



Autozone drives employee engagement with benefits, HR app

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Published April 25 2019, 1:25pm EDT

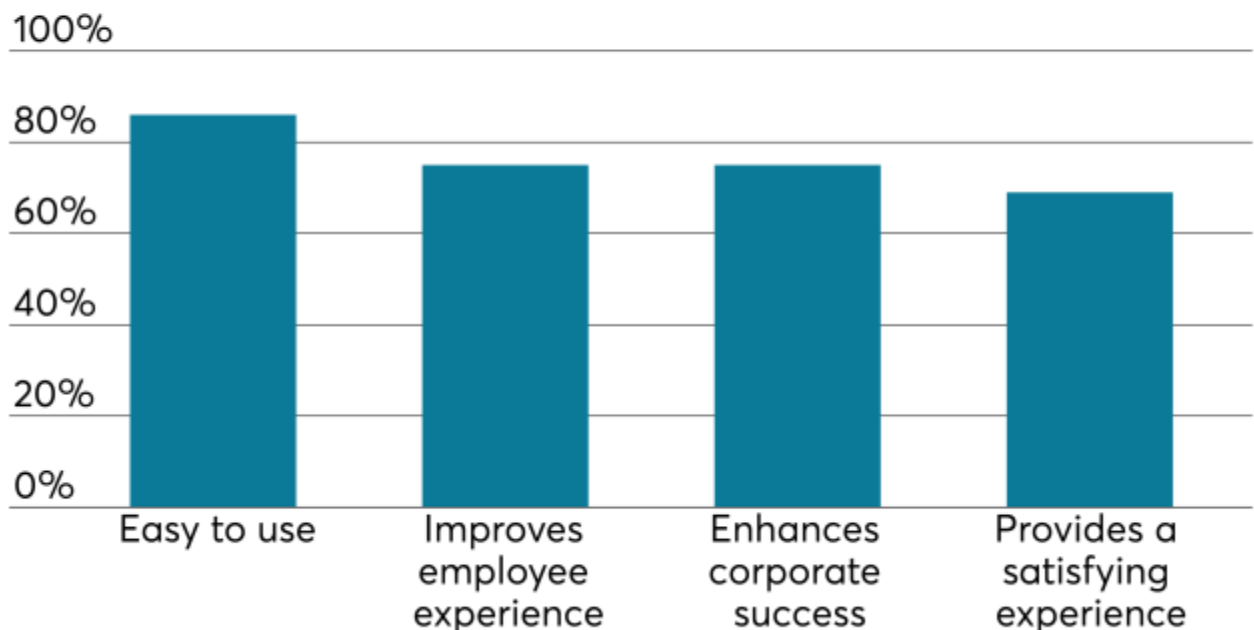
LAS VEGAS — Automotive retailer Autozone had a communications problem. Though it offers a slew of competitive benefits, its employees either weren't taking advantage of them or were unaware of the offerings altogether.

The problem was compounded by the nature of the retailer's 90,000 employees: They were scattered at more than 6,000 locations across the nation. Many weren't in front of computers, and some didn't even have an email address.

"You can have great programs, but if people aren't engaging in them it doesn't make sense," Matthew Harmon, vice president of benefits and compensation at Autozone, said Wednesday during Human Resource Executive's Health and Benefits Leadership Conference. "This wasn't good enough for our Autozoners."

So Harmon started looking for an integrated communications tool — one that could evolve over time. "We knew we couldn't do it all on day one, so we were looking for a partner who could add to it through time and be flexible," he said.

How benefit pros view technology



Source: 2018 Paychex Pulse of HR Survey

He soon found HR tech firm Green Circle Life (formerly Green Circle Health), and the two companies worked to roll out a platform — available online and in app form — for Autozone employees in 2016. The first version of the tool was focused on health and wellness and gave employees access to their insurance cards, information on their providers, healthcare coaching, and the ability to refill their drugs, among other capabilities.

That got “great engagement,” Harmon said, but the numbers got even better when Autozone and Green Circle started adding other HR components, like viewing their paycheck, looking at their schedule, changing their address and viewing travel information.

“Our folks wanted everything in one place,” Harmon said.

The result? Explosive growth and increased employee engagement.

After adding more HR components, Autozone experienced a 1,000% increase in utilization “without even communicating it,” Harmon said. “Once we communicated it, it grew even faster.”

Now about 48,000 Autozone employees use the app every day.

It has helped increase employees’ understanding of their benefits because “you can’t help but trip over the information” in the app, Harmon said. Because of greater awareness, utilization of preventive screenings has increased roughly 10%, he said.

Another important component of the program is allowing employees’ family members to download and use the platform, which Harmon says is significant because “spouses are usually the ones making many decisions” and also often drive up company healthcare costs.

It’s also been a boon for managers and executives, who can send notifications or information to employees when they need to. For example, Harmon said, the app is a great communications tool during natural disasters or other emergencies. “We can make sure [employees] are OK — that’s a really important thing we are able to do.”

Harmon told benefits managers at the conference that the key to success in rolling out a tech platform is to first identify company priorities, then “find a partner to service those needs for your organization.”

Green Circle Life currently partners with about 20 employers, said the company's CEO, Dinesh Sheth, to create centralized HR benefits and services dashboards for employees.

"When you look at costs, you can't always change things," he said. "But tech allows you to launch a personalized and branded experience for your employees