

Benchmarking Your Retirement Plan

A growing number of retirement plan sponsors are finding that their retirement plan has changed significantly over the past several years. This questionnaire and the plan design benchmarking report generated from it is designed to help you identify potential problems and opportunities with your retirement plan.

CLIENT NAME _____ ADVISOR NAME _____

	Your Client
What is your plan size?	
Micro (Under \$5 million in assets)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Small (\$5 - \$49 million in assets)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Medium (\$50 - \$199 million in assets)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Large (\$200 million - \$1 billion in assets)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mega (Over \$1 billion in assets)	<input type="checkbox"/>
What type of defined contribution (DC) plan(s) does your organization offer? (check all that apply)	
401(k)	<input type="checkbox"/>
403(b)	<input type="checkbox"/>
457	<input type="checkbox"/>
Money Purchase	<input type="checkbox"/>
Profit Sharing	<input type="checkbox"/>
ESOP	<input type="checkbox"/>
KSOP	<input type="checkbox"/>
Non-Qualified Deferred Compensation (NQDC)	<input type="checkbox"/>
SEP	<input type="checkbox"/>
SIMPLE IRA	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have a Roth contribution option?	
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Which of the following (if any) additional workplace retirement/savings plans does your organization offer? (check all that apply)	
Defined Benefit Plan - Traditional	<input type="checkbox"/>
Defined Benefit Plan - Cash Balance	<input type="checkbox"/>
Defined Benefit Plan - Hybrid/Other formula	<input type="checkbox"/>
Equity Compensation (e.g., Stock) Plan	<input type="checkbox"/>
Health Savings Accounts (HSA)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Retiree Health Benefits	<input type="checkbox"/>
529 College Savings Plan	<input type="checkbox"/>
How many participants are in your DC Plan?	
Less than 50	<input type="checkbox"/>
50 - 99	<input type="checkbox"/>
100 - 499	<input type="checkbox"/>
500 - 999	<input type="checkbox"/>
1,000 - 4,999	<input type="checkbox"/>
5,000 - 9,999	<input type="checkbox"/>
10,000 or more	<input type="checkbox"/>

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Is your DC plan a “safe harbor” plan?	
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>
When are full-time employees eligible to participate in the plan?	
Immediately upon hire	<input type="checkbox"/>
Within 3 months of employment	<input type="checkbox"/>
After 4 to 11 months of employment	<input type="checkbox"/>
After 1 year of employment	<input type="checkbox"/>
After more than 1 year of employment	<input type="checkbox"/>
What is the participation rate in your DC plan among eligible employees?	
	____%
Does the plan have a loan provision?	
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unsure	<input type="checkbox"/>
How many loans can a participant have open at one time?	
1	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 or more	<input type="checkbox"/>
Which of the following in-service distribution options are allowed by your plan document? (check all that apply)	
Hardship withdrawals	<input type="checkbox"/>
Distributions connected to attainment of a specific age	<input type="checkbox"/>
Distributions to active duty military personnel (as defined in the HEART Act)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Distribution of rollover assets previously received from the employee	<input type="checkbox"/>
Distribution of after-tax dollars	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other in-service distributions conditioned to specific circumstances (please describe)	<input type="checkbox"/>
None – we do not allow in-service distributions of any type	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you use automatic enrollment?	
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unsure	<input type="checkbox"/>
What is the default investment for automatic enrollment?	
Retail Target-Date Fund (Actively Managed)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Retail Target-Date Fund (Indexed)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Custom Target-Date Fund	<input type="checkbox"/>
Risk-Based Lifestyle Fund	<input type="checkbox"/>
Balanced Fund	<input type="checkbox"/>
Professionally Managed Account (Participant-Level Allocation Model)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stable Value Fund / GIC	<input type="checkbox"/>
Money Market Fund	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

