

What do millennials want from a benefits package?



Remember when “job hopper” was a bad thing?

For younger employees, the difficulty of finding work during the recession and the need to take just-for-now jobs has increased job hopping ... and decreased the stigma.

In fact, workers born in the early '80s held an average of 6.2 jobs between the ages of 18 and 26, and 57% of those jobs lasted less than a year, says a U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics report.

Employers value stability in their workforce and try to tailor benefit plans to retain employees. But today's millennial workers are less interested in (and less knowledgeable about) their workplace benefits than older colleagues, according to a new Employee Benefit Research Institute (EBRI) survey. The survey says millennials, born after 1982, are:

- Less likely than baby boomers (born 1948-1964) and members of Generation X (1965-1981) to report health insurance as the most important benefit they receive at work. They value time off and flexibility.
- Less likely to report that the benefits package is extremely important in their decision to accept a job.
- More likely to say that they do not know about their benefits.

“Employers that have depended on employee benefits as a primary tool to recruit and retain workers may need to rethink the role that employee benefits play with millennials,” said EBRI's Paul Fronstin.

Benefits: The top 6 'wants'

Millennials are drawn to employers that offer flexibility. They've grown up being able to make more personalized choices, so they're less interested in static, fixed benefit plans. They strongly favor being able to pick through a menu of benefits options.

According to a recent MetLife study, here are the top benefits that millennials list as important.

1. Training and development. Millennials don't expect a chair and paycheck. More than half (58%) says they expect employers to provide them with real learning opportunities related to their positions. And they don't want to work in a bubble—42% want feedback from supervisors and mentors every week.

2. Flexible hours that support a positive work/life balance. More than three-quarters believe flexible work

hours make them more productive, and 43% say they'd switch jobs if given greater flexibility elsewhere.

3. Competitive compensation. Money talks with any age group, but millennials don't believe in the pay-for-pulse system. The survey says a majority of millennials prefer performance-based compensation rather than a rigid salary structure based on employee longevity.

4. Comprehensive health care. Almost all (96%) would choose to take a job based on the healthcare package offered, all other factors being equal.

5. Retirement funding. Millennials worked through the Great Recession, so they see the benefit of saving. More than half want to invest in retirement savings and seek a generous matching system.

6. Socially conscious culture. Millennials, more than any group, want to do good things while doing good work. Sixty percent cite "a sense of purpose" as part of the reason they work for their current employer.