AON

Personalising and Digitalising Benefits

A Guide for Multinational Organisations (EMEA Edition)

Foreword

Innovation and growth are never mutually exclusive.

No matter the industry, no matter the technology, embracing innovation lights the fire under growth, initiating advantages for employees and employers alike. When it comes to employee benefits, embracing innovative solutions — in response to a desire for flexibility, personalisation and clear communication — has never been more needed.

As uncovered in Aon's Employee Sentiment Study (ESS), multinational organisations are experiencing a significant shift in how their current and future employees view work and benefits. Workers are demonstrably expressing an expectation for personalisation, flexibility and ease of use. As technology develops and data collection increases, these features are becoming more accessible and easier to integrate into current processes, helping employers meet those expectations with confidence.

Technological developments have also enhanced benefits design, which moves beyond flexibility as the core advantage and embraces advanced analytics, increased personalisation, and employees having a better awareness and understanding of artificial intelligence (AI). An effective AI solution encompasses human capital analytics and technology, weaving together broader segments of talent, rewards and benefits into one offering.

The sticking point, however, is the willingness to take that jump in the first place, due to fears of high costs and a lack of resources. In a volatile economic landscape, the potential competitive advantage of embracing a new approach is unignorable.

In this guide, we address how organisations can adopt more flexibility and personalisation into their benefits and embrace human capital analytics and advanced technology to accommodate diverse employee preferences and bring together talent and rewards.

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The Key Takeaways

Customisation of Benefits is Essential

Benefit customisation has evolved significantly, enabling employees to tailor their rewards to their work and life stage. However, multinational organisations face challenges in aligning these offerings with diverse local needs and employee expectations.

Actions:

- Assess current benefits for flexibility and personal relevance across all local markets.
- Gather employee feedback regularly to identify gaps between offered and desired benefits.
- Adapt benefits to reflect local cultures and regulations while maintaining global consistency.
- Ensure technology and communications support a positive experience and employee decision making.

Local Relevance of Benefits Drives Engagement

For benefits to be truly valued, they must reflect the unique needs, cultural expectations and regulatory requirements of each location. A uniform benefits package risks missing critical local priorities and may reduce employee engagement.

Actions:

- Conduct local market research to understand what benefits are most valued in each region. For instance, Aon's analytics tools, such as benchmarking and employee take up analysis, can help support decision making.
- Involve local HR leaders in the design and selection of benefits packages.
- Regularly review and update benefits to reflect changing local legislation and employee expectations.
- Ensure communications channels and messages align with personal relevance and local nuances.

Effective Communication and Employee Listening are Critical

Engagement hinges on segmented, relevant and clearly understood communications. Two-way listening — through data analysis and direct employee input — is vital for evolving benefits propositions.

Actions:

- Segment communications by location, role and employee demographics.
- Implement regular surveys and feedback channels to capture employee sentiment.
- Use insights from listening exercises to refine and personalise communications.

Measurement and ROI Must be Prioritised

Tracking the impact of benefits — through cost savings, employee engagement, retention and alignment with business goals — is crucial for ongoing improvement and justification of investments.

Actions:

- Set clear KPIs for benefits programmes (e.g., uptake rates, satisfaction, retention).
- Regularly review performance metrics and adjust strategies accordingly.
- Link benefits outcomes to broader business objectives and report results to leadership.

Technology is the Key Enabler for Integration and Personalisation

Unified technology platforms allow for both individual employee adaptation and compliance with country-level regulations, reducing complexity and enhancing employee choice.

Actions:

- Invest in scalable, integrable benefits technology that supports both global and local needs.
- Leverage data analytics and AI to drive personalisation and cost control.
- Ensure technology solutions are user-friendly and accessible across all regions.
- Technology that can integrate with all other areas, such as total rewards, wellbeing and EVPs, into a single experience.

Today's Employee Benefits Landscape

Today, costs continue to rise and employers are spending more than ever on benefits packages. In such a volatile economic environment and higher employee uptake, cost efficiencies are a top priority for most business leaders when designing and refining a benefits package. For multinationals, cost containment measures reduce or control overuse and will play a significant role in benefits plans moving forward. Bigger design changes, including the use of flexible benefits plans to install a ceiling over total benefit costs and delivery restrictions, will help to integrate these changes smoothly and at speed.[1] However, the question many organisations are asking is how to balance cost efficiencies and rising uptake.

The Top Five Priorities for Organisations Globally[2]

01
Cost management.

02
Competitive benefits.

03
High-valued benefits.

04
Consistency of benefits.

05
Global minimum standards.

The Top Five Priorities for EMEA Organisations[3]

01
Cost management.

02
Competitive benefits.

03
High-valued benefits.

04
Global minimum standards.

05
Consistency of benefits.

1 Aon's 2025 Global Medical Trend Rates Report.
2 Aon's Global Benefits Trends Study 2025.
3 Aon's Global Benefits Trends Study 2025.

Many employees fail to understand the value of the benefits available to them. Aon has increasingly found that ensuring employees recognise their benefits and utilise them correctly is quickly rising up the list of priorities, as businesses begin to understand their power in terms of attraction and retention. Effective communication has never been more vital — employers must ensure that the money they're spending on benefits is in areas valued by their employees.

Whether communication, cost management or competitiveness, personalisation and embracing innovative new technologies are the right way to approach these top priorities, helping organisations move into the future with confidence.

Effective communication has never been more vital — employers must ensure that the money they're spending on benefits is in areas valued by their employees.

