



Quick Links

[Newsletter Archive](#)

[Contact Us](#)



Who's Your Biggest Loser?

We're all familiar with the popular television show featuring a half-dozen or so severely obese people who are cheered on over a few weeks or months to shed pounds.

Well, "cheered on" is hardly the term. Pleas, threats, embarrassment and even bullying are terms that seem more apt. The point is, the show's hosts are constantly in the collective and individual faces of the participants to get them to do what is ultimately going to be in the participants' best interests – losing weight. Some of the "biggest losers" can't handle the challenge and drop out; others get the message, stick to the program, shed weight by the ton – literally – and emerge as victors who are not only winners, but much healthier, happier and admired individuals.

Besides being popular entertainment, the program demonstrates the power of in-your-face, constant communication. I'm reminded of this as we try to encourage clients to beef up their communication programs, especially their wellness and preventive care initiatives. While open enrollment is a terrific time to remind employees and dependents of the full extent of these programs, the effort shouldn't end there. Once the flurry of open enrollment has passed is the time when communication needs to ramp up if these programs are to be effective. That's when your audience isn't distracted with other matters and has time to focus on your targeted message.

As the television show demonstrates, people need constant "reminders" to do what is best for them. They need to be constantly reminded of the fitness program, weight loss clinic, the cholesterol screenings, the colonoscopy exams, mammograms and the benefits they will gain from taking advantage of these programs. **These reminders are most effective if they are continuous and consistent, using a variety of media. E-mail is great, but electronic communication needs to be supplemented with other media as well.** For example, simple postcards to the home or posters in the work place (I read where one employer even placed posters on stall doors in the ladies room!) are effective, direct and personal approaches, especially if they are constantly delivered, or said another way, in-your-face!

See the next page for more...

Variation is also important. Anyone seeing the same media or format soon begins to ignore the message (think of the late night, kitchen gadget infomercial). Mixing things up a bit in terms of the look or tone of your message and media goes a long way to improving audience attraction to your message.

All this doesn't have to be expensive. On the contrary, a well executed communication program alerting employees to the availability of these programs can yield an impressive ROI. For example, one BeneCom client launched a company-wide, multi-year wellness and preventive care initiative that helped to reduce paid claims more than the cost of their entire communication campaign – including open enrollment! And taking a lesson from “if they don't know about it they won't use it,” [The Vitality Group](#) found that increased frequency of gym visits reduced hospital costs between 6% and 16%.

If the adage “20% of employees make up 80% of the claims” has any truth, getting your message to the right people at the right time may prove to be the best investment your organization can make.

BeneCom has 18 years of experience with employee benefits communication. We can help you design a successful strategy that educates, increases satisfaction and engages employees. **BeneCom Associates offers effective benefit communication strategies for every budget.** To learn more about us call **860.674.2626** or visit us [online](#).