Open Doors

Constant year-round communication about benefits is a must

By Thomas R. Giddens

It’s February and the open enrollment season has wrapped up—but that doesn’t mean you should stop communicating with your clients. Even though open enrollment season is when agents and brokers communicate most with their customers—and when employers traditionally talk to their employees about benefits—it’s important to maintain that communication all year round.

We’re well into the first quarter of 2014. If you haven’t checked in with your clients lately, now is the time to explain the importance of ongoing conversations with employees. Here are three talking points that can set both you and your clients up for success:

Company contributions. Make sure your customers understand the benefits of communicating how much they are investing in their employees’ insurance policies. This enables companies to paint a clear picture of total compensation packages. Since health care costs continue to rise, employers’ total contribution can have a substantial impact on workers’ wallets.

Voluntary benefits offerings. Even at companies that offer major medical insurance, voluntary insurance policies can provide an extra financial safety net in the event of serious illness or injury. Make sure you’re offering customers a variety of options, including critical illness, disability, life and accident coverage. According to the 2013 Aflac WorkForces Report, 25% of companies say they have experienced lower workers comp claims since they began offering voluntary products. Since voluntary insurance can be offered at no added cost to an employer’s bottom line, it’s a win-win.

Total rewards strategy. If your customers offer perks such as wellness programs, flex time or discount gym memberships, remind them to promote those benefits throughout the year. By now, many people have probably started to stray from New Year’s resolutions to exercise regularly, so your client’s friendly reminder about a discounted gym membership might be just the push employees need to get back on track. Even if some don’t take advantage of these programs, increasing awareness will improve employees’ opinions of their company benefits.

Thomas R. Giddens (aflacforbusiness.com) is executive vice president and director of sales at Aflac.

VISIBILITY CHECK

According to the 2013 Aflac WorkForces Report, 65% of workers say their employer only communicates about benefits during open enrollment season or when they’re a new hire. In today’s age of constant information and over-communication, going silent is a mistake. 79% of workers at least somewhat agree that a well-communicated benefits package would make them less likely to leave their job. Help your clients by reminding employers to maintain visibility for benefits all year long.—T.G.