

Why should employers investigate share plans as a global benefit in the 'new normal'?

The shake up from coronavirus has had wide reaching consequences and in a relatively short space of time and our normal way of working has changed dramatically - but then, as you sit and sip your morning coffee with children running around or facing your partner at your desk which happens to be the kitchen table, we don't need to tell you that! While we now start to emerge from lockdown, it is useful to consider the reactive changes to wellbeing initiatives which have been made so that we can embrace efficient ways to engage, motivate and support employees. Global benefits like Zoom Yoga classes have emerged to support mental & physical wellbeing but how have companies tackled financial and community wellbeing? The answer may lie with share plans...

Motivate. A share plan cohesively binds the workforce to company objectives by ensuring that the employees are financially motivated to ensure the company succeeds. Where employee values are aligned with the core values of the company, there is a sense of community and collective created. As employees drifted to the four corners of the world to isolate and work remotely, employees were still able to share in the purpose and vision of the company despite being separated from their colleagues. They are part of the bigger picture and their individual contribution directly counts towards the success of the business. The workforce is motivated by the collective success which fosters a community wellbeing environment with employees reaching out to one another to make sure they are well and safe in both home life and professional life.

Equality. Share plans provide a transparent employee benefit with a simple and clear rationale behind the scheme. There is an equality to the success of the company in that all scheme members benefit when the company performs well as the financial success and benefits are distributed further than C-suite. This creates an open environment where everyone works to achieve the same, equal goal regardless of where they work in the world. Over the last few months, this has helped to cement the idea that 'everyone is in it together' and some companies have opted to go further with C-suite slashing bonuses and forgoing dividends as they recognise the hardship their employees may be facing. Share plans provide a global means of rewarding employees in a standardised and transparent way.

Wellbeing. With complex scheme rules and regulations, share plans in tandem with financial education is essential to making sure employees understand the value of their employee benefits and are supported with understanding any tax liabilities. Inevitably, share plans segue into a wider conversation around financial wellbeing and money management as employees understand how money released from a share plan can be saved tax-efficiently to meet their life goals. Supporting employee's financial wellbeing especially in the current climate is important, with financial markets dipping and rumblings of a global recession, there is a palpable nervousness. Using a share plan to open a wider conversation about money and savings supports both financial and mental wellbeing during this period of time where financial instability is a concern for many individuals across the globe. Through financial education, employees understand the value of their share plan and how best to manage their money to take control of their financial future.

Overall, global share plans are a great opportunity for an employee to share in the success of the company. They create a sense of community, foster an environment of equality, and spark financial wellbeing discussions.

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