

Employee benefits, jobs & careers

A strong employee benefits package has always been an effective means of recruiting and retaining top talent, setting companies apart in a competitive job market. It is crucial for companies to properly consider employee benefits due to the increasing costs of employment.

Employee expectations are also shifting when it comes to what they want from prospective employers. While pay remains a key factor, perks that enhance monetary stability, decrease personal costs, and enhance work-life balance hold equal weight now.

Employee benefits are indirect forms of compensation, beyond salary, provided by employers to enhance employee well-being and satisfaction. Not all employers are known for their benefits to employees, leaving employees to fend for themselves. Employers in South Africa are increasingly recognising the importance of providing attractive and competitive employee benefits to attract and retain top talent.

Having a comprehensive understanding of the employee benefits landscape is needed for both employers and employees. Understanding mandatory employee benefits is essential. These benefits are legally required and help ensure fair working conditions and social security. In South Africa, mandatory employee benefits include paid time off, unemployment insurance fund, compensation for occupational injuries and diseases, sick leave,



overtime pay, maternity and paternity leave. Some further benefits offered include health insurance, education assistance, employee wellness programs, flexible working hours, and bonus and incentive programs. Many employers in South Africa offer a range of non-mandatory employee benefits. These benefits go beyond the legal requirements and are designed to foster a positive work environment. A well-structured benefits package not only fosters an enhanced overall organisational performance but also attracts top talent.

One common pitfall for employers is too much focus on benefits that employees don't want or need.

When companies are unaware of their workers' problems or desires, they risk a lack of benefits that support their employees and wasting money on benefits that are not needed.

The message for employers? Stay informed and be ready to adapt.

It is beneficial to research the types of health perks your employees want to create a benefits plan that serves your company well.

There is a need to note that, effective from 1 March 2025, the South African government implemented wage hikes encompassing both public and private sectors. The national minimum wage has been adjusted from R27.58 to R28.79 per hour, reflecting the government's commitment to improving workers' livelihoods. It is important to keep abreast of employee benefits and any changes happening in the industry to ensure happy staff.



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Trends influencing the SA employee benefits landscape



Fiona Leppan

The emphasis on **mental health** is anticipated to rise, prompting employers to place a high value on resources and initiatives that promote their employees' well-being.

"Mental health is a critical

element of workplace safety, requiring equal attention as physical health under the Occupational Health and Safety Act 85 of 1993," says Fiona Leppan, Director of Employment law at Cliffe Dekker Hofmeyr Legal Advisers. SANS 45001 highlights the inclusion of mental health in workplace safety and provides a structured approach to mitigating risks to both physical and mental well-being.

Flexibility in work arrangements, specifically remote work options, has been seeing an upsurge as employers acknowledge its advantages. Pnet South Africa recruitment platform, alone, has over 1 000 jobs advertised for 'remote retail jobs'. The trend towards more remote or hybrid jobs grows every day since Covid-19. Though many companies are calling their workers back to the office, believing in the power of real-time, in-person communication from a central location.

But employees are still resisting the abandonment of their flexible working lives. Pew Research highlights that 46% of remote employees would quit their roles entirely if their employer forced them to return to the office.



Checkers Sixty60 says it is confident that it can "pick and deliver customer orders in under 60 minutes without compromising driver safety."

Photo: Ashraf Hendricks, <https://groundup.org.za>

Safety is fast becoming imperative to employees. Supermarkets like Shoprite provides ongoing behavioural training and awareness programmes. For example, to enhance driver safety on last mile Sixty60, they support their riders with their awareness and culture projects. Drivers undergo a K53 rider test at induction followed by annual defensive driving courses and practical training sessions. The Company also employs telematics to monitor driver behaviour, providing insights that help in safety enhancement.

Moreover, weekly safety-themed content and videos are circulated among the staff to foster a culture of safety. In adverse weather conditions, delivery slots are limited to protect the drivers and ensure their safety.

Finally, effective **skills development** and training schemes will be crucial in attracting and retaining skilled employees. For 88% of organisations, LinkedIn's Workplace Learning Report of 2025 finds that "providing learning opportunities" is a top retention strategy.