Current State Versus Employee Preference[4]

Global

72%

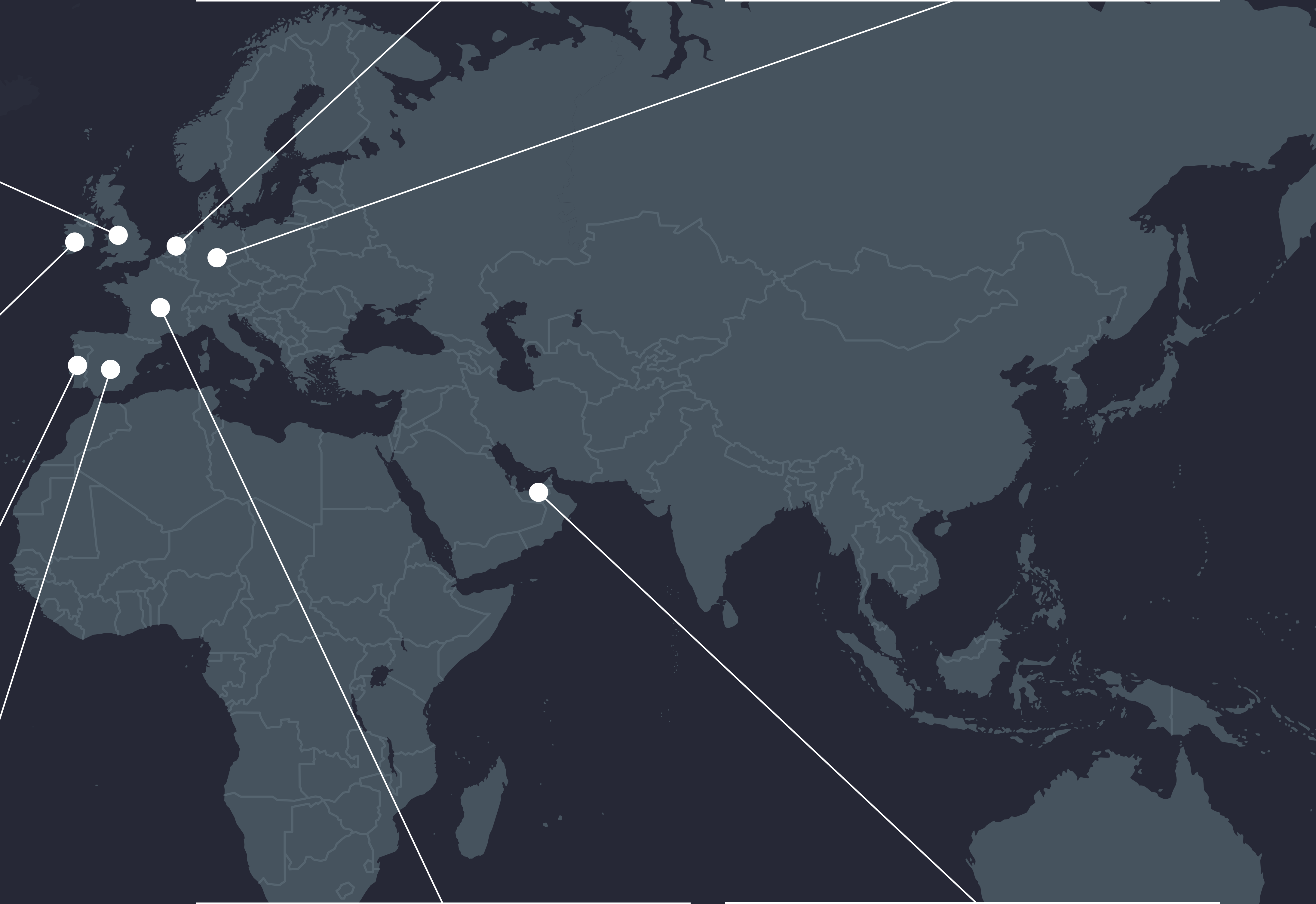
of employees say it is important or extremely important to be able to customise benefits.

41%

of employees say they currently have the ability to customise their benefits.

63%

would be willing to sacrifice existing benefits for a better choice of benefits.



United Kingdom	50%	28%	57%
Ireland	66%	24%	66%
Portugal	68%	17%	70%
Spain	58%	31%	55%
Netherlands	52%	20%	61%
Germany	52%	26%	34%
France	49%	19%	54%
U.A.E.	80%	58%	83%

4 Aon's Employee Sentiment Study.

48%

of companies say they need to personalise benefits information for employees.

46%

of companies say they are considering or already offer a flexible plan or lifestyle spending.[5]

5 2025 Future of Total Rewards Study.

The Employee Sentiment Study — What are Employees Saying?

In 2025, Aon conducted the ESS — a comprehensive, global survey into employee attitudes towards their workspace and employer.

We uncovered deeper insights on ‘personalised benefits’, ‘employee expectations’ and ‘seeking new employment’ statistics, with key findings helping to illustrate how and where employers can take action. The study revealed why leveraging technology and offering greater flexibility and personalisation enhances the employee experience.

The statistics from the EMEA region were stark. The Study revealed that 49 percent of EMEA employees are either in the process of moving employers or might/will seek new employment in the next 12 months, with 53 percent willing to sacrifice existing benefits for a better choice of benefits.[6]

6 Aon’s Employee Sentiment Study.

The Challenges for Multinational Companies

As outlined in Aon's 2025 Global Benefits Trends Study, leading employers are driving the integration of tailored or customisable benefits worldwide to address evolving employee value expectations.[7] Employee value has become a clear priority in multinationals' strategic agendas, along with effective and ambitious governance actions.

Despite personalisation becoming increasingly important, multinational organisations have struggled to integrate a consistent benefits system that deals with contrasting regulatory and cultural realities in different nations around the world. While these multinationals are focusing their personalisation on features such as defined contribution pension risks and health screenings, the employee expectations from Aon's Employee Sentiment Study do not correlate. Employees were much more concerned with the inclusion of health insurance, paid time off and work-life balance. While a proactive approach towards personalisation is to be commended, this misalignment is creating a gap between the benefits offered and those employees actually want and need.

Leaders have been eager to embrace digital solutions, with 41 percent of multinationals[8] stating that technology is a critical component of delivering benefits choice. The question is whether multinationals understand the power of technology not just to administer a benefits programme, but to enhance communication and the employee experience. Further client insights have also indicated that transparency will increasingly become a priority expectation for employees over the next ten years.[9] Communication is a vital cog in the functioning of a personalised benefits system, yet only 27 percent of employees at leading multinationals understand their benefits.[10] While this is slightly above smaller-sized businesses, there are clear opportunities to improve communication between organisations and their people and further enhance personalisation.