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What is the default deferral rate as a percentage of the employee's salary?	
1%	<input type="checkbox"/>
2%	<input type="checkbox"/>
3%	<input type="checkbox"/>
4%	<input type="checkbox"/>
5%	<input type="checkbox"/>
6%	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
Which of the following (if any) types of "re-enrollment" did your plan take in the past 12-18 months? (check all that apply)	
Re-enrolled employees not participating in the plan	<input type="checkbox"/>
Re-enrolled participants saving below the default deferral rate	<input type="checkbox"/>
Re-enrolled participants not invested in the default investment	<input type="checkbox"/>
We have NOT attempted to re-enroll any employees/ participants	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does your plan offer "auto escalation" (i.e., automatic deferral increases)?	
Yes - but participation is voluntary and participants must opt in to auto escalation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yes - participants are defaulted into auto escalation at time of enrollment unless they opt out; all other participants can opt in at any time	<input type="checkbox"/>
No - we do not offer auto escalation to participants	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unsure/Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>
Which of the following (if any) income-oriented products/services do you offer in your plan? (check all that apply)	
<i>Note: A guaranteed retirement income product guarantees a certain amount of monthly income in retirement.</i>	
Systematic withdrawal option at retirement (i.e., allows participant to schedule a series of fixed/variable withdrawals over a specified period of time)	<input type="checkbox"/>
IN-PLAN insurance-based investment products that guarantee monthly income at retirement (i.e., fixed/variable annuities, GMIBs, GMWBs, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>
IN-PLAN managed payout fund(s) specifically designed to generate a cash flow stream but lacks the guarantee of insurance products	<input type="checkbox"/>
IN-PLAN professional managed account service that helps participants turn account balances into monthly retirement income (i.e., Financial Engines Income+, Morningstar Retirement Manager with Income Secure, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>
OUT-OF-PLAN annuity purchase/bidding service (i.e., Hueler Income Solutions, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>
UNSURE what type of income product(s) are offered	<input type="checkbox"/>
NONE - we do not offer any income-oriented products/services	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is investment advice offered to participants in your DC plan? (check all that apply)	
Yes - through onsite meetings with a financial planner/adviser outside of the plan	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yes - through phone-based conversations with a financial planner/adviser outside of the plan	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yes, using a 3rd party (i.e., Financial Engines, Morningstar, etc.) independent of our recordkeeper	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yes, using proprietary services/tools offered through our DC provider's website/call center/etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yes, through another source	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

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Does your organization offer a matching contribution to participant accounts?

Note: A matching contribution requires a participant contribution that is "matched" by the employer up to some defined limit (i.e., 50% match on first 6% of salary, dollar-for-dollar up to \$1000, etc.).

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unsure/Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>

What is your plan's most common policy for handling plan forfeitures?

Used to pay general plan expenses	<input type="checkbox"/>
Used to reduce future employer contributions	<input type="checkbox"/>
Allocated to existing participants on a pro-rata basis	<input type="checkbox"/>
None - we do not have a formal policy regarding forfeitures	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unsure/Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other policy	<input type="checkbox"/>

Are matching contributions vested on a cliff or graded basis/schedule?

Cliff vesting- employees becomes fully (100%) vested at a designated time of service	<input type="checkbox"/>
Graded vesting - employee becomes partially vested in increasing amounts over time, until fully vested	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unsure/Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you have an employer match, please select the option below that best describes your effective match rate.

More than 100% of first 6% of salary	<input type="checkbox"/>
100% of first 6% of salary	<input type="checkbox"/>
51%-99% of first 6% of salary	<input type="checkbox"/>
50% of first 6% of salary	<input type="checkbox"/>
Less than 50% of first 6% of salary	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

What percentage of active participants do you estimate are deferring enough salary to take full advantage of the MAXIMUM employer match?

All or nearly all participants (90% or more)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vast majority (75% or more)	<input type="checkbox"/>
More than average (More 50% but less than 75%)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Less than average (More than 25% but less than 50%)	<input type="checkbox"/>
A minority (Between 10% and 25%)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Very few (Less than 10%)	<input type="checkbox"/>

How long before participants are 100% vested in the match?

