

34TH ANNUAL ISCEBS
Employee Benefits

Symposium

Creative Benefit Communications

Paula Legendre Stop, GBA

Director Benefits

Bell Partners Inc.

Greensboro, North Carolina

The opinions expressed in this presentation are those of the speaker.
The International Society and International Foundation disclaim responsibility
for views expressed and statements made by the program speakers.



International Society
of Certified Employee Benefit Specialists

PARTNERS IN EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE

International Foundation
OF EMPLOYEE BENEFIT PLANS



Benefits Are Expensive, Tell Your Employees



- Benefits are a significant part of employee compensation
- Communication and education on the benefit package is vital for employees to understand the value and use of their benefits

Keys to Benefit Communications



- Communicate year round
- Poll the audience
- Develop communication plan
- Brand your communications
- Be creative
- Keep it clear and easy to understand
- Capture their attention
- Target your message

Communicate Year Round



- Try to spread out your communications
- Don't have too many new topics introduced in one communication
- Give plenty of notice for major changes
 - New Consumer Driven Health Plan
 - Tobacco Free workplace
- A proven track record of employee communications should be part of a union avoidance strategy

Poll the Audience



- **Survey your workforce**
 - Find out their perceptions and needs
 - What do they know about the topic?
 - What are they confused about?
- **Focus groups**
 - Sample from different areas of workforce
 - Find out what communications are working

Develop a Communication Plan



- Plan and design your communication strategy
 - Develop a communication cascade
 - Don't minimize bad news
- Put your timeline in writing
 - Plan to communicate big changes early and often
- Find reviewers for your communications who are outside of HR
 - What seems evident to those who know the topic is not clear to the average employee

Rule of 7



- Don't introduce more than 7 new ideas/concepts in any communication



Brand Your Communications



- Create a “look” for the same type of communications for consistency
 - Open Enrollment
 - Health Care Reform
 - Wellness Programs
- Introduce the theme
- Use a logo if possible



Use Different Types of Media

- Letters
- E-mail
- Postcards
- Videos
- Intranet Posts
- In person communications
- Bulletin Board notices



**TIME IS
RUNNING OUT...**

**Remember to get your
wellness screening before
January 31st!**

BELL PARTNER
REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT & MANAGEMENT
300 N. Greene Street, Suite 1000
Greensboro, NC 27401

The advertisement features three individuals sitting on chairs, each holding a large clock in front of their face. The text is in red and black, with the company name and address in the top right corner.

Try to Answer Possible Questions



- **Try to address employee questions in the communication**

Use Humor if Possible



Humor Can Help Make an Impression



Be Creative



Ask not for whom the bell chimes. . . it chimes for Open Enrollment—
Barbie A. Dolle

Enter the fictional town of Bellsboro, and join the staff at Bell Cape Rotor, where all the models are sparkled, all the units are leased, and the staff is above average. Follow Barbie, our heroine, as she discovers the answers to these and many other burning questions:

- Will Barbie remember that Open Enrollment for the Health Care plan ends on 11/27?
- Will Buggy quit smoking before Sassy's finals?
- Will Sasha Do the Right Thing Every Time?
- Has anybody in Bellsboro ever read the Personal Appearance Guidelines, available on the intranet?

Capture the Short Attention Span



- How long is the average attention span?
 - The average is 15 to 20 minutes
- The amount of time a person can focus directly on an object is about 8 seconds.
 - This time period is decreasing
- There is a lot of competition for attention
 - The employee needs to understand why this communication is important

Reference.com- The Associated Press: 4.28.2013

Create Your Own Sitcom



Get Attention!



- With the many media outlets competing for attention learn how to design communications to break through those barriers
- Explain what is in it for them and why they should care!
- Use **colored text** or different **color paper** for impact
- Appeal to different learning styles

Use the Black Box



- Put the most important information in a box
- Like the government does for the “Black Box” drug warning to get attention

Use Clip Art and Graphics



Bell Partners Inc. Benefit Plan

IMPORTANT NOTES

This year is a passive open enrollment for the medical and dental plans which means you do not have to take any action unless you need to make changes **OR** if you want to enroll or **re-enroll** in flexible spending for medical expenses or dependent care.

A new buy up dental plan is being offered in addition to the current base plan. If you currently have dental coverage and you do not elect the new buy up dental plan during open enrollment then your coverage will default to the base dental option that will exclude orthodontia.

Paper Enrollment

To make changes to your benefits you **MUST** submit the enclosed open enrollment form and send to benefits@bellpartnersinc.com. Enrollments cannot be made by phone.

Open Enrollment will start on November 3rd and end on November 14th.



It's Open Enrollment time again! This year we have exciting improvements for 2015 which will enhance our benefit program. At Bell Partners we know how important it is to have superior, affordable health and group benefits and a retirement program that helps you save for your future. That's why we offer competitive benefits that can provide protection, peace of mind, and savings.

What is Open Enrollment?

Open Enrollment is that time during the year when you can sign up or make changes to your benefits.

- Outside of Open Enrollment, you can only make changes to your benefits if you experience a qualified life event (see the enclosed benefit summary for a list of covered life events).

Repeat



Repeat, Repeat, Repeat, Repeat, Repeat, Repeat, Repeat,
Repeat, Repeat, Repeat, Repeat, Repeat, Repeat, Repeat,
Repeat, Repeat, Repeat, Repeat, Repeat, Repeat, Repeat,
Repeat, Repeat, Repeat, Repeat, Repeat, Repeat, Repeat,
Repeat, Repeat, Repeat, Repeat, Repeat, Repeat, Repeat,
Repeat, Repeat, Repeat, Repeat, Repeat, Repeat, Repeat,
Repeat, Repeat, Repeat, Repeat, Repeat, Repeat, Repeat,
Repeat, Repeat, Repeat, Repeat, Repeat, Repeat, Repeat,
Repeat, Repeat, Repeat, Repeat, Repeat, Repeat, Repeat,
Repeat, Repeat, Repeat, Repeat, Repeat, Repeat, Repeat,
Repeat, Repeat, Repeat, Repeat, Repeat, Repeat, Repeat,
Repeat, Repeat, Repeat, Repeat, Repeat, Repeat, Repeat,
Repeat, Repeat, Repeat, Repeat, Repeat, Repeat, Repeat,
Repeat, Repeat, Repeat, Repeat, Repeat, Repeat, Repeat,

Coordinate Communications



- Review communications from vendors for consistency
- Make sure there is not contradictory information from the employer and vendors

Is Action Required?



- Communication if action is required
 - Clearly tell what needs to be done
 - Give deadlines
- Provide context
 - Why is action required?
- Use terms like
 - *****Action required*****
 - **FINAL NOTICE**
- Advise where they can get more information

Customize



- Customize your communication if possible
 - Send different versions of a communication if needed instead of trying to cover all options
- Don't send communication to employees not impacted
 - This can create unnecessary confusion and questions

Keep it Clear



- Don't use blocks of text
- Do use boxes, clip art and bullets
- Don't communicate unnecessary information
- Do use **bold**, *italics* and underline for emphasis
- Don't use jargon, acronyms or technical language
- If you have too much information for one communication, break it into pieces
- Have communications translated into other languages if needed

Questions?