Increased digitalisation and AI integration are a pathway to personalisation in employer communications. While only one in four multinationals is currently using AI technology in HR processes, those that do intend to enhance employee communications, including supporting wellbeing, answering questions and helping them make better benefits choices. Almost two-thirds of multinationals are also planning to increase inclusive benefits, with family support as the core priority offering. However, while these inclusive benefits are welcomed, lower-income employees are increasingly struggling.

Multinationals are ahead of the pack in many ways, but there's plenty more work to do.

7 Aon's Global Benefits Trends Study 2025.

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.

10 Aon's Global Benefits Trends Study 2025.

The Global Landscape

Pay and Benefits Transparency

Employers are under more pressure than ever to communicate their benefits packages transparently and consistently. The ripple effect of the European Union (EU) Pay Transparency legislation (due to pass in June 2026)[11] is already being felt within many organisations. In EMEA, 50 percent of employees agree that their compensation is fair compared to similar industry roles. However, a more sceptical 23 percent of employees are not confident that their employer ensures pay equity regardless of gender (5 percent higher than the global average).[12]

There is now an increased need for employers to take a total rewards approach to pay transparency, while using data management to drive unity and feed data through the analysis, design and communications phases to ensure compliance. Aon's Human Capital approach and technology have evolved specifically to provide an end-to-end, integrated approach to pay transparency.[13]

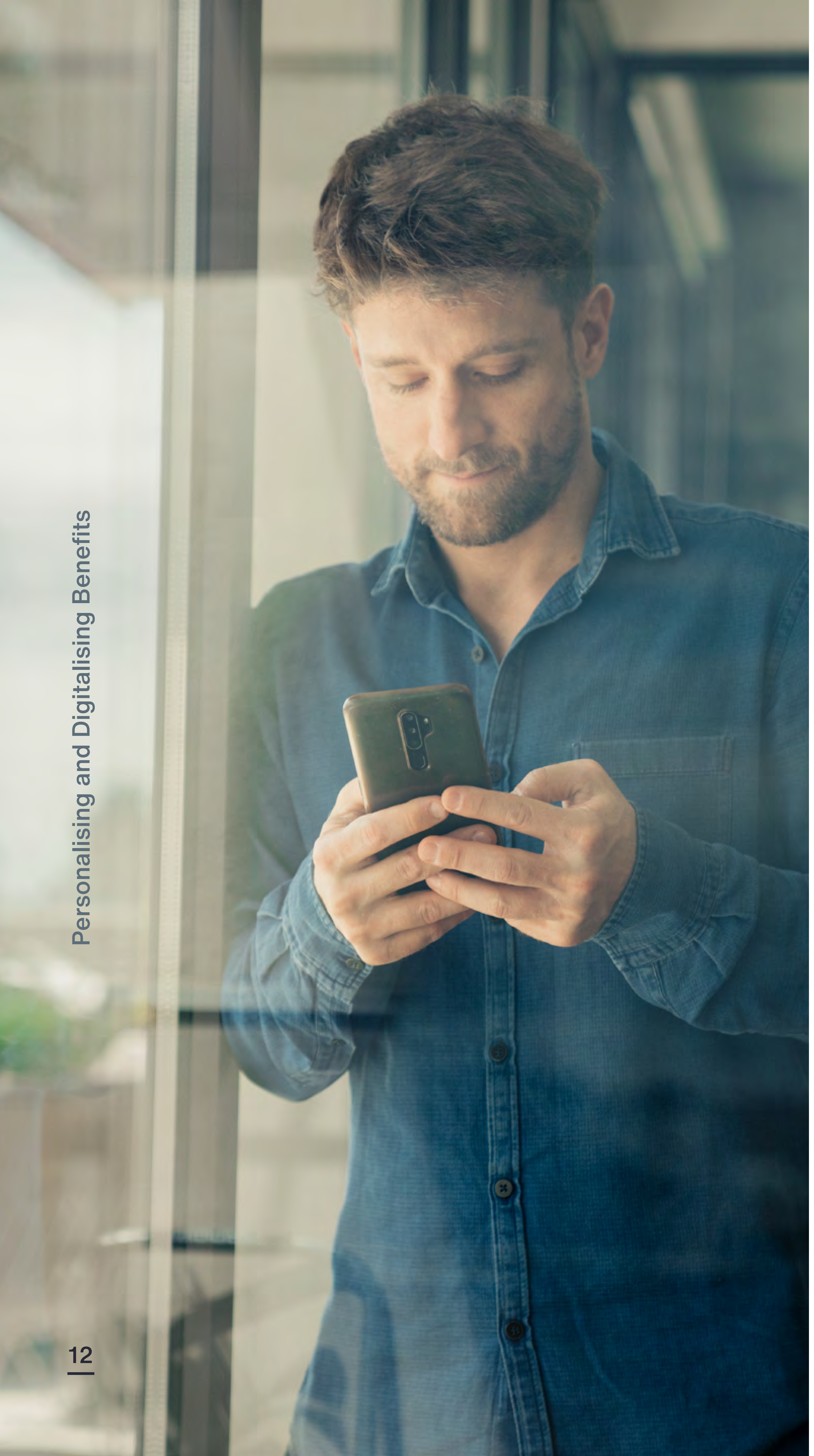
The EU Pay Transparency Directive also means EMEA organisations must prioritise their total rewards communication strategies. Transparent, consistent and easy-to-understand communication will be critical for building trust, fulfilling legal obligations and supporting employee engagement. Establishing a strong communications strategy early will meet compliance needs and prepare managers for informed conversations once the directive is introduced. To achieve this, companies must ensure their teams are fully trained and have access to the necessary tools and resources.

Aon's Human Capital approach and technology have evolved specifically to provide an end-to-end, integrated approach to pay transparency.

11 New EU rules for pay transparency, EU Commission.

12 Aon's Employee Sentiment Study.

13 Aon's Global Pay Transparency Study 2025.



AI Integration and Digitalisation

Employees expect their employers to communicate more effectively using digital platforms and methods that resonate more with individuals, especially as AI integration and digitalisation continue to evolve. They want a tool that makes their life easier, without having to 'engage' with benefit platforms. Instead, employees would rather ask the tool a question, for that tool to provide context, before coaching and performing the action the employee needs — all within the same chat.

