

5 Benefits All Startups Should Offer in 2020

To compete for the best talent, get creative with compensation packages.

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Yesterday's benefits don't resonate with today's employees. With uncertainty surrounding the future of healthcare coverage, a distributed and diverse workforce and the ever-present pressure of student loans, companies must rethink their benefits packages to attract the best and brightest.

As much as business owners would like to give their employees the world, budget constraints place a cap on salary. To compete for the best talent, startups with limited money must get creative with their compensation packages. Unique perks and useful benefits can help companies with cash constraints stand out in a crowded job market.

Keep an eye on these trends in employee benefits to give your team members what they need without overextending your budget.

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Uncommonly Generous PTO Policies

Employees all know about unlimited PTO policies, and people who have been in the job market for more than a few years are well aware of the drawbacks. HR platform Namely found that employees at companies with unlimited PTO policies tend to

take less time off than employees with defined limits.

Unlimited PTO places unnecessary stress on teams. Instead of feeling empowered, employees feel pressured not to take more time off than their colleagues, creating a self-regulating environment that increases resentment and decreases much-needed recharge time. Instead of taking the lazy route by offering unlimited PTO, offer employees a higher number of PTO days and allow them to roll some time over at the end of the year. In most industries, starting at 25 days of PTO will catch the attention of top talent.

Health Help Beyond Insurance

Not many employees feel comfortable building a future at a company that doesn't offer health insurance. Employer-provided plans famously offer better coverage at lower prices than the options available on the open market. Health insurance can get expensive quickly, though, and even the most generous policies can still have out-of-pocket expenses add up.

Consider offering employees health-related stipends and perks to go along with their insurance. Employer-sponsored, out-of-pocket payment platform Paytient, for example, lets employers offer deductible credits to pay for healthcare costs without adding interest and while sparing their HSA. Employees can use credits to pay for vet bills, an added bonus for pet lovers.

Practical Benefits in the Office

"Adulting" isn't always easy for busy professionals. Between planning presentations and analyzing reports, employees don't get much time to consider their basic needs at work. Alleviate some of that stress by offering practical perks in the office, such as free food, gym equipment, childcare services, elder-care help and laundry options. Partnering with local providers can be a great way to build community relationships and help

employees access necessary services.

On-site quiet rooms help employees reduce stress levels and stay productive in the face of busy days. According to the Society for Human Resource Management's 2019 Employee Benefits Survey, the number of companies offering quiet rooms rose 21 percent last year.

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Help When Working From Home

Employees weigh remote work and telecommuting options heavily when choosing employers. Now that most professionals can work from home, workers expect the option to stay in when they need to take care of things around the house or the weather turns bad. Offer a home-office stipend or provide equipment to make working from home more realistic, comfortable and productive.

Buffer, for example, helps remote employees with laptops, free books and a chance to join the team for an annual international retreat. Not every company can afford to fly the whole team every year, but most companies can afford to make remote work a little more comfortable. Ask employees what they need. For some, a new chair or a second monitor could make a big difference.

More Money, But Dressed Differently

Higher salaries aren't the only way employees like to be paid. Tuition reimbursement, 401(k) contribution matches and flexible spending accounts all help employees manage their financial lives without bloating salary expenses. Don't subtract extra perks like these from competitive salaries, though. Offer them as a bonus, then enjoy the benefits of a workforce filled with educated people content with their

compensation.

Money Crashers notes that employers can write off employee education costs on their taxes. The IRS limits the deduction to \$5,250 per year per employee, but that's plenty of cash for companies to save and employees to receive. Consider helping debt-free employees further their education through the same system. Smarter workforces build stronger companies.

Online work options and a student debt crisis have changed the way employees view potential employers. In 2020 and beyond, new factors could lead workers to look for different perks. Keep an ear to the ground, and regularly ask team members how the company can help make their lives better.

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