

It's Time to Give Thanks: Why HR Leaders Have a Lot to Be Grateful for This Holiday Season

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As we gather around the table this Thanksgiving, it's hard to ignore the turbulence in healthcare with rising costs, steep renewals, employee frustrations, and the uncertainty around government policies. These realities weigh heavily on employers and employees alike. Yet, even in the midst of these challenges, there are reasons to be thankful. From innovative benefit solutions to expanded access and wellness programs, the landscape still offers opportunities to support and care for our workforce. Let's take a moment to focus on the silver linings that remind us why employee benefits matter. Here are five reasons HR leaders can be thankful in our evolving healthcare environment.

1. Comprehensive Health Coverage as a Strategic Advantage

Organizations with comprehensive healthcare benefits that speak to their employees' specific needs have a strategic advantage over their competitors. These benefits form a cornerstone of employee experience. Robust health coverage attracts and retains top talent. When 80% of employees consider health benefits a critical factor in job decisions, it matters. Companies that offer strong benefits and compensation packages see an average 27% lower turnover rate than other employers. This is because access to programs that promote preventive care and mental health support boost morale and productivity. They also reduce absenteeism and offer staff members the tools they need to thrive personally and professionally. HR leaders who have invested time in creating a benefits strategy that addresses their employee concerns can be thankful they have made decisions that enhanced their employer brand in the labor market.

2. Mental Health and Holistic Wellness Support

The increased inclusion of mental health and holistic wellness support for employees in the years since the COVID-19 pandemic should not be understated. While there have been growing pains with regards to the implementation of these resources, employee need for them is apparent in the statistics about workplace stress and burnout in the American workforce. Nearly 8 out of 10 employees experienced burnout at some point in 2024 according to one Forbes report and employee burnout continues to be a dilemma for employers across many industries.

According to [Mental Health America](#), 90% of employees in unhealthy workplaces report that work stress impacts their sleep and relationships compared to 44% of employees in healthy work environments. The same report suggested that employees with higher rates of psychological safety feel more confident advocating for themselves and others. This difference illustrates how mental health support promotes worker resilience which leads to improved focus and productivity. While no single solution exists, fostering a culture of care improves employee satisfaction and loyalty. HR teams and employees alike can be thankful that mental health is no longer a taboo topic but a core component of organizational health and benefits strategy.

3. Healthcare as a Driver of Organizational Resilience

But investing in healthcare isn't just about employee satisfaction, it's also about business continuity. Healthy employees mean fewer absences, higher productivity, and reduced turnover. Organizations that prioritize well-being often outperform peers in engagement and retention metrics. HR professionals can be thankful that healthcare benefits are now recognized as a strategic lever for an organization's resilience in a volatile labor market. By supporting employees' physical and mental health, companies build a foundation for long-term success, even in times of uncertainty.

4. Innovation and Flexibility in Benefit Design

HR leaders can also be thankful for innovation and flexibility in healthcare benefits design because technology empowers smarter, more personalized solutions. Digital platforms streamline enrollment, automate compliance, and enhance employee engagement, reducing administrative burdens while data analytics enable cost control and informed decision-making. Flexible benefits powered by technology allow customization for diverse employee needs, improving satisfaction and retention. These advancements transform benefits from a static offering into a dynamic, strategic tool that supports well-being and organizational success. Embracing tech-driven flexibility ensures HR remains agile in an evolving healthcare landscape.

5. Gratitude for Healthcare Professionals

Finally, let's not forget the people behind the care. Healthcare professionals such as doctors, nurses, therapists, all continue to provide care with extraordinary dedication, often working through holidays to keep their patients and communities safe and healthy. A culture of gratitude for their efforts reminds us that well-being is a shared responsibility between employer and employee, doctor and patient, each person and their community. HR leaders can play a role in expressing appreciation through recognition programs, wellness days, or simple thank-you messages to staff. Staff members can in turn demonstrate their thankfulness to colleagues and beyond, to family members and friends as we gather to celebrate the Thanksgiving holiday.

This holiday season, HR professionals have much to be grateful for: comprehensive benefits, mental health support, innovative solutions, organizational resilience, and the unwavering commitment of healthcare providers. Acknowledging these advancements and sharing appreciation with employees can set the tone for a healthier, more engaged workforce in the year ahead.

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