MassMutual Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company

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Turning Insights into Action:

A Benefits Playbook for Today's Financially Divided Workforce

Workforce financial stability has never been one-reality-fits-all. And in today's economic environment, that's truer than ever.

Use these key insights from our proprietary research to understand how middle-market working Americans* are feeling, what's changing about how they think about financial protection and benefits — and what it means for your client conversations now, next month and next year.

INSIGHT 1

The financial reality gap is real.

Today's working Americans are navigating very different financial realities. While some feel financially confident based on their income and investments, others struggle under the weight of everyday costs.

A single benefits narrative can miss connecting with both audiences. Benefits brokers can help employers move away from one-size-fits-all.

Insights into Action

Now

Reframe the employer conversation from plan renewal to helping manage workforce stability. Ask: "What happens to your workforce if one unexpected $1,000 expense hits?"

Next Month

Help employees see their benefits as financial shock solutions by defining their 'runway' — how long they could cover living expenses and absorb financial shocks using their available cash or savings. Map the runways to specific benefits and features.

Next Year

Elevate benefits from an HR discussion to a workforce resilience strategy by positioning yourself as the broker who helps employers answer:

- Where might we be overestimating resilience?
- Which benefits spread risk most efficiently across the workforce?

INSIGHT 2

Automation without validation creates blind spots for Financially Healthy** workers.

The Financially Healthy segment is becoming younger, more dynamic, and increasingly reliant on defaults to run their financial lives. They are consolidating wealth into fewer, more concentrated vehicles, but may be more dependent on automation and market performance.

Insights into Action

Now

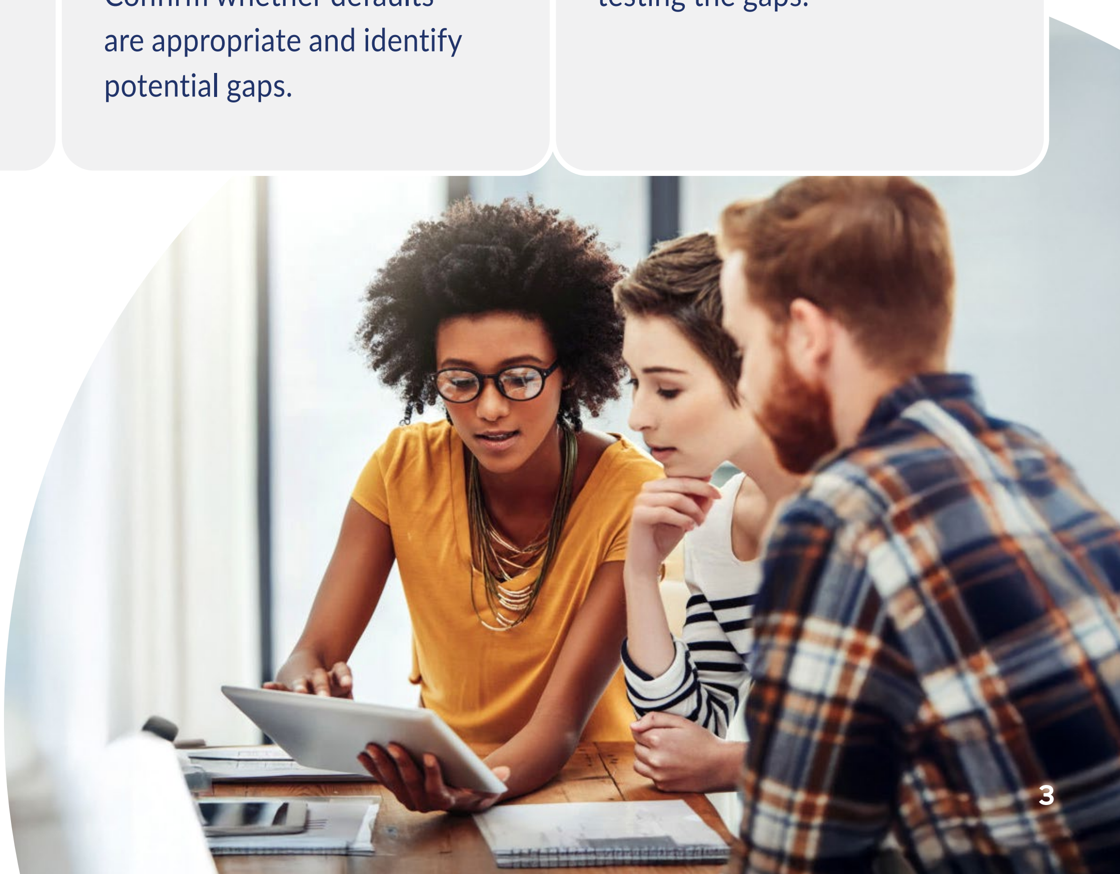
Shift client conversations from ‘adding benefits’ to ‘validating coverage.’ Position benefits as a stress test of existing defaults, not an expansion of options.