Immediately upon enrollment	<input type="checkbox"/>
1 year or less	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
5 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
6 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
More than 6 years	<input type="checkbox"/>

How frequently are matching contributions made to plan participants?

Each pay period	<input type="checkbox"/>
Non pay period - Annually	<input type="checkbox"/>
Non pay period - Quarterly	<input type="checkbox"/>
Non pay period - Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/>
Non pay period - Twice monthly (24 times per year)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Non pay period - Biweekly (26 times per year)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

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Your Client

Does your plan include a provision to “true up” matching contributions?

Note: A true up match can be used to restore matching contributions “lost” when an employee reaches the annual contribution limit prior to year-end and thus foregoes the opportunity to make additional contributions that would have otherwise been matched. In such situations, a plan may elect to “true up” the employer matching contribution.

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unsure/Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>

Does your organization offer non-elective or profit-sharing contributions to participant accounts?

Note: These contributions generally do NOT require participant contributions.

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unsure/Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>

Which of the following investment classes/options are available to your plan participants? (check all that apply)

Target-Date Funds	<input type="checkbox"/>
Target-Risk Funds (i.e., "growth", "conservative," etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Balanced Funds	<input type="checkbox"/>
Professionally Managed Account Service (for participants)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Money Market Fund	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employer Stock	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stable Value Fund	<input type="checkbox"/>
Real Estate/REITS	<input type="checkbox"/>
Alternative Investments (Hedge Funds, Private Equity, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Socially Responsible Funds	<input type="checkbox"/>

Which investment vehicles is your organization currently using in its DC plan? (check all that apply)

Mutual Funds	<input type="checkbox"/>
Separate Accounts	<input type="checkbox"/>
Collective Investment Trust	<input type="checkbox"/>
ETFs (outside of brokerage windows)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Self-directed Brokerage Window	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mutual Fund Window	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

Which of the following index funds are offered in your plan?

Target-date index fund(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Domestic equity index fund(s) (i.e., S&P 500, Russell 2000, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Domestic bond index fund(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
International equity index fund(s) (i.e., Europe/Asia, Global Market, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>
International bond index fund(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other categories of index funds	<input type="checkbox"/>
NONE - we do not offer any index funds	<input type="checkbox"/>

What is the approximate average expense ratio of all the investment options in your plan?

Less than 0.25% (Less than 25 bps)	<input type="checkbox"/>
More than 0.25-.50% (25-50 bps)	<input type="checkbox"/>
More than 0.50-.75% (51-75 bps)	<input type="checkbox"/>
More than 0.75%-1% (76-100 bps)	<input type="checkbox"/>
More than 1%-1.5% (101-150 bps)	<input type="checkbox"/>
More than 1.5%-2.0% (160-200 bps)	<input type="checkbox"/>
More than 2.0%-2.5% (201-250 bps)	<input type="checkbox"/>
More than 2.5% (more than 250 bps)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>

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How many investment options are OFFERED in your defined contribution plan?	Qty. ____
How many investment options are HELD in your defined contribution plan?	Qty. ____
What type of target-date funds does your DC provider/recordkeeper offer? (check all that apply)	
Target-date funds comprised of funds from one firm (single-manager funds)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Target-date funds comprised of funds from multiple firms (multi-manager funds)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Target-date funds comprised of funds from your plan's current fund line-up (customized funds)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unsure	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you considered building a customized target-date series for your plan utilizing your plan's current fund lineup?	
Already use	<input type="checkbox"/>
Considered - but decided not to use	<input type="checkbox"/>
Considering - may use in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have not considered	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unsure	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does your company have an investment committee for its DC plan?	
Yes - committee includes only internal employees	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yes - committee includes only people external to our company	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yes - committee includes a mix of internal and external people	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yes - but unsure of composition of investment committee	<input type="checkbox"/>
No - we do not have an investment committee	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have a written investment policy statement (IPS) for the DC plan?	
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does your investment policy statement (IPS) specifically cover target-date funds and their underlying funds?	
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unsure	<input type="checkbox"/>
How often do you formally evaluate your DC provider?	
Annually	<input type="checkbox"/>
Every 1 - 2 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
Every 2 - 3 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
Every 3 - 5 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
Every 5+ years	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unsure	<input type="checkbox"/>
How long has your organization used the provider for your plan?	
Less than 1 year	<input type="checkbox"/>
1 - 3 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 - 5 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
5 - 7 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
More than 7 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>