In EMEA, for example, concern around digital advancements is building, with 25 percent of employees reporting feeling unsure of the impact of AI on their jobs (compared to the 15 percent global average). This sense of uncertainty may also have resulted in 27 percent of employees feeling more motivated to develop new skills to stay relevant.[14] It's clear that employees are expecting (and will continue to expect) efficient AI integration and digitalisation within their organisation, on top of the upskilling that comes with this. In an era of rapidly evolving technology, those who do not also integrate AI, data insights and deeper digitalisation into their benefits offering will lose their competitive edge.

Employers' challenges tend to focus on risk and compliance. To them, every new AI tool promises to be the next big thing, instead of demonstrating an understanding of the internal processes an employer must go through to integrate it. The other complexity lies in whether these tools are discreet or interconnected and how organisations manage the associated data challenges.

A Multi-Generational Workforce

With four generations now under one roof, employee expectations and demands are increasingly disparate, despite some regions maintaining unity in certain areas. Without reward flexibility, managing these evolving needs is almost impossible. Employers struggle to manage the growing number of benefit expectations, especially as employees continue to work into older age. In fact, Aon's study uncovered that Generation X and Baby Boomers are the most dissatisfied with their workplace benefits.[15]

A Shift in Approach to Total Reward

Over the last decade, a mindset shift has occurred, away from salary and benefits and towards total reward packages. This shift is seen within many multinationals, which have spent considerable time building employee value propositions (EVPs) directly linked to their organisational values. For strategically minded organisations, EVPs are becoming a primary driver and guiding force for how they design and implement their total rewards strategies. As a result, more employers are starting to shift focus to employee segments within their own workforce based on data analysis and making total reward relevant and valued.

That said, plenty of work is needed to bring this shift in approach to life: 48 percent of organisations say they still need to personalise benefits information for their employees, while 33 percent say their benefits offering needs to be more fair and competitive than it is today.[16] For multinationals, aligning total rewards strategies with business growth, balancing investment with cost discipline and prioritising initiatives that drive measurable ROI will be vital moving forward.

14 Aon's Employee Sentiment Study.

15 Aon's Employee Sentiment Study.

16 Aon's Future of Total Rewards 2025.

Shifting to Personalised, Flexible Benefits[17]

23%

say their benefits do not offer enough choice for employees to choose what's right for them.

48%

say they need to personalise the benefits information for the employees.

46%

say they are considering or already offer a flexible plan or lifestyle spending account.

33%

say their benefits offering needs to be more fair and competitive than it is today.

Choice Matters to Today's Employees

According to Aon's 2025 Employee Sentiment Study, when it come to benefits customisation, 72 percent of employees told us personlisation was important to them, yet only 41 percent currently have it. Over 60 percent of employees said they would give up existing benefits for more choice.

17 Aon's Future of Total Rewards 2025.

Opportunity to Deliver Higher Value with Current Offering[18]

71%

say their total rewards package is meeting employee needs, while 11 percent say it's not.

25%

say total rewards is not a positive differentiator compared to other employers.

35%

say they are not effectively communicating the value of the current total rewards offering.

36%

say they are not managing their total rewards programs as effectively as they should.

How Should Organisations Communicate the Value of Their Total Rewards Offering?

According to Aon's 2025 Employee Sentiment Study, email is the top employee communication preference (52 percent), followed by 1-on-1 meetings (42 percent) and internal company websites (31 percent).

18 Aon's Future of Total Rewards 2025.

Effective Communications

Communication is the key to maximising the value of personalised benefits and total rewards. Without clear and engaging communications, benefits are often underutilised, and employees may not see the true value of their benefits package. Employee understanding is directly linked to attraction, retention and overall engagement, making communication critical to education and awareness. In short, two-way communication (listening and responding) is essential for growth and change.

The challenges in communication are clear: only 27 percent of employees at leading multinationals understand their benefits,[19] which highlights a big communication gap. Many organisations focus on benefits (like pensions or health screenings) that don't match employee priorities (such as health insurance, paid time off or work-life balance), often due to a lack of employee listening and poor communication. Diverse regulatory and cultural landscapes mean communications must be localised and tailored.

For best practice, organisations must pursue segmentation and personalisation with data, embrace a multi-channel approach, use transparent and straightforward language, and ensure messaging is always localised. Clear, proactive communication is critical for creating understanding, minimising resistance and maximising engagement, now and in the future.

An Increasing Desire for Flexibility

Flexibility is a clear priority for employees working for multinational organisations. For example, businesses across the EMEA region are now implementing flexibility in countries they couldn't previously. This resurgence is being driven from the top down and is feeding into the current landscape, which is, ultimately, a desire for more personalisation.

19 Aon's Global Benefits Trends Study 2025.

Insights from the EMEA Region

Localised, national and multinational organisations must all consider a range of attitudes, expectations and regulations when pursuing the right benefits packages.

When it comes to designing the perfect benefits package for each employee, the challenges across the regions are clear to see:

- Administrative complexity
- Regulatory compliance
- Integration with existing systems
- Directionless, disjointed communication
- A lack of uptake and utilisation
- Poor personalisation options
- A multi-generational workforce

Multinational organisations are benefiting from the unification of one technology for both individual employee adaptation and country-level regulatory adaptation in order to face these challenges. In the past, these two levers have led to many siloed solutions that are difficult to manage or the delivery of solutions that don’t meet employee needs. Today, organisations are leaning towards offering more choice and using technology as a key enabler. As a global provider, Aon’s benefits solution has been made with these multi-faceted needs as a first priority. Below, we jump into the core markets.

Multinational organisations are benefiting from the unification of one technology for both individual employee adaptation and country-level regulatory adaptation in order to face these challenges.

The Current Landscape

The expectation for pay transparency from employers and incoming legislation is having a significant impact on organisations in the EMEA region, applying pressure on employers to be more transparent and communicate total rewards more clearly. Enhanced communication is also needed with the continued rise in digitalisation and AI integration, which is changing how a multi-generational employee workbase interacts with their organisation and learning about their own benefits options.

