



## The HUB Q&A: Making Benefits Work Across Generations and Life Stages






Given the enormous changes in the workplace over the last half-decade, it's not surprising that employee benefits are evolving as well. These changes reflect the diverse generations now populating the workforce, their work engagement, and their unique motivations and values.

Michelle Jukoski, National Employee Benefits Workforce Technology Strategy Leader, and Mim Minichiello, Chief Performance and Talent Officer for HUB International, recently discussed how employers can enhance their benefits through technology, communications, and personalized approaches.

### Q: How would you characterize generational differences in employee benefits?

**Michelle:** Most older workers focus on core standard benefits—medical, dental, and vision—and plan around them. Younger workers, however, often don't think about benefits until they need them or during open enrollment. They are more interested in non-traditional benefits like tuition assistance and mental health support, especially since the pandemic.

**Mim:** Generational differences in benefits are rooted in age and experience-based characterizations. What I've come to respect is that people's life stages aren't permanently fixed. Employers need a benefits portfolio that meets employees' needs for their current life challenges. This approach can drive more successfully to full employee engagement.

Effectively Engage the Five Generations of Workers						HUB
						
	Silent Generation 79 + (1925 - 1945)	Baby Boomers 78 - 60 (1946 - 1964)	Gen X 59 - 45 (1965 - 1979)	Millennials 44 - 30 (1980 - 1994)	Gen Z < 29 (1995 - 2010)	
% of Total Workforce	0%: 1 EEs	8%: 41 EEs	23%: 116 EEs	56%: 280 EEs	13%: 64 EEs	
Most Common Plan	Aetna : 100%	Aetna : 83%	Aetna : 79%	Aetna : 69%	Aetna : 71%	
Of Enrolled: % Employee Only	100%	56%	48%	75%	98%	
Communication Strategy	Meet with Me	Meet/Mail me	Call Me	Email me	Text me	
Concerns & Well-being	Remain healthy and productive at work until ready to retire	Providing for family and retirement	Buying a home, supporting families, financial future	Concerned with finances and their future	Beginning their career	
Medical Benefits **	Likes choice (PPO) but can afford (HDHP); likes HSA retirement savings option	Likes choice (PPO) but can afford (HDHP); likes HSA retirement savings option	Likes choice (PPO)	HDHP or low cost option (HMO)	Likely still on parent's plan	
Voluntary / Disability **	ID theft, permanent life, CI and LTD	Term life, CI, ID theft and LTC; Disability - Values coverage	CI, accident, 529 plan, home/auto; Needs Disability but must be educated on it's value	Home/auto, financial wellness, student loan repayment, accident, ID theft		
Coverage Considerations	Permanent Life Insurance, Retirement	Sabbatical, ER Paid LTD, IDI, Retirement	Paid Maternity/Paternity, Pet insurance, Child Care Support, ER paid LTD, IDI, Student Loan Repayment, 529 Savings Plan	Paid Maternity/Paternity, Pet insurance, Child Care Support, ER paid LTD, IDI, Student Loan Repayment, 529 Savings Plan		

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**Q: What about accessing benefits?**

**Michelle:** The delivery mechanism is crucial, especially for ensuring a quality employee experience. Gen Z employees, being digital natives, expect a seamless app platform where they can access information about their benefits, what they've signed up for, and their usage.

**Mim:** Accessing benefits that meet the varied needs of each employee is a significant challenge for employers. Employee engagement surveys show that employees need messages delivered in their preferred modality and often need to hear them multiple times. The internal communications landscape can be overwhelming, so it's essential to provide multiple ways for employees to sign up for benefits and have their issues resolved.

**Q: What is holding employers back from effective benefit delivery and communications?**

**Michelle:** Many employers view employee benefits as a focus area only during open enrollment or life events, rather than a constant. Continuous communication and education are essential, along with the right benefit administration tools. Unfortunately, many employers still lack sophisticated tools to manage a robust, responsive program.

**Mim:** Time to create the messaging and technology to support the delivery are major impediments. There is reason to be optimistic AI can help by quickly translating messages for different audiences, though it requires editing. AI can significantly speed up message creation turnaround times, which can help reduce one barrier to success.

