

2020

E-book version

How to Boost Enrolment in Your Employee Stock Plan

Download the latest eBook from the Global Shares Academy for a step-by-step guide on how to boost your plan participation rates. Free templates, sample marketing texts and more.

Don't miss out.





Why employee ownership?

Enticing more staff to join your company's employee stock plan is good for business: it means more workers have a stake in its success. Higher engagement levels improve everything from productivity to profitability – so it's in your best interest to have a well-subscribed employee stock plan.

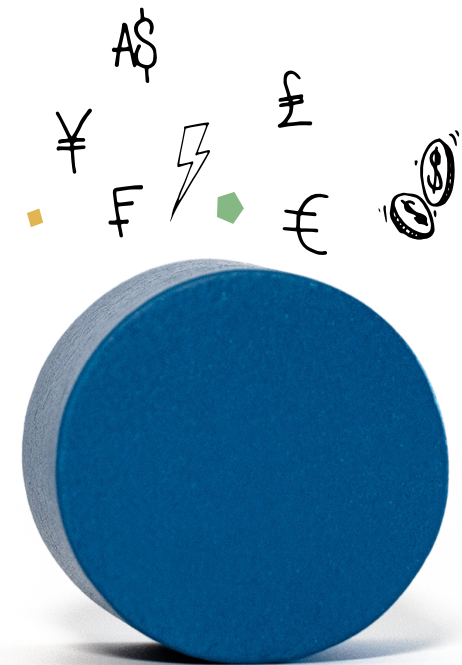
But how do you go about increasing the numbers?
[Read our comprehensive guide for some expert tips on increasing engagement in your plan.](#)

Collaboration

It might seem obvious but telling your eligible employees about the stock plan in the first place is a good first step. Employees can only join a plan if they're aware of its existence so talking to them about it – whether in person or via internal communication channels – is key.

Focused messaging from the HR, compensation & benefits and marketing departments is essential to communicating to employees on the benefits of subscribing to the employee stock plan. Proper collaboration between these departments is necessary in order to get the correct message across.

Your marketing personnel will know how to communicate your stock plan to your workforce, but they might not necessarily know the ins and outs of the plan. Engage an expert from the compensation & benefits or finance department to explain the rules and requirements that come alongside joining the plan. This can then be communicated in an easy-to-understand way by your marketing team.



Here are some tips of what to include in a written brief:

- *What type of plan is it?*
- *Explain – in very simple and easy to understand language – what the plan is and how it works. Don't bombard people with too much technical information. Keep it concise.*
- *Lay down the rules early. If there are joining restrictions – such as the length of time someone has been at the company before signing up – explain these early on.*
- *Focus your communication campaigns. Don't send information to junior staff members about plans that are only available to executives, or vice versa. It can breed frustration if people are sent information that's not relevant to them.*
- *Spend some time creating proper lists so that you're sending the correct details to the correct people.*
- *Use statistics and case studies to demonstrate the value of joining the plan. Is there an example or case study that demonstrates how an employee benefited from joining?*



Talk the Talk



Talk about your employee stock plan at different stages. From the recruitment phase to the onboarding process and beyond, make sure that they're aware of their entitlements to join a plan and how they go about doing so. The whole point of employee stock plans is to attract, engage and retain employees. If your company is employee owned, talk about it on your website, mention it in job specs and make sure that you tell the world.

Focused messaging from the HR, compensation & benefits and marketing departments is essential to communicating to employees on the benefits of subscribing to the employee stock plan. Proper collaboration between these departments is necessary in order to get the correct message across.

Employee-owned companies perform exceptionally well, and it's been shown that having ownership in the company that you work for encourages you to work harder and engage more. It makes total sense – if you've got a vested interest in the success and profitability of a company, you'll do your best to ensure that you work as part of a team to help it with its strategies and goals.