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Which of the following measures (if any) do you use to assess the success of your defined contribution plan? (check all that apply)	
Participation rates	<input type="checkbox"/>
Deferral rates	<input type="checkbox"/>
% participants saving to match	<input type="checkbox"/>
% of participants meeting projected monthly retirement income goals	<input type="checkbox"/>
% of participants meeting retirement income replacement ratio goals	<input type="checkbox"/>
% of participants with "appropriate" asset allocations	<input type="checkbox"/>
% of participants increasing deferral rates in past year	<input type="checkbox"/>
% of participants using advice tools/seminars offered through the plan	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employee satisfaction with plan (through survey)	<input type="checkbox"/>
External/competitive benchmarking of plan design	<input type="checkbox"/>
We do not have any formal plan success measures	<input type="checkbox"/>
How often do you formally review the investment options?	
Quarterly	<input type="checkbox"/>
Twice a year	<input type="checkbox"/>
Annually	<input type="checkbox"/>
Every 1 - 2 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
Every 2 - 3 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
Every 3+ years	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>
How often do you formally review actual administrative costs/fees?	
Annually	<input type="checkbox"/>
Every 1 - 2 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
Every 2 - 3 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
Every 3 - 5 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
Every 5+ years	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unsure/Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>
Generally speaking, how would you say the plan's recordkeeping fees are paid?	
Plan (via participants)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employer	<input type="checkbox"/>
Both	<input type="checkbox"/>
Generally speaking, how would you say the plan's trustee fees are paid?	
Plan (via participants)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employer	<input type="checkbox"/>
Both	<input type="checkbox"/>
Generally speaking, how would you say the plan's employee communications/education expenses are paid?	
Plan (via participants)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employer	<input type="checkbox"/>
Both	<input type="checkbox"/>
Generally speaking, how would you say the plan's legal/compliance/audit fees are paid?	
Plan (via participants)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employer	<input type="checkbox"/>
Both	<input type="checkbox"/>
Generally speaking, how would you say the plan's investment management fees are paid?	
Plan (via participants)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employer	<input type="checkbox"/>
Both	<input type="checkbox"/>

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	Your Client
Generally speaking, how would you say the plan's investment consulting expenses are paid?	
Plan (via participants)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employer	<input type="checkbox"/>
Both	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does your plan employ an "ERISA account" or "plan expense reimbursement account" to capture appropriate revenue sharing credits?	
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unsure	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does your plan employ the services of a financial advisor?	
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unsure/Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>
What is the advisor's fee arrangement? (check all that apply)	
% of plan assets (bps)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Per participant	<input type="checkbox"/>
Project-based	<input type="checkbox"/>
Monthly/annual retainer	<input type="checkbox"/>
Performance: investments	<input type="checkbox"/>
Performance: participation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

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Methodology: Between mid-September and early November 2017, approximately 50,000 survey questionnaires were sent to defined contribution (DC) plan sponsors listed in the PLANSPONSOR magazine database, as well as to client lists supplied by defined contribution providers; a total of 3,750 responses were received by the close of the survey, November 14, 2017. Visit <https://www.plansponsor.com/research/2017-dc-survey-plan-benchmarking/> for more information (registration required).

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