

## **Benefits as a retention tool**

People tend to remember bad news, whether it is trouble with a consumer product, inattentive customer service, a poorly handled public event, or the treatment given to employed friends and family members by an employer. Because people move toward pleasure and away from pain, employer treatment deemed unpleasant can result in a reduction in the quality of job candidates.

Considering the current economy, it would be understandable if recruiting is not a priority for companies. While this current situation will take time to begin to right itself, it would be wise to maintain ones competitive position to attract the best candidates in addition to retaining the intellectual capital and experience of current employees. Appealing benefits can help do that; employee benefit decision-makers understand this.

Workforce Recruiting Management ([www.workforce.com](http://www.workforce.com)) reports the MetLife's 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Employee Benefits Trends Study indicates 54% of employers surveyed cited the "retention of employees" as one of three top benefit objectives for 2009. (For more on the study: [www.whymetlife.com/trends2009](http://www.whymetlife.com/trends2009)).

A June 2009 Employee Benefit News article reports the MetLife study also provided that "employees now view benefits as the second most important driver of employee loyalty, behind salary/wages but ahead of advancement opportunities and company culture." Employers, the study revealed, "remain steadfast on preserving workplace benefits" with fewer than 15% expecting to scale back on their benefits programs (Bridgeford, 2009). Most of those scaling back are targeting 401(k) matches (Mullaney, 2009).

In yet more encouraging news, a survey by Buck Consultants ([www.buckconsultants.com](http://www.buckconsultants.com)), a global human resource consulting firm, revealed employers are increasing their communication to employees about employee assistance and wellness programs. One can see the economy shaping responses, with 45% of respondents increasing their communication to employees regarding issues emerging from the downturn in the economy (a portion of which could be the stresses and costs associated with the challenges of the elder caregiver and other long term care issues).

We can see eldercare challenges of employees reflected in the 2003 Society for Human Resource Management's Eldercare Survey, which indicates that 16% of respondents report their organization has faced increased turnover due to these eldercare issues. HR professionals expect the number of employees caring for an aging relative to increase in the next five to 10 years ([www.businessknowhow.com](http://www.businessknowhow.com)).

Employers that support employees that are caregivers of the elderly through subsidized care management services find the return on investment is successful in that it increases employee retention and productivity (Pasalic, 2005). A study by Johnson & Johnson and IBM showed that such programs play a key role in influencing a worker's decision to stay with the company (FamilyCare America, Inc. 2002).

Elder care benefits can take many forms, from resource and referral to on-site professional geriatric care management services. Our August e-newsletter will expand on these desirable services. After all, in most cases, it's not a matter

of “if” an employee will find value in an elder care benefit, it’s a matter of “when” they will find value in the elder care benefit.

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## References

Web sites:

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Mullaney, Bill (2009) “Employee Benefits: A Differentiator During Challenging Economic Times”, MetLife Institutional Business publication, pg 3.

Pasalic, M. (2005). The New Generation of Eldercare Benefits. *Broker World*, March 2005, v25, no3, pp. 52, 54-55.

*In a Culture of Health survey by Buck Consultants, 56% of respondents reported that “measuring outcomes is the top priority for enhancing wellness programs.” To measure and provide solutions for your employee elder care work/life challenges, contact Corporate Eldercare Solutions today. Phone: 414-763-6333; Email: [veronica@corporateeldercaresolutions.com](mailto:veronica@corporateeldercaresolutions.com); Web site: [www.corporateeldercaresolutions.com](http://www.corporateeldercaresolutions.com)*

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CES helps companies realize the costs associated with unaddressed employee eldercare difficulties via a Customized Employee Eldercare Needs Analysis (CEENA). Based on the quantitative and qualitative results of this analysis, CES then provides corporate shareholders with solutions to their specific employee eldercare concerns. The results assist in the positive enhancement of company productivity and associated employee health-related issues, as well as facilitating relief of employee eldercare-related stresses, thereby improving employee work/life circumstances.

CES pursues as clients and partners professionals in employee assistance and work/life programs, human resources, HR consulting firms, and executives involved in the concerns of corporate productivity management. CES does not provide elder care benefits, geriatric case management, financial or legal planning services (May, 2009).