

BLOG

Employee Perks: Adapting Your Approach for a Hybrid Workforce

By Risk Strategies Employee Benefits Practice

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Over the past several years, many employers have begun offering creative perks within their employee benefits program as a differentiator to help in recruitment and retention efforts. Many of these perks, however, were designed and implemented to help employees working in an office environment.

COVID-19 has accelerated the move to remote or hybrid work. It's important, then, that employers review whether their perks are offering work for this reality. The purpose behind offering perks is still the same - to provide greater convenience and reduce employee stress - but, the themes and delivery methods may need adjustment.

Risk Strategies was a recent sponsor of the PERKS convention in Boston. Here are a few key trends and perks that our team noted that may help:

- **Rewarding employees regardless of location:** For organizations that previously had everyone working in the office and living nearby, it was easier to identify and deliver spot rewards that employees would value. For example, offering rewards for local restaurants or coffee shops, or tickets to local concerts or sporting events. Supporting the hybrid or remote workforce means organizations may have to adopt location-independent solutions, such as a global reward catalog of gift cards, so that they can find a rewards they find valuable and can use.
- **Providing healthy food options to employees at home:** Prior to COVID-19, many organizations provided food and drinks in the office as an employee perk. Some offered meals, while others offered access to unique, healthy snack options. In the remote-hybrid workplace, some employers have turned to vendors that can deliver boxes of snacks and healthy tips to employees at their homes.
- **Virtual Well-Being Benefits:** To give employees access to well-being resources such as yoga, ergonomics, knitting, improving a credit score, and other helpful topics, many employers have engaged vendors that can deliver sessions virtually.
- **Telehealth benefits for employees... and their pets:** The COVID-19 pandemic drove a dramatic



increase in telehealth for physical and mental health services. Employers had to act quickly to make sure employees knew how to access these types of services. Some have even offered virtual care options for their pets. For example, one service gives employees the ability to access a vet 24/7 via video and text-chat, without needing to make an appointment.

- **Flexibility to choose:** In the past, low utilization caused some employers to shy away from offering perks. A perks marketplace offered through a mobile app or website can give employees access to hundreds of different vendors, including those offering services for fitness, nutrition, mental health, and more. Vendors can be assigned a point-value, with employees provided a set amount of points upfront. Thus, no matter where an employee is located, they'll have flexibility and choice in selecting the perks of most benefit to them.
- **Streamlining operations for "In-Office" days:** For companies adopting a hybrid approach for their workforce, it's important to make things as seamless as possible for the days employees will be in the office. Employees primarily working remotely may have legitimate concerns about accessing the tools they need to get their job done once in the office - desk space, access to a phone, as well as resources needed to abide by COVID-related protocols. To ease these concerns, employers are adopting technology that automates and streamlines the process, including:
 - Online desk booking and room scheduling to make it easy for employees to reserve desks and conference rooms ahead of their visit.
 - Visitor management systems that let employees easily abide by COVID-19 protocols, which may include support for pre-registration and a check-in process.

Of course, these are just a few of the perks and adjustments that employers are making to their employee benefits program in 2021. If you would like to learn how your organization may be able to strengthen its benefit offerings, [please contact a member of our team.](#)

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