



## 7 Steps to a Smooth Remote Open Enrollment

These are brave new times for us all. We must think differently to do our jobs with new and unexpected constraints.

At Benelogic, we are inherently planners. Our client services team helps plan hundreds of open enrollments each year – thousands over their careers with us. When we all started working remotely a few weeks ago, our first conversations were about how remote working may impact this year's timelines.

These are the strategies we employ with our clients. Following the steps below, will get us and them the best outcome. It will work for your company, too. The following are Benelogic's seven steps to a successful (remote) open enrollment.



### Step 1. Start Early

The Benelogic team starts working on open enrollment timelines six months before the plan year renews. Why so early? Starting early allows us to accommodate unforeseen circumstances. After years of managing open enrollments, we know there are always surprises.

Pad your own timeline with an extra month or two. Every business that supports you is struggling with their own "new normal". Extra time is imperative for a smooth open enrollment in 2020.



### Step 2. Think About What If?

Take time to think ahead and go through your what if scenarios. You don't need to take action right away but write your ideas down. This exercise helps you focus. When you are ready to dive into open enrollment preparation, you won't do it with a sense of panic, but with confidence-inspiring decisiveness.



### Step 3. Practice Makes Perfect

Open enrollment is often used as a "high touch" opportunity to meet with employees face-to-face during benefit fairs or meetings. In our current environment of social distancing, it may be a while before we all want to be cozied in a room for a meeting together. How will this impact your communication strategy?

Review the technology you plan to use and become an expert with it. Take time to use it. Learn what works and what doesn't. A bit of practice now will make sure you look like a pro when you use it with employees.



## Step 4. Devise Your Communication Delivery Strategy

If you can delivery communication to employees solely through email, count yourself lucky. Do an audit. Make sure you have good email addresses for everyone. If you need to collect non-corporate emails, start that process now. Send out informational emails to work out the kinks. Is information getting through? Is it getting hung up in junk folders somewhere?

If you are going “old school” and mailing things to homes, make sure you have good addresses for everyone. Snail mail adds time. You will either need a partner for printing and fulfillment or you need to fit it in your schedule. These are all things you should get lined up now instead of waiting for the last minute when everyone else is doing it too.



## Step 5. Leverage Existing Technology

As we work remotely, we are using technology features that weren’t relevant when we were all in the office together. Re-evaluate the technology options available to you in all of your systems. Just because you didn’t use it before doesn’t mean you can’t use it now. Now may be the perfect time to create an open enrollment video to replace the in-person meetings that you used to host.

Luckily, Benelogic (and many other enrollment sites) allow employers to embed presentations and videos in their custom enrollment site to tailor messages to employees. Check with your online enrollment provider to see what additional features they can implement to help make open enrollment easier on everyone! For 2020, Benelogic is helping out by waiving all fees associated with hosting higher band-width video materials.



## Step 6. Watch Industry Trends

The industry experts are already talking about the potential for large increases on the back end of the COVID-19 crisis. Insurance vendors are watching carefully to see how this will impact their bottom line. If it impacts them, it will eventually impact you.

Stay updated on emerging trends to prepare for changes you may be faced with at enrollment. You and your broker may even want to shop early to ensure better deals. Pay attention and be prepared so you won’t be surprised at decision time.



## Step 7. Ask for Help

We are in this together. You don’t need to navigate these uncertain times alone. Reach out to your trusted advisors and ask for help, for advice, or for moral support. And if you aren’t getting the support you need, call Benelogic!