

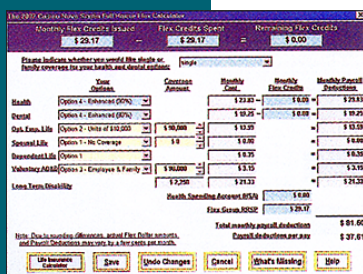
WINNER

SOFTWARE

# CASINO NOVA SCOTIA AND HOTEL



WHEN ASKED WHAT THE MOST INNOVATIVE ASPECT OF Casino Nova Scotia's flex plan enrolment program was, both the consultant who helped design the strategy and the company's benefits manager say "user-friendliness."



MacLeod Nichols, systems practice leader at Krieger & Associates in Toronto, and J.P. Girard, manager of compensation and benefits for the casino and its three properties in Halifax and Sydney, say the enrolment program conducted on flex calculator software is accessible and easy to understand. "You can't skip a step. So there was no room

for missing anything," adds Girard.

The enrolment program was one part of a comprehensive communications strategy launched last fall. The new benefits program took effect in January. "The plan we had was outdated and it didn't offer any variety or flexibility. We wanted employees to feel a sense of ownership of the plan," says Girard of the move from a plan that offered blanket coverage to a flexible benefits program.

Girard adds that the company opted for enrolment software because producing printed material for all employees simply wasn't feasible. The challenge was ensuring that all staff had computer access to sign up.

Only 15% of employees have computer access at work so the company set up kiosks at each site. Girard loaded the software program onto computers and made them available to all employees.

Over an eight-day period, human resources representatives and a representative from the employer's insurance provider guided employees

through the enrolment process.

The enrolment program, *The Casino Nova Scotia Full House Flex Calculator*, gives employees a brief overview and instructions. It then prompts employees through the enrolment progress, step-by-step, starting with their personal information and moving to the selection of options as well as dependents and beneficiaries. If any of the fields are not filled in, a 'What's Missing' box appears, prompting the member to complete the previous field.

Each screen has a link to online help and allows members to change information. The screens are created with a lot of white space and they are not text-heavy. The enrolment process also calculates flex benefits plan costs on the 'Options' screen, which is divided into several sections: coverage amount, monthly costs, monthly flex credits and monthly payroll deductions.

There's also a life insurance calculator screen that takes employees through the process of determining appropriate life insurance coverage. In addition, a table of contents allows employees to access information such as frequently asked questions and the benefits guide.

The graphics and colours throughout the program were consistent with the rest of the communications program, says Nichols. The main graphic is a hand holding a paint pallet with brushes. But instead of dabs of paint, there are different coloured playing cards. Girard says the sleeve of the coat is modelled on the organization's own staff uniforms to help employees identify with the program.

He adds that, overall, the online enrolment program went smoothly and 90% of all eligible employees signed up for the new flex plan.

— Deanna Rosolen

## FINE POINTS

- IMPETUS:** To electronically enrol employees into a new flexible benefits plan.
- CHALLENGE:** Only 15% of employees have computer access at work.
- OUTCOME:** 90% enrolment rate.
- JUDGE SAYS:** "Very easy to use flex calculator."