Next Month

Offer employers an operational framework to assess how auto-enrolled benefits align with a younger, more dynamic workforce. The objectives? Confirm whether defaults are appropriate and identify potential gaps.

Next Year

Differentiate yourself as a partner in benefits validation. Focus on optimizing the financial architecture employees already rely on — and stress testing the gaps.



INSIGHT 3

'Financial socialization' varies by generation.

Younger generations grew up in households where money was discussed openly. Older generations didn't.

The result? Different comfort levels with financial decisions. The challenge? When workers lack confidence, they may delay decisions, default to whatever feels simplest, or disengage altogether.

Insights into Action

Now

Benefits adoption is not just a product problem. It's a confidence problem.

Instead of starting with, "Here are the products," start with, "Here is how to decide."

Next Month

Build a confidence ladder into benefits communications, such as:

- Orientation: What this is and why it exists.
- Guided choice: Simple scenarios and rules of thumb.
- Reinforcement: Decision validation and information on how to use the benefit.

Next Year

Help employers position benefits as a platform for financial dialogue by creating a culture where employees can ask basic questions without stigma, and where benefits communications don't assume everyone starts from the same level of confidence.

INSIGHT 4

Workers are starting to view Voluntary benefits as a financial protection strategy.

In 2025, working Americans* perspectives shifted. Instead of seeing voluntary benefits as a “patch” for their financial lives, they began to see them as a way to help patch the holes in their core medical coverage.

As a result, a growing number of workers approach benefits enrollment like a major purchase, they do their homework, ask questions, and spend time thinking about the decision.

Insights into Action

Now

Start by helping to reduce voluntary benefits confusion and increase confidence. Reposition coverage options around lived outcomes, not product labels.

Next Month

Create a short ‘Voluntary Benefits = Financial Protection’ storyline that’s easy for employers to repeat. Then, build a scenario-based enrollment flow that’s tied to the idea that voluntary benefits can help reduce gaps and provide cash when it matters.

Next Year

Evolve the strategy to make voluntary benefits a durable part of financial well-being. Help employers offer a clear path to guidance, such as a benefits consult window, a short call or chat option, or a structured Q&A session.

Explore the latest research findings in our
Pathway to voluntary benefits success report.

* The MassMutual Workforce Financial Stability Score measures the changing attitudes and financial outlook of working Americans. Commissioned by MassMutual, the research began in June 2022 and is conducted online, monthly, among a nationally representative sample of 1,000 U.S. middle-market employees. For purposes of this research, MassMutual defines working Americans and middle-market employees as those between ages 22 and 67, working at firms with at least 25 benefit-eligible employees, with a household income of $40,000 to less than $150,000, and assets less than $300,000.

** Working Americans are segmented into three cohorts based on the WFSS, using a scale from 0 to 100 to indicate the overall sentiments of financial well-being: Financially Challenged — survey respondents who scored between 0 and 39, Financially Stable – survey respondents who scored between 40 and 69, and Financially Healthy — survey respondents who scored between 70 and 100.

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