In the EMEA region, organisations are shifting their mindsets away from traditional segmented benefits and salary considerations towards embracing a more effective, comprehensive, personalised EVP. Aon's Global Medical Trends Report also highlighted that global organisations are using flexible benefit plans to mitigate rising medical costs. In this new era of benefits, EMEA employers face a myriad of challenges, such as enabling effective communication, embracing and integrating technological innovation, and successfully meeting shifting employee expectations.

Employee Sentiment Study Core Results[20]

49% of EMEA employees are either in the process of moving employers or might/will seek new employment in the next 12 months.

53% of EMEA employees would be willing to sacrifice existing benefits for a better choice of benefits.

43% of EMEA employees say employers should support employee wellbeing.

41% of EMEA employees ranked 'provides better than average pay and meaningful benefits' as the number one most influential characteristic attracting employees.

Innovations and Solutions

At a crossroads of a multi-generational workforce and emerging technology, EMEA organisations will benefit from embracing a benefits solution that integrates smoothly with current processes, instigates employee engagement and enhances two-way communications. Utilising data is key to subduing rising costs and refining personalisation, as is the further integration of AI technology. In short, EMEA organisations must take the jump and elevate their EVP with a benefits solution that meets — and goes beyond — shifting employee demands.

Take Action

- Embrace a comprehensive, highly integratable total rewards benefits solution.
- Continue refining EVPs to ensure maximum flexibility and personalisation for a multi-generational workforce.
- Pursuing innovative solutions will help organisations successfully confront the future in both the short and long term, building lasting resilience in the face of rising employee expectations and heightening costs.

20 Aon's Employee Sentiment Study.

United Kingdom

The Current Landscape

The UK reward landscape is relatively mature and competitive compared to other EMEA regions, offering a wide range of flexible core benefits to satisfy a diverse workforce. With an aging population[21] and the NHS continuing to struggle,[22] health insurance is indisputably the fastest-growing desired benefit among all ages, despite a 25% increase in private medical insurance costs.[23]

Even with expansion in this area, the priority for most employees is their future financial security. 'Retirement savings' is the highest-valued benefit for Generation Z, Generation X and Baby Boomers, while Millennials rank it second. Auto-enrolment has helped the younger generations better understand their finances, with many organisations offering pension salary sacrifices. Tax efficiencies have largely dissipated for organisations buying benefits, but tax and national insurance efficiencies remain within holiday benefits and electric car leases. Key to the UK market, however, is the increase in employer national insurance contributions, which is expected to — without action — continue to squeeze company benefit budgets for years to come.

21 The UK's changing population, UK Parliament.

22 The doctor will see you never – the NHS in 2025, The New Statesman.

23 Broking Insight September 2025

Employee Sentiment Study Core Results[24]

57% would be willing to sacrifice existing benefits for a better choice of benefits.

27% of employees are not at all confident that their employer is investing in their skills development and training to prepare them for the future of work.

65% of employees are either in the process of moving employers or might/will seek new employment in the next 12 months.

3 out of 4 generations rank 'Retirement savings' as their top valued benefit.

29% of employees are unsure of the impact of AI on their jobs.

3% of employees classify their current wellbeing as thriving.

Innovations and Solutions

It is expected that UK organisations will benefit hugely from a more data-led approach to benefits, helping meet the expectations and challenges of health insurance and retirement savings benefits. In the UK, Aon holds a unique position as a leader in using data to drive communications and output from benefits platforms, using the most advanced set of data analytics tools in the country. As the cost-of-living crisis deepens, employees increasingly anticipate a rise in wages; in response, employers must develop a stronger communication method to articulate the value of benefits effectively.

Take Action

- Take a data-driven approach to targeted communications, which can drive down costs and increase opportunities for more spending.
- Use health and pensions data specifically to inform personalised communications for both younger and older generations.
- Set SMART objectives and understand what your organisation is trying to achieve to align stakeholder buy-in.
- Take an omnichannel approach to communications to deliver more consistent and integrated messaging around total rewards.
- Leverage health data to provide targeted interventions to the right people at the right time (Health Risk Analyser can facilitate this).

24 Aon's Employee Sentiment Study.

Ireland

The Current Landscape

Ireland's employee benefits landscape continues to be dominated by health insurance and pensions, and this doesn't seem to be slowing. As such, Irish medical plans have experienced an inflation-related increase in costs. Despite the urgency and significance of health insurance across all generations, recent years have shown a distinct focus on lifestyle and voluntary benefits, as well as allowance models that offer flexibility and broaden the overarching package. Dental insurance, AVC pensions and holiday trading have also gained traction. Many of these personalised initiatives have a particular emphasis on gender, with one global conglomerate in Ireland recently launching a menopause policy that ignited a lasting conversation around the gender lens on benefits.[25]

As with other EU nations, pay transparency legislation in Ireland is expected to inevitably drive a trend towards embracing innovative benefits solutions. However, AI integration and data utilisation are not being initiated as fast as other EMEA countries, while attraction and retention remain a challenge in a tight labour market.

25 Vodafone to train all staff about effects of menopause, Irish Independent

Employee Sentiment Study Core Results[26]

67% of employees are either in the process of moving employers or might/will seek new employment in the next 12 months.

52% say employers should help employees save for retirement/long-term needs.

66% would be willing to sacrifice existing benefits for a better choice of benefits.

27% of employees are 'not at all confident' that their employer is investing in their skills development and training to prepare them for the future of work.

Innovations and Solutions

Within many organisations, private medical insurance (PMI) has been offered to employees to provide more coverage to account for the broad spectrum of life choices. Voluntary benefits and the ability to cover dependents have been especially vital, while data utilisation in Ireland is becoming an innovative solution to some of the country's biggest employee benefit challenges. Aon's analytics hubs are the perfect example, providing statistics on take-up rates and engagement and helping organisations to design and build the most effective benefits package.

Take Action

- Leverage existing insurer relationships to cultivate better value from premium spend.
- Generate an effective communications strategy to underpin benefits programmes.
- Target benefits that balance aligning broader company benefit strategies with those most valued by employees.
- Ensure effective collection of employee feedback to hone your offering over time.

