

# 13 employee benefits that make you stand out

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In today's world, employers need to stand out to attract and retain top employees-and benefits are an excellent way to do this. But when it comes to which benefits employees want and which aren't worth the investment, it can be hard to decide.



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Here are 13 of the top benefits and perks employees want, helping you to compete in the employment market, and ensure that you get, and keep, the best talent out there.

1. **Excellent medical, dental and vision insurance** may seem obvious, but this is first and foremost in a great benefits package; it's hard to compete if you don't offer desirable essential benefits.
2. **Supplemental insurance** allows employees the option to pay for additional insurance, like life insurance or short-term disability insurance coverage; this doesn't cost you more but increases employee satisfaction.
3. **Unlimited (paid) time off for full-time employees** who are performing well is becoming more popular. Think this sounds crazy? Think again. If employees have the freedom of taking time off whenever they need or want it, as long as their job is done, they are motivated to be more productive while they're in the office. It's a "keep us happy, we keep you happy" mentality. Consider the alternative that happens all too often: an employee submitting a request to use all their allotted vacation time in the last couple months of the year, after being unproductive and not meeting their goals all year. Employers adopting unlimited paid time-off policies have experienced increased productivity from employees, making it worth a second look.
4. **Remote work options** improve employee satisfaction and reduce both management and employee frustration over absences and having to use paid time-off for unavoidable occurrences. For example, if remote work options are offered and an employee has a sick child, he or she could potentially avoid a last-minute missed workday and

important deadlines or meetings.



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5. **Schedule flexibility** allows vacation time to be saved for vacation, and employees to work hours that are best for them (within reason). For example, if employees are required to attend all meetings and work 40 hours per week, but outside of that, hours are determined by the employee, employees can accommodate personal commitments, such as morning fitness classes, taking children to school and midday appointments.
6. **Annual learning or tuition assistance** encourages employees to further their education, creating a more knowledgeable workforce. While many employers offer some sort of tuition assistance, it is often difficult to make use of because courses are required to meet business needs. Consider providing annual access for each employee to a specific dollar amount of company-provided reimbursement of costs and fees associated with courses taken to pursue continued education, such as graduate degrees, certification programmes, etc. Promoting this benefit can attract a more driven workforce, and increases the value of the benefits package to employees, whether or not each employee chooses to utilize the benefit annually.
7. **Providing snacks and drinks and somewhere to enjoy them** is a seemingly small benefit, but one that employees feel strongly about. Offering healthy snacks and drinks onsite, either free or at wholesale prices, is a perk employees want, that also benefits the employer. With access to healthy choices readily available, employees will leave for breaks and meals less frequently, resulting in less time spent away from work and greater daily productivity. Putting these items in a space for employees relax is better yet, as employees who sit at their desks all day tend to be unhealthier and more frustrated with their jobs.



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8. **Discounts on products and services** employees need or want is a small but often appreciated benefit that costs little for the employer (sometimes nothing at all). Some examples are:
  - a. Daycare and housing discounts can often be offered by employers at no cost by contacting local businesses and asking about referral programmes. Ask daycares, apartments and condos for a referral code that gives new customers discounts — if so, provide that code to employees.
  - b. Fitness centers and/or classes often offer a free first week, month or class. Contact local fitness centres or teachers and ask if they have a programme like this, or would like to collaborate with you to encourage employees to work out there.
  - c. Technology discounts may already be available to you through the companies you purchase computers, phones and other tech devices from—if so, find out if you can extend these discounts to your employees. Many companies offer employee discount programmes, allowing you to pass on savings to employees at no extra cost.
9. **Company swag** may seem silly or unnecessary, but every time you order mugs for new hire desks or zip-ups for celebrating sales wins, remember that these things mean something to your employees! It's not completely free, but is relatively inexpensive, and when the person toting it around or wearing it is bragging about their company, it's good advertising. Plus, a lot of employees keep their swag long after they leave a company, offering more free advertising opportunities for you.

10. **Paid parental leave for new parents**, not just unpaid FMLA leave, is hard to find. But the companies that offer it are 10 steps ahead of the rest. New parents who are in the office will be tired, excited and may not be doing their best work, but can you blame them? They really want to be home with their newest addition(s), but without paid leave, it's often hard to justify taking much time off.



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11. **Volunteer time exchange** helps employees give back, when they may not feel they have the time to do it otherwise. It's not only good for the nonprofit organisations that need the help, but also gives the company a good reputation in the community. Consider giving employees a set number of hours per year they can get paid to volunteer. For example, if you offer eight paid volunteer hours annually, an employee could use eight lunch hours to get paid to deliver for Meals on Wheels. You could organise a team volunteer event, or have employees set up their own volunteering.
12. **Parent rooms** can bring employees peace of mind when they need it. Whether used by nursing or pumping mothers, or parents who need to bring their children to the office for a few hours but don't want to disturb their co-workers, a private room to use if needed is appreciated by many parents in the workplace.
13. **College scholarships for children of employees** and the opportunity to apply for them annually are a benefit that may encourage employees to retain long-term employment relationships and put their best foot forward.

There are many ways to increase employee satisfaction, and benefits are a great place to start! Don't be daunted and write them off with the assumption that a good benefits package will be too expensive—as this list shows, there are lots of affordable options, and it's up to you how to proceed. Be creative and build a benefits package that appeals to both your employees and your budget.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

As President and CEO of HPS, Terry's focus is providing consistent, relatable leadership that engages, inspires and encourages growth within all levels of the organization. His People-Centric approach consistently yields positive bottom-line results by influencing hard-to-control costs such as turnover and productivity. Throughout his 30+ year career, Terry has consistently led teams that exceeded financial objectives in both growth and cost reduction. While Terry has spent the last five years in the healthcare and patient billing industries, his senior leadership has made a positive mark in logistics, E-commerce and online retail including guiding retail giant Kohl's Department Stores Inc.'s online merchandising launch as VP and GM of E-commerce. Terry's People-Centric approach and success roadmap doesn't stop at the organization's doorstep. He attributes much of his consistent success to creating positive experiences for clients and customers. Terry's commitment to thriving work environments and amazing customer relationships has made him a highly sought-after motivational and keynote speaker for groups and events ranging from 5-5000.

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