

FLEX PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Submitted by **KRIEGER + ASSOCIATES FOR CASINO NOVA SCOTIA**

CATEGORY: OVERALL INTEGRATED COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

Need/Opportunity

The success of a 'Flex Benefit' plan relies on the quality of the supporting communications. Education is key to enabling employees to make appropriate choices. Flex enrollments present a number of challenges: employees can select their benefits from a menu of choices and costs and complexity depend on the option.

In 2001, Park Place Entertainment, the world's largest gaming company with 57,000 employees worldwide, decided to provide its 1,000 Canadian employees at Casino Nova Scotia and Sheraton Hotel with a new 'Flex Benefit' plan. Each location had a different benefit plan - *now* was the time to level the playing field and support the message that Casino Nova Scotia is a leading edge employer.

We needed a campaign that created awareness and educated a young, predominantly single employee population that worked 24-hour shifts in a fast paced, service industry. We also needed an enrollment process to reduce errors and coverage delays in a working environment with little employee access to technology.

STRATEGY

THEME

- ◆ A colourful, focused theme titled "Full House Flex Plan" incorporated both hotel and casino industries. (In the casino industry, a Full House, three of kind plus two of a kind, is a winning hand, in the hotel industry means fully booked.)
- ♥ A 'winning combination' of benefits, presented on an artist's paint palette, supported by a sleeve bearing the hotel insignia.
- ◆ Each colour on the palette is a playing card representing an area of benefits - further endorsed by showing the three 'flex' benefits, dental, health and optional life insurance, as diamonds, and the two core plans, disability and basic life insurance, as hearts.

PROMOTION

- ◆ Piqued employee awareness with a series of 12"x18" full colour "Full House" theme posters, each posted for one week.
- ♥ Starting as graphic only teasers creating a buzz, transforming into valuable notices providing education session details.
- ◆ Three weeks into the campaign, employees received a full colour postcard with their payroll stub, announcing coverage highlights with answers to common questions.

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EDUCATION

- ◆ Two weeks before enrollment, employees attended information sessions where they viewed a Full House Flex Plan presentation, covering plan changes, next steps, targeted education, and ending with a question period.
- ♥ At the session, employees received enrollment kits containing a:
 - CNS welcome letter,
 - Comprehensive Flex Enrollment Booklet that also includes answers to common questions.
 - ‘Benefits at a Glance’ brochure highlighting the plan;
 - Claim form; and
 - Savings and Investment Plan election form with a self-addressed return envelope.

ENROLLMENT

- ◆ We established a foundation of awareness through the promotion and education phases of this strategy.
- ♥ The enrollment booklet educated and assisted employees in making informed decisions.
- ◆ Employees had 24-hour access to enrollment computer kiosks, where they accessed the CNS Flex Calculator, including an electronic version of the Enrollment Booklet.
- ♥ The CNS Flex Calculator, using a bright clear interface consistent with the theme, simplified the complexity of enrollment by collecting the necessary information and allowing the employee to determine quickly the cost of different combinations.

ONGOING BENEFITS REFERENCE

- ◆ The ‘Benefits at a Glance’ (BAAG) a two-fold, three panel brochure highlighting the benefits, provides ongoing reference.

WHAT MAKES THIS STRATEGY UNIQUE?

- ♥ Innovative and creative use of imagery and symbolism to communicate a *new* and *complex* program.
- ◆ Targeted communication and enrollment methods were successful at meeting the needs of the demographics and logistics unique to CNS.
- ♥ Combined use of electronic and manual enrollment procedures appropriate for a population with little exposure to technology.

The client achieved its goals, on time and on budget, stating . . . **“the roll-out was very smooth and strategic. It kept the employees waiting in anticipation of what was coming next. We never lost the crowd; there was never any confusion. I am very happy with the job we did changing a plan that had not been changed in 17 years. Kudos to K+ A.”** JP Girard, Manager of Compensation and Benefits, Casino Nova Scotia