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F5 turns open enrollment into same-day insight

COMPANY SIZE
~6,650 employees

INDUSTRY
Application security and delivery

LOCATION
Global

Overview

F5 is a global application delivery and security leader with approximately 6,650 employees. Facing two open enrollments in quick succession for its US-based employees, F5 turned to Avante. Carly, Avante's AI benefits assistant, gave employees personalized answers, while Ava, Avante's AI for benefits teams, gave F5's benefits team a real-time view into what employees needed.

IN A TWO-WEEK ENROLLMENT USING CARLY AND AVA:

612 employee questions
answered across 153 conversations

92 hours
of HR time saved, estimated

27% of questions
arrived after hours

CHALLENGE

Two open enrollments, one already-busy benefits team

F5 was moving its US benefits plan year from fiscal to calendar, creating a three-month short plan year and two open enrollments in quick succession. US-based employees had to navigate deductible resets, HSA changes and, for those with an FSA, another election.

For MaryBeth Kramer, Senior Director, Global Benefits at F5, that meant a surge of work for her team. Even in a normal year, the team fields hundreds of employee questions by email.

The team also had little visibility into what employees needed as enrollment unfolded. They knew from experience which issues were likely to cause confusion, but couldn't see patterns across employee questions or know whether a concern was isolated or widespread.

Reporting was another manual process. When leadership wanted to know how enrollment had gone, the team had to wait for enrollment to close, pull the data and compile the analysis before it could provide a meaningful readout, a process that could take weeks.

> "A single benefits question can easily generate a lengthy email exchange, creating substantial administrative work for the team."



MaryBeth Kramer
Senior Director, Global Benefits, F5

General-purpose AI wasn't built for benefits

F5 was already investing in AI for HR and had built a general-purpose HR agent. But benefits presented a different use case, with its own regulatory requirements, specialized terminology and need for precise, current plan information. Cross-functional testing showed the team that benefits needed AI purpose-built for the job.

Version control was one example. With years of documents in SharePoint, a general-purpose agent could pull an older policy alongside a current one and conflate the two. For benefits, where the right answer can change from one plan year to the next, F5 needed a system that could spot conflicting information and make sure employees received answers based on the right plan documents.

SOLUTION

Purpose-built for benefits. Put to the test by F5.

As a security company, F5 set a high bar for any AI handling employee benefits information. Avante went through F5's architecture review board, spanning technical and AI specialists, privacy, security and legal, with outside ERISA counsel also weighing in.

Avante gave F5 the benefits-specific capabilities it was looking for. During setup, Avante audited F5's benefits content, identified conflicting or outdated documents, and worked with the team to establish which information was current before employees ever used it.

For the short-plan-year enrollment, F5 loaded its transition materials into Avante. Employees could ask Avante's AI assistant, Carly, questions using a web app or by email about deductible resets, FSA re-elections and other changes. The benefits team used another AI agent, Ava, to see what employees were asking and how their questions changed throughout enrollment.

> "Security, privacy, and compliance were non-negotiable requirements for us. Receiving final approval gave us confidence that we could move forward responsibly."



MaryBeth Kramer
Senior Director, Global Benefits, F5

RESULTS

Less manual work. Live insight. Same-day reporting.

Over the two-week enrollment, with no advance promotion of Carly, Avante helped F5:

- Answer 612 employee questions across 153 conversations
- Draft 184 email responses for the benefits team
- Save an estimated 92 hours of HR time
- Support employees after hours, when 27% of questions arrived
- Generate 6 enrollment reports and readouts from baseline through final wrap-up

The team could now see what employees needed while there was still time to act. After day one, Ava identified a concentration of questions about the HSA transition and recommended a targeted email to address them. As enrollment continued, Ava tracked how employee questions changed and helped the team decide where to focus communications next.

By week two, the data showed another shift: employees had moved from initial plan shopping and comparison into deeper questions and plan commitment, the progression F5 had hoped to drive through its communications strategy.

And when enrollment ended, the team didn't have to wait weeks to understand how it had gone. Ava produced the wrap-up the same afternoon.

F5 could show leadership what employees had focused on, how their behavior changed over the two weeks, and whether the communications strategy had achieved its objectives, all on the day enrollment closed.

For Kramer, it was a career first: a full analysis, backed by real data, delivered the day open enrollment closed. “It represented a significant shift in our ability to turn employee questions into actionable insights,” she said.

> “Open enrollment closed at noon, and by 4:00pm I had a comprehensive report and executive-ready summary. Traditionally, that level of analysis would have taken weeks to compile.”
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> **MaryBeth Kramer**
> Senior Director, Global Benefits, F5

LOOK AHEAD

Taking Avante global

F5 is already heading into its second open enrollment, but the benefits team isn't starting over. Avante has the plan documents, results and transition knowledge from the short plan year, giving the team a foundation to compare results across enrollments. And this time, F5 plans to promote Carly more broadly to employees.

Now Kramer wants to take that experience global. She plans to share the US results at F5’s global HR all-hands as she builds support for expanding Avante across regions.

She already has advocates on her benefits team. In a recent company pulse survey about AI, every member of Kramer’s global team responded positively. She attributes that enthusiasm to what they had already experienced with Avante.

> “The team has seen the impact firsthand and is enthusiastic about scaling the solution globally. They view it as a practical tool that helps them better support employees and operate more effectively.”
>
> **MaryBeth Kramer**
> Senior Director, Global Benefits, F5



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