26 Aon's Employee Sentiment Study.

Portugal

The Current Landscape

In Portugal, 70 percent of companies offer flexibility within their Employee Value Propositions, and there continues to be key tax advantages to offering them.[27] Unlike salary exchange in the UK and some other EMEA countries, base salary cannot be touched. There has been a distinct push in the market towards more flexibility, with employees increasingly expecting a wide range of benefits. This was reflected in the Employee Sentiment Study, with 70 percent of Portuguese employees stating that they would be willing to sacrifice existing benefits for a better choice of benefits.[28]

Portuguese organisations offer lower salaries compared to other EMEA nations. However, the country is becoming more attractive to remote and foreign workers, driving up housing costs and increasing financial pressures on native workers. The Iberian nation also has an exceptionally high ageing population, with an old-age dependency ratio of 38.2 percent. This is one of the highest in the EU, equating to fewer than three working age adults per adults aged 65 or over, putting social security under significant pressure.[29] Despite a reputation as a generous pension provider, social security will become an integral challenge in the coming years.

27 Aon's Employee Sentiment Study.

28 Aon's Employee Sentiment Study.

29 Population structure and ageing, Eurostat.

Employee Sentiment Study Core Results[30]

70% would be willing to sacrifice existing benefits for a better choice of benefits.

46% of employees are either in the process of moving employers or might/will seek new employment in the next 12 months.

33% of employees feel undervalued.

58% say employers should support employee wellbeing.

42% say employers should provide financial education.

Innovations and Solutions

Complex Portuguese regulation, labour and tax laws have also induced organisational headaches in the past. Employers should work with legal and compliance experts to ensure all benefits align with local regulations, with regular reviews and updated benefit plans needed to keep compliance in line with new laws.

Take Action

- Collect comprehensive data on current benefit offerings, including pensions and insured benefits (e.g., medical, life, income protection, critical illness, dental, travel insurance).
- Incorporate employee feedback through surveys and focus groups.
- Benchmark benefits against general Portuguese market practices.
- Simplify and segment benefit details when communicating with employees to avoid information overload.
- Diversify communication channels to reach more employees with key updates and foster engagement.

30 Aon's Employee Sentiment Study.

Spain

The Current Landscape

Work-life balance is a powerful incentive for employees in the Spanish marketplace, with 'Paid time off' and 'Work-life balance programmes' high on the list of valued benefits for every generation.[31] As with many other EMEA countries, retirement benefits are expected to grow over the next five years, in line with an ageing population and legislative changes. Unlike neighbouring Portugal, salary sacrifice plans are common, with flexible compensation plans under the IRPF (Personal Income Tax Law) in Spain.[32] The government is increasingly keen to promote benefits linked to private health insurance and social security through employers to release the burden on public services, which continue to struggle. Legislation has also been enacted on flexible working (often called teleworking in Spain) for those who work 30 percent of their time at home.[33] This requires employers to cover all costs, including equipment and maintenance.

With effective EVPs, organisations can gain tax advantages and cost efficiencies without increasing salaries. Organisations must grasp these perks to drive cost optimisation.

31 Aon's Employee Sentiment Study.

32 Personal income tax, Spanish Government.

33 Telework Legislation, European Council.

Employee Sentiment Study Core Results[34]

55% would be willing to sacrifice existing benefits for a better choice of benefits.

50% say employers should support employee wellbeing.

22% of employees are unsure of the impact of AI on their jobs.

4 out of 4 generations rank 'Paid time off' as their top valued benefit.

32% of employees are not at all confident that their employer is investing in their skills development and training to prepare them for the future of work.

Innovations and Solutions

While tailored benefits are common in Spain, many organisations have faced challenges integrating the right technology into their processes. Embracing modern, global technology and further digitalisation, including AI and data, will be vital for Spanish organisations looking to gain a competitive edge. While retirement savings are only number four on the top five valued benefits across all generations, an ageing population and incoming legislation on retirement[35] means employers should prioritise refining their pension offering. This should be done without neglecting the younger generations, where efficient personalisation becomes ever more crucial. Total Reward Statements (TRS) are also gaining special relevance, highlighting and communicating benefits and helping companies to comply with the EU Pay Transparency Directive.

Take Action

- Embrace further digitalisation to enhance employee communication and benefits utilisation, using all-in-one platforms.
- Ensure core offerings, including retirement costs and health insurance, are secure and relevant in the face of Spain's changing regulatory and political landscape.
- Automate and streamline administrative processes by leveraging AI technology to improve efficiency and ease complexity.

34 Aon's Employee Sentiment Study.

35 New rules for retiring in Spain: 2025 and beyond, EuroWeekly.

Italy

The Current Landscape

Tax policies, incentives and efficiencies are particularly prominent in the Italian benefits market. Increasing private healthcare costs have made employee health protection, including accident insurance, a critical focus for companies, while there is a growing emphasis on medical expense reimbursement and accident insurance. E-commerce benefits, such as vouchers for groceries, are popular thanks to full integration with vendors and numerous tax efficiencies. There is also a growing adoption of flexible benefits plans, allowing employees to access various services and advantages — including healthcare, education, mobility, and wellness — tailored to their individual needs and preferences.

An ageing population and workforce struggles — with just 1 percent of Italian employees 'thriving'[36] — are significant hurdles, while future Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) regulation must also be considered. Italian wages have stagnated in recent years, lagging behind other EMEA nations, but tailored benefits can play a pivotal role in both attracting and retaining talent. Many companies are increasingly investing in integrated wellbeing and benefits strategies in response to these challenges. According to the Aon H&B Benefits and Trends Report Italia 2024, 76 percent of Italian companies have already implemented a wellbeing strategy.[37]

36 Aon's Employee Sentiment Study.

37 Aon H&B Benefits and Trends Report Italia 2024.

Employee Sentiment Study Core Results[38]

57% would be willing to sacrifice existing benefits for a better choice of benefits.

1% of employees report that they are thriving and feel continual, positive progression.

