



Your Guide to Selecting the Right Employee Benefit Advisor

As a business owner or manager, you have a lot of responsibilities and a lot of “hats” to wear. Successful businesses surround themselves with quality advisors – from accountants and attorneys to risk managers and employee benefit advisors.



Employee Benefit programs play an increasing role in the overall compensation strategy of most firms, and, with the cost is rising more rapidly than most other expenses, it is vital that you “get it right”.

FIRST, SELECT THE RIGHT BROKER/ADVISOR THEN WORK WITH THEM TO DESIGN THE RIGHT STRATEGY AND THE PROPER PLANS FOR YOU.

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER:

The employee benefit plan market is very complex. Health Insurance plans alone can seem like an alphabet soup – CDHP, HSA, HRA, Section 125, PPO, POS, HIPPA, COBRA, and more! Not to mention your other benefit programs such as Income Replacement, Retirement/401(k), Executive Compensation, and more.

Look for professional advisors that have demonstrated advanced knowledge and training by achieving levels of **certification**, such as **CEBS** (University of Pennsylvania’s Wharton **Certified Employee Benefit Specialist** program). Some “designations really matter”, most do not.

Choosing someone who is a friend or relative WITHOUT the right skills and training can be a costly mistake.

BROAD SOLUTIONS:

To your company and your employees, your employee benefit programs are a “package”. Your approach to designing and buying these programs should be packaged too. Look for an advisor that has the experience to deliver *solutions* for

- Group Health Insurance
- Income Replacement
- Retirement Plans/401 (k)
- Executive Compensation
- Rewards and Business Continuation Strategy



BROAD SERVICE OFFERING:

If your advisor does not help you **communicate** your TOTAL BENEFIT PLAN to your employees regularly, find a new advisor. The job of designing and implementing a comprehensive plan is not complete unless the employees understand

- What is Included and Why
- How the Plan Works
- What Questions To Ask, and Where to Get Answers
- The Financial Investment Your Company Makes in Your Plans and in Your Employees

You make a tremendous financial and resource commitment to your employee benefit plans. Make certain you get a return on investment (ROI).

ONE SIZE DOES NOT FIT ALL:

You offer a benefit plan to attract new employees and to retain your current talent. A competent advisor can help you decide how to prioritize and allocate your resources to best meet your goals.

A program that meets the needs of a second generation professional engineering firm probably won't work well for the pre-IPO software firm.

Look for an advisor that will

- *Listen* to YOUR goals and needs, and tailor a plan to suit you
- Understand your business, and the role benefits play in the growth of your firm
- Use the right technology tools to help you identify the best ROI on your benefit spend. Tools such as
 - Web Surveys
 - Total Compensation Statements
 - On-Line Portals and Printed Benefit Plan Descriptions



ONGOING SUPPORT

Some advisors make an annual appearance to deliver the plan renewal, and a package of “options” from which to choose.

Instead, hire an advisor that will work with you and your employees throughout the year to provide service, support and advise proactively throughout the year.



PRICE IS IMPORTANT, BUT NOT IN SELECTING YOUR ADVISOR

In the Philadelphia metro market, there are only a handful of insurance carriers offering health programs (60% of employee benefit dollars are spent on health insurance premium) – Blue Cross, Aetna, United HealthCare, Coventry and (soon) CIGNA .

If your company has less than 100 employees, the pricing that each of these insurers will offer is THE SAME, regardless of who represents you as an advisor. So select your competent advisor, and let them help you select the right-

- Carrier
- Plan Type
- Plan Design
- Consumer Driven Plan Components
- Plan Provisions
- Mix of Benefits Offered
- Employee Contribution Strategy

and to communicate the package to your employees.



Good luck and best wishes in getting the best benefit program to help you grow your business!