



Different strokes for different folks

AUTUMN IS PRIME TIME for some of America's favorite pursuits: college football, the World Series and...annual benefits enrollments.

The "Employer Size and Industry Demographics: MarketVision—The Employer Viewpoint" report delves into enrollment preferences and practices. Here are five key things you should know.

1. High-tech and high-touch options

Most employers offer multiple enrollment methods for voluntary products. Self-enrollment on a website or mobile device is most common overall, but nearly as many want to offer options with personal support. Enrollment with an HR representative is also popular, along with completing forms on paper, on a computer or during a virtual meeting; or a live call center.

2. An easy-to-use enrollment platform

Almost half use a single self-service platform for voluntary enrollment. However, certain industries are more likely to use two platforms. Most obtain their platform through their broker or carrier, although many use platforms provided by their own organizations.

Ease of navigation and implementation are the most important factors for employers in choosing an enrollment platform, but some industries lean toward other capabilities, such as the ability to access and enroll in benefits from any device.

3. Pandemic-induced impact

More than half say the pandemic caused more employees to enroll in voluntary products, and most expect that to continue.

Most important reasons for choosing an enrollment platform

Ease of navigation and use



Construction
Finance/Insurance/
Real Estate

Ease of implementation



Business services

Ability to access and enroll from any device



Personal services
Manufacturing
Education Retail/
Wholesale

Ease of data transfer after enrollment



Health care

Source: Eastbridge's 2023 "Employer Size and Industry Demographics: MarketVision™—The Employer Viewpoint®" report

Growth is happening despite cutbacks in personal meetings. More than a third reduced in-person meetings as a result of COVID-19.

4. Ben admin systems for all benefits

Eighty percent of all employers have a benefit administration system in place, and most use it for all their employer-funded benefits.

5. Strong enrollment preferences

Employers of all industries are fairly aligned in their preferences for the enrollment process. Most have a strong preference for letting employees choose from various types of enrollments, while some employers are more likely to prefer an online enrollment as part of a benefit administration system, rather than a separate entity.

Obviously, no one can be all things to all clients. But understanding the preferences of your target industries can help you be ready to better meet their needs this enrollment season—and keep a few steps ahead of your competition.

Nick Rockwell is president, Eastbridge Consulting Group.