When you're at the hiring stage, a job ad should mention the fact that there is an option to join an employee stock plan. During an interview, it should also be mentioned as one of the perks and during the onboarding process, new employees should be given information packs about the employee stock.

Direct communication.



Rather than digitally communicating with your workforce, you could also consider an awareness campaign that directly targets employees while they're in the office. Think posters for the work cafeteria or break room or displaying information on TV screens by the coffee machine. Passively reminding employees about the option to join the stock plan will keep the information fresh in their minds on an ongoing basis. As the saying goes, seeing is believing and visual cues about the stock plan are simple yet effective ways to boost awareness and therefore participation rates.

Organize an information session at lunch. Order in free sandwiches or pizza and invite employees along to learn how they can opt in to the stock plan.

Who doesn't love free pizza?!

Keep the session casual, informative and jargon-free. As with your written communication, when you're speaking to people, you shouldn't bombard them with too much complex information that's meaningless to them because they don't know what you're talking about. Always simplify and tell them about the stock plan from their point of view. How does it work? How much will it impact on their base monthly salary if they buy in? What happens if they leave or if their contract is terminated? What discount are they getting on stock? People want to know why they should join, how they can join and what impact it will have on their finances.



Use case studies.

It is a great idea to get someone to talk about how joining the stock plan benefited them. Perhaps you can get Jean from the Operations team to talk about how cashing in her stock helped her pay for her dream wedding, or Liza from the finance team paid for a dream vacation to Europe thanks to her stock plan. People will relate much more to real people telling their real-life story much more than they will to just numbers and hypotheticals.

A proper communications strategy will breathe life into your stock plans and enable potential participants to visualize exactly how they will benefit if they join.

You need to be prepared to answer some unexpected questions about the plan, or about the information you have provided. Make sure you know the information like the back of your hand and if you can't answer a question, make sure to have a prepared response and be able to inform people that you'll come back to them with the correct information.

Remove Uncertainty.

Research has shown that the uptake of employee stock plans can be low because of uncertainty or fears about what may happen in certain situations. Take away that uncertainty by clearly explaining what happens in the event of death, termination of employment, or how participants can withdraw if they so choose.

Dispel myths and misunderstandings as early as possible. Remember that an employee stock plan, even at its most general, has responsibilities on all participants which must be incorporated in your communications strategy.



Talk to Participants.

Keep participants of your employee stock plan informed. Transparency, openness and displaying the intricacies of an employee stock plan in a readable format is essential. Create reports that are easily digestible. Reporting is easy when you outsource the management of your employee stock plan through a company like Global Shares.

Our reporting tools and user-friendly dashboards and wizards allow you to filter through lots of data to create visually appealing graphics and charts to illustrate what you want to communicate with to your participants. Through the Global Shares admin portal, it's also super easy to send attractive, HTML rich emails to participants. Inserting images, graphics and visuals into participant communications is simple, improving click through rates and ensuring that employees read the information you're sending. We have implemented an entire communications plan that will inform your participants throughout the life cycle of a stock. From launch to vest, we promote internal awareness of your equity plan, increase participation rates and help it grow and thrive.

The Benefits of Communicating your stock plan well:

