.

Some of those that are providing these new resources compete directly with consultants. This is their prerogative – but will prove to be a philosophy that is barely sustainable. Organizations need direction, expertise, strategic thinking – tools enable but don't replace that.

Therefore, what works best for organizations now is an intelligent and careful approach in combining the intellectual and experiential resources their broker brings to tame technology and bring it into use as a full resource rather than the sole objective of employer desires. It's the people that matter – executives, staff...and the consultants and brokers who bring their goals and desires together in a cost efficient and caring manner.