

binder/booklet **WINNER**

Lucent Technologies Canada Corp.

As a dominant player in the high tech field, Toronto-based Lucent Technologies Canada Corp. is accustomed to constant change and a fast-paced environment.

The company put these skills to good use when it decided to go back to the drawing board and redesign its flexible benefits plan in order to boost participation during a re-enrolment program. The award-winning communications strategy was written, produced and rolled out to employees in less than eight weeks.

make as many choices for themselves as possible. We wanted the benefits plan to reflect our corporate values.”

The company designed a plan that increases the number of options open to employees and encourages them to pick which ones suit their needs. It includes a new taxable spending account for unused flex credits for those employees who don't want to contribute to the registered retirement savings plan or use the health spending account option.

Eberlin says a pension and benefits committee came up

ly to attract and keep the best people and they wanted to develop their own identity around the plan.”

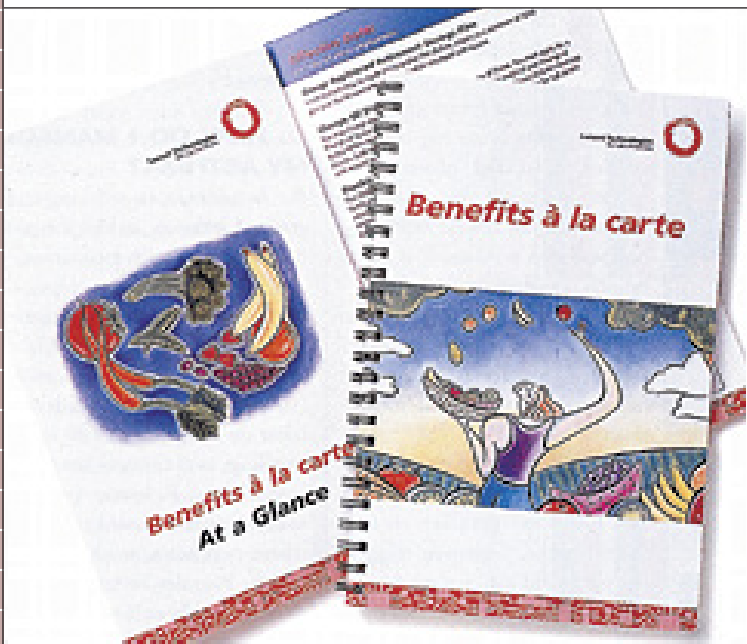
The simple yet highly effective communications package comprises a small ringed binder, *Benefits à la carte*, and an accompanying booklet, *Benefits at a glance*, which is essentially a snapshot of the benefits plan. The pocket-book size of both pieces makes them portable and a box with tabs helps employees keep track of all human resources materials.

Playing on the concept of a menu, the bilingual materials use lively food illustrations and clear and simple writing free of complicated terminology to present options available to employees. In addition, many common questions such as ‘Am I covered if I am temporarily away from work?’ are thoroughly answered in the materials.

Overall, the clean design of the material and use of red through the pieces reflects Lucent's circle icon and the professional image of the company. As Eberlin points out: “It's a waste of money to have a program or materials that employees yawn at.”

This initiative certainly wasn't a sleeper. Lucent says it received a lot of positive feedback from employees, and the percentage of workers taking advantage of the flex plan as opposed to relying on the default option skyrocketed to 85% from 23%—a true measure of success.

— Kathryn Dorrell



“The flex plan we had previously was not as well used as we would have liked,” explains Warren Eberlin, director of human resources at Lucent. “We had recently divested from AT&T and now had the opportunity to know our employees better and give them more choice. Our employees are all professionals—knowledge workers. It's a competitive field and we try to let our people

with the *Benefits à la carte* theme at a brainstorming session.

“We thought of the plan as a high-class restaurant with employees picking items off a menu. The visual effects followed.”

David Krieger, president of Krieger & Associates, the Toronto-based consulting firm that wrote and designed the communications materials points out that Lucent is “working diligent-

Fine Points

Impetus: To revamp the existing flex benefits plan, offer more choice to employees and decrease the number of users selecting the default plan.

Challenge: Tight time lines. Material was written, designed, produced and delivered to employees in less than eight weeks.

Outcome: Launched on time. The rate of employees who chose a benefit option rather than the default coverage rose from 23% to 85%. Lucent also received a lot of positive feedback on the plan.

Cost: \$70,000.

Judge Says: “This entry anticipated questions plan members would have and it answered them right off the bat. Overall, WOW!”