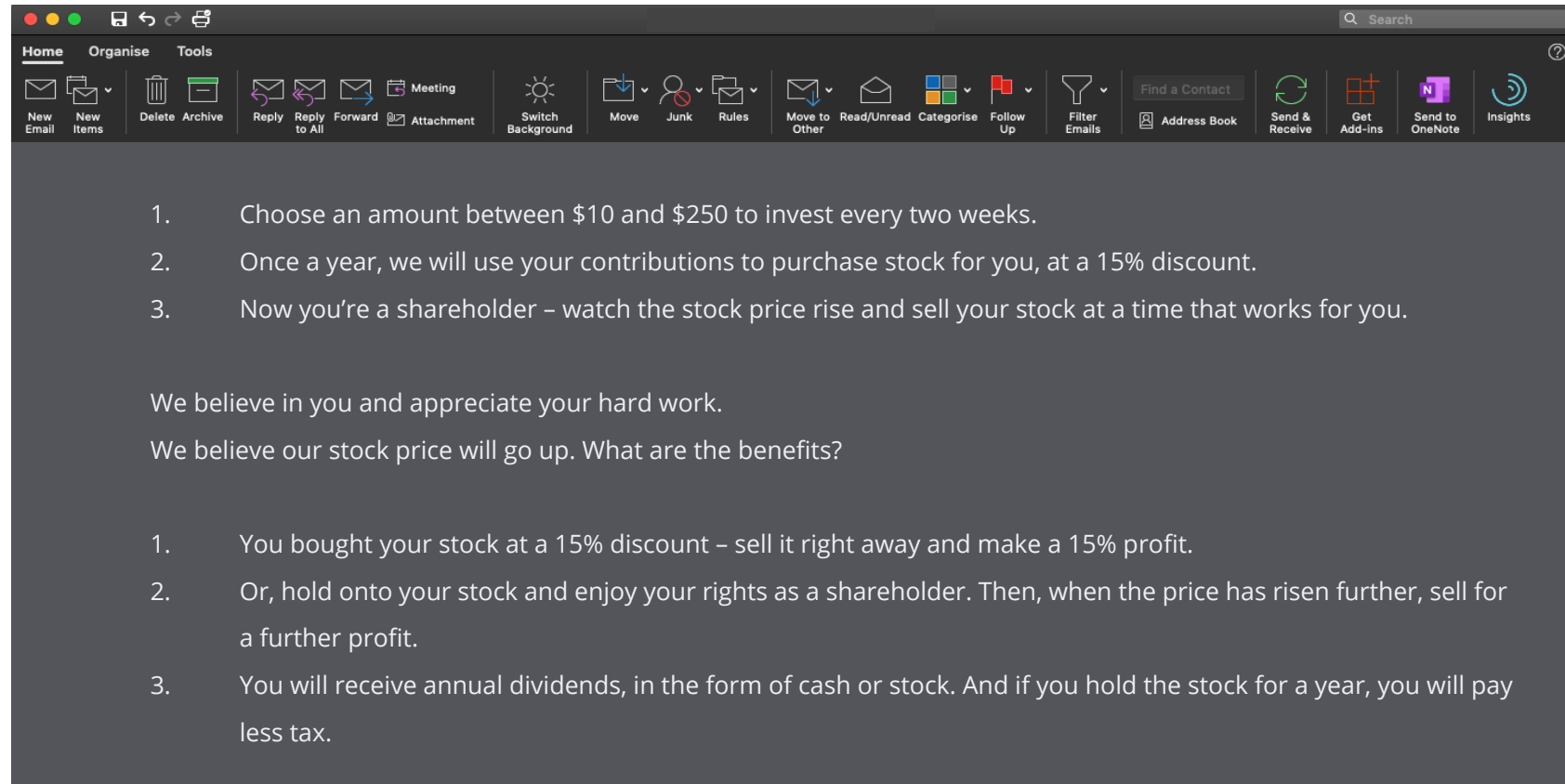
- Increased engagement
- The more clarity people have, the fewer queries you'll have to deal with

Nurture.

In an average stock plan, many participants sell their stocks within the first year – before they can see any benefits. During the long stretches of holding or vesting, keep participants engaged and focused on the benefits. A nurturing campaign can help encourage participants.



Sample template for simple communication:





Conclusion

Communicating your stock plan in a simple, concise and user-friendly way is essential to its success. Here at Global Shares, we've been managing the stock plans of public and private companies all over the world for more than 15 years. We have the expertise and knowledge to help you maximize the power of your stock plans and to empower your employees, enabling your company to grow to its full potential.

Contact us today to book a free consultation and a demo of our award-winning product.

[Click here](#)

www.globalshares.com