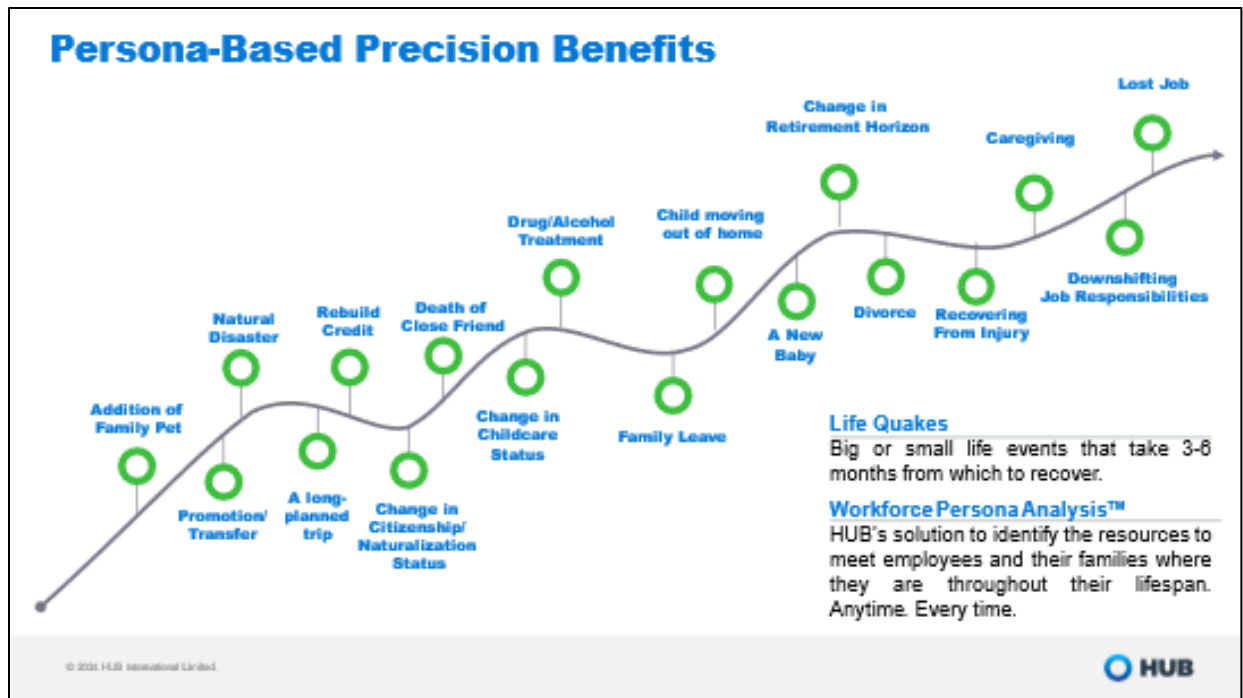
**Q: Nearly all employers say benefits are critical to recruiting and retention. Are they delivering benefits employees need and want?**

**Michelle:** Not always. Many employers lack a comprehensive benefits strategy, mistakenly believing that more benefits equal a strategy. Instead, they need the right types of benefits for each generational cohort. For example, middle-aged workers want a good medical plan and a solid 401(k), while gig workers want flexibility and options like lifestyle spending accounts.

**Mim:** Exceptional employers create a portfolio of solutions that support employees through various life events. Though it may seem daunting, benefits industry professionals can help employers curate a robust benefits portfolio, create a meaningful communication strategy for those benefits and help reveal the best supporting technology.

**Q: How can employers proceed in today's environment?**

**Michelle:** Improvement starts with a thorough consultative assessment with a benefits broker to determine an optimal program. This includes evaluating current benefits and technology and aligning benefits strategy with business strategy. Employers need to understand their employee population beyond generational lines, using tools like HUB's Workforce Persona Analysis to develop personalized benefits driven by data analytics.



**Mim:** I'd build on Michelle's advice:

1. Partner with a forward-thinking benefits consultant supported by tools and technology.
2. Understand employee demographics through data, turning it into actionable information.
3. Use surveys and focus groups to understand what truly matters to employees and be ready to act on the feedback.

Employers who take these steps will see a more engaged workforce, driving innovation and exceptional results. HUB's Employee Benefits practice can help optimize your benefits strategy to achieve these results. Learn more [here](#) or comment below to start a conversation.