3 out of 4 generations rank 'medical coverage/ health insurance' as their top valued benefit.

25% disagree that their employer provides easy access to benefits.

19% of employees feel undervalued.

Innovations and Solutions

Italy's employees are often unaware of the full benefits available at their fingertips, with Italian employers too often relying on traditional communication methods and complicated messaging. A comprehensive communication strategy focusing on regular updates and engaging, simplified content through diverse communication channels is key to enlightening the workforce.

To meet the increase in health insurance, some Italian organisations have introduced other tools to support employee wellbeing. These jointly physical and digital services meet various employee expectations, providing flexibility and comprehensive health cover. In addition, many companies are leveraging the healthcare network, which enables employees to access medical services at discounted rates through a vast network of affiliated providers.

Health pods are also being used as a proactive engagement tool for prevention: they are compact, tech-enabled booths equipped with medical devices that allow employees to monitor key health indicators (such as blood pressure, heart rate, BMI and more) autonomously and confidentially, often integrated with digital health platforms.

Take Action

- Analyse demographic data, segmenting workforces into different groups based on age, job role, location and other factors, allowing for more targeted communication.
- Stay informed on Italy's volatile regulatory environment by working with an expert provider, such as Aon.
- Automate and streamline administrative processes by leveraging AI technology to enhance efficiency and reduce complexity.

38 Aon's Employee Sentiment Study.

Netherlands

The Current Landscape

While the Netherlands' benefits offering is considered less flexible than several other EMEA nations (such as the UK), employees still have a wide range of core benefits. Real-time customisation platforms are becoming increasingly popular, with Human Resources Information System (HRIS) integration, analytics and dashboards, self-service portals, and benefits management platforms all being embraced as key tools.

The mandatory holiday allowance in the Netherlands, known as 'vakantiegeld',[39] is often creatively used by employers as a flexible benefits budget, reallocating funds to a benefit that better suits the employee, such as wellness or pension contributions. Tax-efficient schemes are also prevalent, including the compulsory Work-Related Costs Scheme (WKR),[40] which enables employers to offer certain benefits tax-free, optimising cost-effectiveness.

39 Paying holiday allowance to your staff, Dutch Government.

40 Work-related costs scheme: staff allowances, Dutch Government.

Employee Sentiment Study Core Results[41]

61% would be willing to sacrifice existing benefits for a better choice of benefits.

44% of employees are either in the process of moving employers or might/will seek new employment in the next 12 months.

4 out of 4 generations rank 'Paid time off' as their top valued benefit.

16% disagree that their employer provides sufficient information about their benefits and choices.

Women are 15% more likely than men to want health and wellbeing benefits.

Innovations and Solutions

Overwhelming information is a consistent trend in the Netherlands, but breaking down benefits into digestible and relevant segments can be particularly helpful. This is also true regarding one-size-fits-all messaging; regular, personalised communication will deliver the right message to the right group or individual. A lack of clarity can be combated with more straightforward language, supported by visual aids, while actively soliciting — and acting upon — employee input can be transformative.

Take Action

- Gather continuous feedback through surveys and one-on-one discussions, in order to adapt to changing employee expectations.
- Embrace technology-driven personalisation platforms, which allow real-time customisation.
- Follow HRIS integration to streamline data flow and compliance.
- Implement arrangements that allow older employees to reduce hours with partial income and pension accrual.
- Use HR analytics to understand workforce age, distribution and preferences.

41 Aon's Employee Sentiment Study.

France

The Current Landscape

In France, personalisation is particularly limited compared to other EMEA nations, with most benefits either statutory or based on Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBAs). This is mainly due to the high cost that businesses incur when integrating personalised benefits. Truly flexible benefits are not market practice by any means, with many larger organisations simply providing employees with pre-paid credit cards in order to provide flexibility. In some cases, companies still stubbornly stick with paper forms to process employee benefits.

Employee Sentiment Study Core Results[42]

54% would be willing to sacrifice existing benefits for a better choice of benefits.

Women are 10% more likely than men to want life and disability insurance.

4 out of 4 generations rank 'Paid time off' as their top valued benefit.

29% of employees are not at all confident that their employer is investing in their skills development and training to prepare them for the future of work.

41% of employees are either in the process of moving employers or might/will seek new employment in the next 12 months.

Innovations and Solutions

Comprehensive benefits surveys — carried out by large brokers or consultants such as Aon — can provide French organisations with much greater insight into their workforce. Voucher programmes and pre-paid credit cards are other innovative benefits solutions in the country, with many large corporations and tech industry businesses embracing them.

Take Action

- Diversify contact channels and move away from HRD external channels and towards internal communications, while reducing the often overly frequent rate.
- Use payroll systems as data sources, with the intention of tailoring communication strategies.
- Integrate innovative total reward packages and technology into current processes.

42 Aon's Employee Sentiment Study.

Germany

The Current Landscape

In the German benefits landscape, a core focus is tailored communication, which helps employees better understand the benefits they can access. Lifestyle benefits are tax-efficient and are quickly gaining traction as workers feel the squeeze of rising living standards, but tax advantages are low in comparison to some other EMEA nations. German organisations also face challenges with worker councils,[43] and data utilisation, which are key pieces of the puzzle for further digitalisation. Older generations in Germany are typically well catered for and value employer benefits.

43 German Works Council Constitution Act, Berlin Business Location Centre.

Employee Sentiment Study Core Results[44]

34% would be willing to sacrifice existing benefits for a better choice of benefits.

39% say employers should help employees save for retirement/long-term needs.

46% of employees are either in the process of moving employers or might/will seek new employment in the next 12 months.

21% disagree that their employer is taking the necessary actions to protect and improve the wellbeing of employees.

Innovations and Solutions

Data analytics will be a vital step forward for German employers, helping them understand disparate segments in the workforce and how their preferences vary. The result will be more efficient communications, assisting employees to feel heard and empowering business-worker relationships. Digital benefits platforms are particularly suitable for this, as they radically enhance personalisation.

