

Lisa Sheppard:

In previous years, our benefit fairs were conducted in person. We would hold the fairs in Building 520. And we would have separate days for the represented employees, and then other days for our non-represented employees.

Christine Latusek:

Here at Ingalls, the fairs were a live event where our benefits staff and our vendors would set up tables at locations within the shipyard. Employees could visit the tables and speak directly with the vendors, but they did have to attend either before work, during lunch or after work.

Teena Senicka:

It was a pretty labor intensive event. Technical Solutions in partnership with human resources would put together a series of live presentations, which in many cases involved travel. For example, last year we delivered 30 live presentations throughout the organization. We don't have vendors participating in those events, typically it's just benefits and HR delivering a presentation to the employee, with an opportunity for some brief question and answer at the end.

Christine Latusek:

Probably the biggest limitation was that spouses or dependents couldn't attend the fair, it was for employees only, for security purposes spouses couldn't come into the shipyard.

Lisa Sheppard:

Not everybody could attend during the times that we had it. If hourly employees came to the fair, they would have to use PTO, or come before or after they got off their shift. And then for our salaried employees, they would have to come at lunchtime or use flex-time. Another limitation was the location.

Teena Senicka:

Offering employees a virtual benefits fair opportunity at annual enrollment is really transformational, in terms of the way that we deliver benefits to employees. It gives them so much more flexibility and options that meet not only their needs, but the needs of their family members as well. The Virtual Benefits Fair gives spouses and partners an opportunity to sit side by side with the employee, view the presentations, review the materials, and seek out questions and answers.

Lisa Sheppard:

The time limitation for in-person fairs was a big obstacle. Now employees will be able to log on anytime, seven days a week, 24 hours a day, and view the same information that they would've gotten in-person. So it does allow employees to have a longer period to be able to access benefit information for annual enrollment.

Teena Senicka:

The benefits fair offers a lot of flexibility. Employees will have an opportunity to go to the portal and view past presentations, download the materials regarding all of the various benefits, and review that at their leisure. All of the sessions will be recorded and available on demand through May 14th. So if an employee wanted to sit side-by-side with their spouse or their partner and view the presentations later, they have the ability to do that.

Christine Latusek:

So employees or their dependents can go into these virtual rooms where they can view videos that the vendors have created themselves. They can view these videos, they can download brochures that they can put into their swag bag to review at their convenience. But it'll look just like a lobby that the employee is walking into, and then just virtually picking and choosing what is of interest to them.

Teena Senicka:

I think it's a 21st century solution, and it's really coming at a very opportune time. I know we are a very dispersed organization, Technical Solutions, approximately 5,000 employees doing business in 46 States and 16 countries. So we have a dispersed employee population already. But when you add the pandemic to that, people working from home, not at a work site in many cases and socially distancing, we just don't have the opportunity to come together like we have in the past. So this is really coming at a time when it's very much needed.

Christine Latusek:

The virtual benefits fair is really transformational for benefits. It opens up the access to many more employees, and it is much more convenient.

Lisa Sheppard:

I believe that this is a positive transformation for Huntington Ingalls' benefits. With a lot of things due to the pandemic going virtual, this gives us an opportunity to pivot to a new format for our employees. And I believe that this may be the wave of the future for us to be able to reach more employees, and to have them access information to their benefits at this time of year.