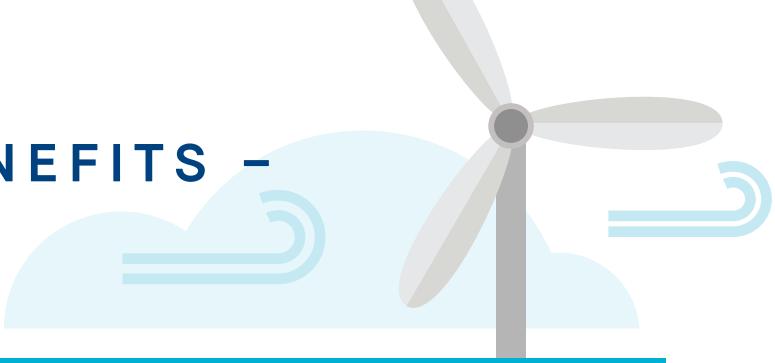


# GOOGLE-IZE MY BENEFITS – PLEASE!



Within hours to a few days, consumers can receive almost any product or service with a few quick clicks on their iPhone. We've become a society of instant demands and rapid gratification for most things, and most industries have responded. That is, with the exception of healthcare, which hasn't evolved a great deal from its original delivery model.

To remain competitive for talent, organizations will have to deliver their healthcare in a way that more closely reflects the consumer-focused, democratized approach of Google than the antiquated healthcare model of today (which is rooted in the 1960s). This is a significant leap forward for the industry, and technology will provide a significant boost.

## I WANT IT NOW

Consumers are becoming more accustomed to making their own decisions from a large selection and enjoying their purchases right away. Many would like to receive the same freedom from their healthcare in search of a greater menu of services and prices, better service, timely responses and more.

We're not there yet, but by 2025, we expect the healthcare landscape to be dramatically transformed into a more customer friendly endeavor. Really.

## DATA DRIVEN

We expect employee benefit programs will soon be truly tailored to each individual's needs, based on data. Various data points of each plan member will be linked, which will tell the plan and worker which personalized plan components best meet their needs based on lifestyle, history, costs and more. The following are examples of variables that will come into play to provide a clearer healthcare picture of each employee:

- **Wearables:** Researchers have created wearable healthcare technology, which can fasten to wrists, arms or other body parts and resemble watches, eyeglasses, clothing or even jewelry, and allows consumers to track their vitals through use of sensors and transmit it electronically to their physicians to improve diagnosis, treatment and management of various illnesses.
- **Mobile technology:** Consumers, health plans and physicians can monitor plan members' activity, nutritional intake and more.
- **Genetic testing:** Biological testing can help determine susceptibility to specific diseases and ideal treatment protocols.
- **Health risk appraisals:** Physicians can pinpoint certain risk areas in patients to help enhance preventive measures.
- **Individual claims data:** A look into a member's history can highlight how individuals use their benefits today, what isn't being utilized and what his or her cost-benefit profile looks like.
- **Individual demographic data:** This illustrates what health services might be most important for each individual based on this point of time and compares/contrasts care with others in a similar demographic cluster.

## DEVELOP A PREDICTIVE PLAN

Once equipped with data from multiple variables, the information can be pooled for each plan member to develop a truly individualized benefits program that takes into consideration how they live their life. This can include risks factors, benefits they most value in the current plan, needs based on where they are in life, cost aversion and more.

We believe that by 2025, employees will no longer guess what benefits they'll need for the coming year. They'll be able to read a predictive roadmap that lays out an optimal benefits program just for them – based on data.

We don't see this driven by government or most health plans. Rather, consumers (employees) will gravitate to those organizations that offer a modern, responsive selection of benefits. Who will drive this? Millennials and progressive companies will get the ball rolling, but due to the speed of information, within no time other workers, competitive companies and some future-looking plans will follow.

Ready or not, this is where we're heading in society. More sellers are using technology to predict shopping patterns and preferences. By 2025, employees at companies that lag behind will ask themselves: Why should I work at this company that tells me what health benefits I want when there are some organizations out there that actually ask me? Or, at least show me what benefits are best for me, based on my profile?

Health plans have the potential to really make the benefit selection process far more prescriptive than it is today. The following list can help employers get a jump start today instead of waiting for 2025.

1. **Know your data:** Employers should understand the importance of data, how to collect it and how to use it.

2. **Know your employees:** Do you really know your employees, their wants, needs and drivers of success? Often, employers create plans that they think employees would want and then balance that with cost constraints. Also, sometimes plans will retain an offering that was popular some years back, but have not scrutinized trends and warning signs that show it is no longer valuable to employees. The only way to truly know your people is to survey them, use data to follow internal trends, benchmark to see what's happening in peer organizations, and follow-up with post-election surveys and data on use trends.
3. **Seize opportunities:** Organizations often fixate on the challenges, but within every difficult situation are multiple opportunities – if you know where and how to look. Collect data points from numerous variables and use that individual and collective information to point you in the right direction.
4. **Go digital:** Nearly every day, there are new vendors entering the digital health field, bringing new, futuristic technology, devices and thoughts into the marketplace.
5. **Improve customer service:** This is much more than a friendly voice on the phone (though for many, this would be a good start). In the age of Google, customer service refers to any contact between product or service and end-user. This includes ease of access, clear information, mobile apps, multiple choices, value options, and personalization.

## LET'S START A CONVERSATION.

Times change, but healthcare has been slow to keep up. Employees will demand a “google-ization” of their health plans, and like the company’s mission to make information universally available to all, the organizations that deliver personalized benefits to every single employee will have a leg up in the [struggle for talent](#).

## ABOUT MERCER

At Mercer, we make a difference in the lives of more than 110 million people every day by advancing their health, wealth, and careers. We're in the business of creating more secure and rewarding futures for our clients and their employees – whether we're designing affordable health plans, assuring income for retirement or aligning workers with workforce needs. Using analysis and insights as catalysts for change, we anticipate and understand the individual impact of business decisions, now and in the future. We see people's current and future needs through a lens of innovation, and our holistic view, specialized expertise, and deep analytical rigour underpin each and every idea and solution we offer. For more than 70 years, we've turned our insights into actions, enabling people around the globe to live, work, and retire well. At Mercer, we say we *Make Tomorrow, Today.*

For further information, please visit:

**[www.mercer.ca](http://www.mercer.ca)**

Join the conversation:

On Twitter: @MercerCanada

On LinkedIn: [www.linkedin.com/company/mercercanada](http://www.linkedin.com/company/mercercanada)

