

# U.S. Retirement & Benefits Partners

## The Future of Financial Planning

**A**s the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbates concerns around high debt and depleted or exhausted emergency savings, employees are increasingly turning to their employers for assistance in alleviating their financial stress. According to a recent Prudential survey, nearly 8 out of 10 workers want their company to focus on providing benefits central to their economic well-being. Moreover, the study reveals that workers consider benefits—such as retirement plans, health, disability and life insurance, and emergency savings programs—an integral aspect of their financial resilience. In fact, many employees today prioritize the benefits that employers can offer before accepting a job offer or staying with a business. As such, organizations today seek trustworthy financial services firms to help them with offering top employee benefits and retirement solutions and stand out among their competitors.

Enter U.S. Retirement & Benefits Partners (USRBP). A technology-focused independent national financial services firm, USRBP specializes in public school, governmental, corporate, and non-profit employee benefits plans and employer-sponsored retirement plans.

In an interview with the editorial team of HR Tech, Kevin S. Dunn, Senior Vice President, Chief Information Officer & Chief Information Security Officer of the company, shares his views on how USRBP and its partner firms offer outstanding solutions and services to more than two million clients across the country through a combination of technology, personal service, and extensive product offerings.

### Could you provide a brief overview of the company?

U.S. Retirement & Benefits Partners is one of the largest national independent financial services firms specializing in employee benefits and employer-sponsored retirement plans, including 403(b), 457(b), 401(k), and 401(a). We began our journey back in 2008 and have been successfully serving both the public and private sectors. We have a specialized focus and deep experience in the public markets.

Our highly experienced group of industry experts and a robust technology platform truly distinguish us as the leading single-source solution of technology, benefits, and retirement products. We provide employers and their employees with a full suite of products and services ranging from comprehensive and affordable benefits, retirement compliance to education



KEVIN S. DUNN,  
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT,  
CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER &  
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and administrative programs. Most importantly, we deliver technology and expertise that boost the employer's confidence to serve their employees and meet their compliance and regulatory obligations.

### What do you think are some of the major pain points your clients face today, and how do you go about solving them?

We have observed that the CIOs and other technology leaders are trying hard to resolve a long list of challenges for their business leaders. Today, a major part of an employee's decision to work with or continue working with an employer depends on the benefits and retirement plan the company offers. As such, candidates are enquiring about such benefits during the interview process and while evaluating a competitive offer from another employer. One key thing that employees consider today before taking up an offer is—"does my employer support both my work life and my interests outside of the workplace?" USRBP offers employers an invaluable toolkit of both products and the way to deliver them to the employees.

Furthermore, our primary focus is on helping the employees access their benefits from anywhere. At present, employers have the opportunity to deliver a wide range of benefit plans, from important traditional plans like medical, dental, and disability

to more advanced programs including identity theft protection, telemedicine, and much more. With the unexpected arrival of the pandemic, we increased our focus on providing our clients with access to remote enrollment technologies, including online videos and benefits meetings as well recorded benefits meetings that people can watch anytime. By delivering novel technologies along with the expertise of our enrollment professionals, investment professionals, and counselors who work with employers, we help them come up with the plans and deliver that information for everyone in an organization to make their best choices.

One of our Benefits Administration platforms, The BEACON, has a special module that allows employers to engage with their employees by sending targeted communications to them based on their financial goals and the way they see their needs for different types of benefits. That's all part of the package we bring to an employer. Through our financial wellness center—a package of seminars, online services, materials, calculators, and tools—we allow employees to model out different changes in their life with the help of their employers.

In addition, we are squarely focused on information security. We are deeply committed to a philosophy built around blending industry-leading information security and cybersecurity with the three legs of the standard triangle of people, process, and technology.

From a people standpoint, we conduct continuous training on cybersecurity, not only for our technology teams but for everybody who is involved in providing services to our employers and their employees. From a process standpoint, we have built numerous processes around cybersecurity. Our cybersecurity is evaluated many times a year and has been named industry-leading across our technology platforms.

Finally, from the perspective of technology, we invest heavily in putting the right technology in place. However, we do not just trust the technology; we also train the teams using the technology to be constantly vigilant and ensure that they are protecting that data.

Our solutions are built on the latest platforms. For instance, we use the Microsoft 365 suite across our enterprise. This allows us to keep our client data secure and make it accessible for all of our employees to help and assist our customers.

### **Please shed some light on the methodology you follow to engage with your clients.**

Our engagement process begins with our broker or advisor working with the client. We have offices around the country,

each with a wide variety of specialties. What makes our company unique is that we bring all those specialties together under a single umbrella, and that relationship is our foundation.

It's not just an online web forum or a questionnaire; it's the ability to engage with an industry professional who partners with each of our clients and helps them understand their entire benefits package and how to bring all those elements together rather than looking at those individually.

### **What does the future hold for your organization?**

USRBP is made up of regional firms that have come together to offer best-in-class products and services to our clients. Our mission from the day we started 13 years ago has been to partner with the best entrepreneurs in the market. We continue to foster a culture of collaboration and growth across companies that want to come together to offer the very best products and services.

### **What according to you are the distinct features/differentiating factors of USRBP that give it a competitive edge?**

We have created an environment where employers can select from a range of three different Benefits Administration platforms and three modes of enrollment to find the optimal mix for their employees.

We feel that it is core to our mission to help our clients and their plan participants make informed decisions. To that end we have incorporated some of the most modern technology into highly customized resources, including our Financial Wellness Center and Benefits Administration platforms, which are robustly filled with education videos and decision-support tools.

Additionally, we have technology-based tools that aggregate data from the various services we provide into a single pane of information that we call the Dashboard. This centralization of information across multiple services supports the employer with easier access to information.

USRBP also has a strong commitment to meeting the highest level of Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) criteria in our culture and business operations. Our leaders at every level of the organization are committed to building a diverse, vibrant, and productive workforce. We work hard to enhance our diversity and opportunities across all areas of our firm. We want to be a strong advocate for progress in these areas.

We also have key members in our team who are responsible for finding ways for USRBP and our partner firms to participate in our community. We started Project Starfish to support first responders, medical teams, and front-line workers during the early days of the COVID crisis. Project Starfish has also supported various schools and other educational opportunities. **CA**

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