# How Strategic HR Leaders Use Benefits Data

In today's complex benefits environment, HR leaders are under growing pressure to connect benefits decisions to measurable business outcomes. This requires beyond basic reporting and using data to generate insights that inform workforce strategy and investment decisions.

As Gen Z enters the workforce, organizations are seeing shifts in priorities across generations. What once worked as a one-size-fits-all benefits package may not resonate as strongly today, as interest grows in areas like flexible work, retirement readiness, and long-term care. When benefits are thoughtfully aligned with employees' diverse needs, they can better support focus, wellbeing, and overall productivity.

With increased expectations placed on HR to demonstrate impact, benefits data must be translated into clear insights that show a meaningful return on investment.

**Using Benefits Data to Measure Program Performance**

Most employers assume that offering a wide range of benefits will automatically improve their employee satisfaction rates and their ability to attract and retain talent. However, HR leaders are quickly moving away from this mindset. Instead of focusing solely on what to offer, they are prioritizing what employees actually use and value, and putting investment into those.

According to a recent Glassdoor survey, 51% of professionals expressed dissatisfaction with their benefits package in 2024. Without competitive and comprehensive benefits offerings, in 2026 it is hard to attract and retain loyal employees.

In order to spot these underperforming and under used benefits, benchmarking and data analysis is critical. Using dashboards helps determine overall costs and utilization, ROI, and identifying wasted spend, all to cut costs and improve satisfaction.

**Turning Benefits Data into Insights on Engagement, Satisfaction, and Turnover**

Employee participation is one of the clearest indicators of a successful benefits program. Based on these rates, adjustment may be needed to offerings or to overall employee awareness of offerings. In a 2025 Workplace Wellness Survey, only three in 10 said they understand their employer's health benefits "extremely well", same as in 2024.

Another problem HR leaders tend to have is determining which benefits truly influence satisfaction and loyalty. Employees want to feel seen and feel valued through their benefits offerings. Some key benefits that work are comprehensive health and wellness coverage, flexible work, career development, personalized perks like childcare assistance or gym memberships, and being transparent about communication with these benefits. Nothing is more frustrating for an employee than knowing their benefits exist but being unable to access them with ease.

Understanding employee needs is key, and this can be achieved through surveys and feedback. By offering a mix of benefits, employees are more likely to feel supported, and no major need is overlooked. Additionally, linking company value to benefits will reinforce your brand and mission, positively affecting employee perception.

**Demonstrating Value to Leadership Through ROI**

Claims analysis and utilization will help identify areas of wasted or minimal impact spend in benefits programs. When leadership can clearly see these insights, HR leaders are better positioned to focus on strategic priorities.

Leadership also expects to see a connection between benefits and broader workforce outcomes. Being able to see the direct correlation between benefits investment and improvement in retention or and healthcare spend is valuable. Strong HR leaders translate this benefits data into clear ROI narratives that resonate with leadership. Strategic benefits management isn’t just about cutting costs, but about relocating HR spending to what works.

**From Reactive Administration to Proactive Strategy**

Benefits should not be addressed only when issues arise. They require ongoing attention and proactive strategy in order to keep employees engaged and aligned with business needs.

With effective use of data, HR can anticipate employee needs, rather than reacting after issues surface. HR leaders are moving away from fragmented systems and toward integrated platforms with critical dashboards, key metrics, analytics and AI, which is all helping this shift.

With AptiaOne, employers are saying goodbye to disconnected platforms and towards a unified platform that has all of these features in one place, making it easier to drive business decisions.

**Why Strategic Benefits Management Matters**

As benefits grow more complex, strategic benefits management signals HR’s maturity to executives. When benefits data is accessible, easy to interpret, and clearly connected to outcomes, HR leaders gain credibility, influence, and budget confidence.

Benefits may have previously taken a back seat in workforce planning and retention, but they are becoming increasingly central to overall strategy and long-term organizational resilience.

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