

A New TSE Employee Benefit Orientation System

The TSE **employee orientation system** is intended to create a professional first impression, to assist employees in understanding their benefit choices by getting them involved, and to make them feel welcome on their first day.

The Need / The Solution

The TSE employs about 530 people, with approximately 125 new hires annually. The TSE's long-term vision is to use electronic HR communications where possible and technology to streamline their processes. Today, the TSE is adopting new systems, but practical application for HR communications is estimated to be about two years away. The TSE has a Core plus Options benefits plan called The TSE Choice Plan. The plan contains Core benefits coverage, a choice of five different health and dental 'Modules', Optional benefits and Choice Plan Credits.

There was no formal employee orientation process in place. On employees first day, each Department/Section managed the orientation process on their own. There were no established content guidelines to follow, orientation take away materials were not in one central place and the benefits information given to new employees was not as consistent or effective as it could be.

Some pieces (sample claims forms, EAP brochures, Pension Plan and RRSP enrollment forms, United Way application, benefit cards, for example) were given to employees in a plain manila envelope. General information about the company, gifts, organizational charts were also not presented to employees in an organized way. The TSE's benefits objectives (the business intent of the benefit plan) also state that TSE benefits must be communicated **simply** to promote employee understanding and in a way which **encourages personal responsibility**. Until they adopt new systems, the TSE wanted a low-tech solution to significantly improve the orientation process. The TSE worked with Krieger & Associates to produce the following **new employee orientation system**.

The attached diagram more clearly illustrates the role each piece plays in the orientation process.

Stated Goals / Objectives

The TSE wanted a system that created a professional first impression, assisted employees in understanding their benefit choices, encouraged employee involvement and made them feel welcome. In addition, the system was designed to:

- * Provide established guidelines for employee orientation;
- * Make the orientation process more effective;
- * Provide consistent information to all new employees;
- * Encourage employee involvement and responsibility;
- * Provide a professional look which fit in with the TSE Benefit Plan materials;
- * Provide a central place to put benefit information material, with instructions on what to do with each piece;
- * Communicate the TSE Benefits in a way which is easy to understand;
- * Encourage participation in the 50% coverage TSE Benefits Optimizer (Module E), where it makes sense;
- * Centralize the dissemination of orientation materials;
- * Respond flexibly to plan design change;
- * Be easy to assemble (thus minimizing inventory).

Why does this project demonstrate Excellence?

The development of this system was highly collaborative with involvement from the benefits consultant, systems consultant, communications and the TSE HR Team – a true team effort! The TSE employee orientation system offers a unique ‘low-tech’ solution to the orientation process. The system successfully created ‘descriptive names’ for the Choice Plan health and dental modules, which accurately represent each module’s underlying technical ‘intent’. In addition, the new names assist employees in taking responsibilities for their health and lifestyle needs, while supporting TSE stated goals and objectives.

Following is a more detailed description of the pieces which make up the TSE employee orientation system.

Included in this package is a flow-chart diagram which illustrates the process.

Day One in a Box (photograph enclosed) was developed in-house by the TSE HR department and is produced for all new employees. It provides (at the employee’s new work station on the first day of work) welcoming gifts, general information about the TSE and a checklist employees are asked to complete of what they need to do by Day One, Week One and Month One of their employment. *Day One in a Box* was developed to encourage employees to get involved and get better acquainted with the organization, the environment and the people at the TSE. *Day One in a Box* contains: the TSE Employee Handbook, history of the TSE, maps of the TSE offices, current organizational charts, benefits and pensions booklet, a TSE t-shirt, coffee mug, mouse pad and TSE People video (complete with popcorn). By the end of the second day of work, HR contacts the new employee to set up a meeting for benefits induction.

Benefits induction takes place during a face-to-face meeting with an HR Representative. HR reviews the TSE Benefits Plan in detail using the **Day One Flip Chart**. The Flip Chart was printed in-house by Krieger & Associates in small quantity (less than 10). The flip chart presentation ends with the question: How Do I Get Started? containing the key decisions employees must make as they enroll. HR describes the steps verbally and then provides employees with a **How Do I Get Started?** handout, produced in-house by the TSE.

Employees are then given the **Day One Folder** which contains both reference material and some materials which require action. The folder is highly customized to the TSE materials it houses and each panel contains instructional labels. The labels are produced and assembled with the folder in-house as needed and can be changed at any time.

Employees then take **The Choice Quiz**, a software program which assists them in choosing the most appropriate health and dental module. The Choice Quiz is based on the underlying “benefits logic” of each module. Modules were set up for those with varying needs of: dental coverage, COB eligibility, desire for Choice Credits or Optional benefits and personal risk tolerance. The Choice Quiz resides on the enrollment tool (The Choice Planner) in the HR department.

Once the Choice Quiz makes a recommendation, HR provides employees with the appropriate **Choice Quiz Profiler** pamphlet, containing additional information on the module.

At the end of the benefits induction employees make an appointment with HR to use the Choice Planner to enroll in the Choice Plan Benefits.

Measuring / Evaluating Project Success

Our **budget** for the employee orientation system was \$30,000. This includes writing, design layout, programming and delivery, but not printing or taxes. The TSE Benefits design was previously established.

The TSE will begin to use the system in early March. Although employee response is yet to be determined, The TSE orientation system has already met its objectives in a number of ways:

- * It **centralizes the look and location** of orientation materials using the same look as the TSE Benefits materials. The system also **responds flexibly to change**, and is **easily assembled**.
- * HR staff report that it **provides established guidelines**, offers a much **more efficient process** and will ensure the **consistency of message**.
- * The Choice Quiz was developed so that employees could be more **involved** in their benefits decisions.
- * The Module Pamphlets were written in an anecdotal way which is **easy to understand** and **relevant to the reader**. The pamphlets also emphasize the value of Choice Credits and the 50% coverage Benefits Optimizer (Module E) when used with Coordination of Benefits.