Take Action

- Benchmark against relevant businesses to understand trends and gaps in your programme, helping to keep pace with competitors.
- Leverage data and preference surveys to align benefits to values and employee needs.
- Create more personalised, multi-channel communications, addressing the common lack of employee relevance.
- Use tailored or customisable benefits to minimise the burden on HR.
- Combine insured and non-insured benefits in a tax-efficient way by offering flexible options.

44 Aon's Employee Sentiment Study.

United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.)

The Current Landscape

The U.A.E. has a highly diverse workforce with varying cultural backgrounds and expectations, which requires thorough assessments and surveys to fine-tune EVPs. Cultural sensitivity is also vital in such a culturally diverse employee base.

Many employees report a lack of awareness of the full range of benefits on offer to them, which has led to underutilisation in some sectors. Comprehensive, multi-channel communication and training programmes are a must for a well-informed workforce. Information overload, failure to seek employee feedback and a lack of training for managers are other factors that prevent U.A.E. organisations from effectively utilising their benefits package. Traditionally, many employees migrate to the U.A.E. for a short time, but this is changing thanks to appealing, tailored benefits.

Employee Sentiment Study Core Results[45]

48% say employers should support employee wellbeing.

83% would be willing to sacrifice existing benefits for a better choice of benefits.

70% agree that their compensation is fair compared to similar roles in the industry.

Innovations and Solutions

The UAE is one of the fastest-growing talent markets in the MEA region, driven by a strong focus on enhancing the employee value proposition (EVP) through competitive rewards, work-life balance and flexibility. Increased competition between private and public sectors and the adoption of best-in-class frameworks have created skill-based opportunities and ensured the UAE remains a leader in modern human capital strategies. Many companies are partnering with wellness providers at a reduced cost to offer physical and mental wellbeing services, leading to healthier employees and healthcare savings. Telehealth consultations — a lower-cost, convenient option — also provide additional healthcare options, saving time and travel expenses for employees and employers.

Partnerships with childcare support initiatives can attract and retain talent without substantial costs, offering partnerships with childcare providers or benefits that assist with family responsibilities, which can enhance employee morale.

Take Action

- Foster a culture of continuous, reciprocal feedback on benefits by conducting regular surveys on employee preferences and priorities.
- Offer personalised wellness initiatives that cater to employees' specific health and wellbeing needs, including mental health support, fitness memberships or health screenings.
- Make use of innovative HR technology platforms to offer enhanced personalisation.
- Provide regular reviews and updates, continuously assessing and updating benefits based on demographic changes, market trends and feedback.
- Always consult with legal experts and HR experts to navigate regulatory challenges.

45 Aon's Employee Sentiment Study.

Transforming Total Rewards: Technology as the Catalyst for Personalisation, Transparency and Performance

Embrace a Benefits Experience that Inspires, Drives Impact and Supports Your People

In a competitive talent market, employees' benefit expectations are evolving and expanding. Today, employees demand highly personalised benefits delivered through simple and engaging digital experiences. To meet this challenge, organisations must build a compelling total rewards and benefits experience that appeals to multiple generations and attracts and retains the talent needed to realise their business aspirations now and in the future. With the right benefits platform, organisations can:

- Manage costs and achieve affordability
- Craft positive employee experiences and encourage uptake
- Drive better value across the board
- Reduce health risks
- Generate broad workforce insights
- Build a resilient and agile workforce

Resources, costs and integration timelines are often barriers to adoption, forcing organisations to stick with traditional benefit structures and lose their competitive edge in an increasingly digitalised landscape.

The Growing Importance of Technology

The speed of technological change is accelerating every day. As the pace of advancements picks up, Aon is continuously investing and developing in TBS to ensure organisations remain at the forefront of innovation and retain a unique competitive advantage. With the right benefits technology, integrated efficiently into current processes, organisations can drive employee engagement and make data-oriented decisions, while staying ahead of the competition.

Aon's Benefits Technology (TBS) is the perfect example, providing organisations with a straightforward way to produce highly personalised benefits at a time when rising costs are stifling innovation. Our services are wide-ranging, and include total rewards consulting, benefits consulting, flex consulting, benefits technology, predictive analytics, benefits communications and benefits brokerage. Its advantages are helping leaders to:

- Manage costs and achieve affordability with a clear analytics dashboard.
- Provide employees with clarity and enhance utilisation, thanks to a smooth user experience.
- Access a valuable bank of data to help inform decision-making on benefits offerings.

Aon's TBS ultimately results in a greater return on investment due to enhanced employee engagement and more accurate alignment. Continuous development, automated processes and extensive client guidance are other core elements. On top of cost efficiency, business performance may greatly enhance, too.

Embracing an Innovative Benefits Technology to Confront the Challenges of Today and Tomorrow

In most cases, employees are the number one cost for multinational organisations, but they are also their greatest asset. The right benefits technology has the power to drive down expenditures and greatly enhance employee engagement without increasing spending.

As the Employee Sentiment Study makes clear, workers across the world increasingly value total rewards and personalised benefits packages. There are certainly hurdles to be overcome: meeting pay transparency expectations, enhancing employee and employer communications, navigating multi-generational preferences and integrating new technological processes, to name a few.

Execution is key. A benefits change can appear as a large-scale change management project for many organisations, but pulling the trigger can unleash myriad advantages. EMEA nations are well-positioned to embrace technology that, in the past, has seemed challenging and near-impossible to integrate without high costs and significant time expenditure.

Over recent years, due to shifting employee and employer expectations the experience has evolved to become more holistic; focusing on engaging employees on wider total rewards e.g benefits, pensions, total rewards statements, wellbeing tools and resources. With Aon's technology and data-driven insights, it's never been easier to achieve full personalisation and generate greater impact from benefits and rewards strategies, all without increasing spend.

Today, a flexible, forward-thinking, hyper-personalised benefits solution is ready and waiting. All organisations have to do is reach out and grasp it.

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About

Aon plc (NYSE: AON) exists to shape decisions for the better — to protect and enrich the lives of people around the world. Through actionable analytic insight, globally integrated Risk Capital and Human Capital expertise, and locally relevant solutions, our colleagues provide clients in over 120 countries with the clarity and confidence to make better risk and people decisions that help protect and grow their businesses.

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