Shoprite Holdings is the largest private-sector employer in South Africa with over 163 000 employees and is known as an 'employer of choice' across the African continent. They operate with a strong hire-to-retain model which focuses on attracting, retaining and reward.

The Shoprite Group is the largest private sector employer in South Africa and one of the top graduate employers in the country. In 2023, for the third consecutive year, they were awarded

the Gradstar Students' Choice Award for Employer of Choice in the retail sector.

When it comes to career development, they have impressive entry-level programs like their Retail Readiness Programme (RRP) for new entrants to the workforce, Youth Employment Services (YES) initiative to develop young talent and bursaries available for studies in various academic fields. Shoprite is currently investing R780 million in training and development (FY2024).

Shoprite Holdings: Sustainability Report 2024

Shoprite has a strong emphasis on promoting from within, a focus on teamwork and career development as workplace foundations and skills development initiatives aimed at building long-term careers.

SiyaRinga, released in 2020, the Group's innovative internal app, connects more than 97 000 employees with essential updates, news and competitions – delivered free to their phones without data charges. The app also supports wellness programmes and community initiatives, and provides a platform for reporting concerns, making it a key tool for fostering engagement and communication throughout the Group. It is no wonder that 73% of their employees would recommend working there to a friend based on Glassdoor reviews.



Shoprite Sixty60 joined hands with the legendary Yvonne Chaka Chaka to commemorate her 60th birthday with a delivery of essential food items to elderly residents of Soweto.

Nedbank Workplace Banking



Karen Keylock

Another company that is very aware of retaining and looking after employees is Nedbank, "If you are an employer, Nedbank Workplace Banking gives you financial advice on how to run your business better and lets you offer staff the convenience of banking at work – because the less time your staff spend worrying about banking, the more productive they'll be at work and the more productive your business will be, explains Karen Keylock, National Retail Services Manager at Nedbank Commercial Banking.

Added benefits for retail employers is having the online service to minimise time off with trips to the bank as they offer a banker on call to assist with all banking needs and access to sound financial advice and support.

Nedbank employees are given many perks to show they value their staff, like Retirement funds and Life Assurance, Financial assistance, Health benefits, Flexible working practices, Dis-

cretionary leave, Deals and discounts, Nedbank Running Club, Dr Holsboer holiday accommodation, social responsibility leave, religious holidays, Employee Volunteerism Programme and Performance management.



In the wake of devastating floods in KwaZulu-Natal in March 2025, Shoprite in partnership with City Hope Disaster Relief, delivered much-needed support to the Dakota community.

Drawcards

In 2022, the South Africa retail market size was ZAR1.61 trillion and it will grow at a CAGR of more than 4% during 2022–2027. With the continued growth of the retail sector comes growing employees. A large draw card for employees is medical aid. Formerly known as Tiger Brands Medical Scheme,



Andre Koekemoer

Consumer Goods Medical Scheme, offers “sustainable, innovative, evidence-based and best healthcare outcomes exclusively for employees within the Consumer Goods Industry,” says Principal Officer, Andre Koekemoer, at Universal

Healthcare Marketing, which runs the administration for CGMS.

They offer a dedicated ‘personalised banker model’ with a Key Account Manager to both members and employer groups. A 24/7 helpline is available for support along with an online portal. Having been in existence for 31 years and with an excellent understanding of retail, “The Scheme is fully aligned with the corporate values and culture of the Consumer Goods Industry, reinforcing employer commitment to workforce well-being and productivity,” explains Koekemoer.

As a restricted industry-specific medical scheme, the Consumer Goods Medical Scheme, currently offers tailored benefits to employees of the following consumer brands industry employer groups, namely Tiger Brands, SPAR, Sea Harvest and Adcock Ingram. Allowing CGMS to provide



The Ekuqaleni Genesis Farm, founded in 2021 by Nomxoliswa Makhabane, is transforming lives in Botleng, Mpumalanga, by providing fresh food to over 150 community members and supporting the local economy by also supplying nearby vendors and businesses. Makhabane’s journey into agriculture began with a small home garden during the Covid-19 pandemic, sparking a passion for sustainable food production and prompting her shift from construction to farming. In 2022 Makhabane enrolled in agricultural studies to deepen her farming knowledge. www.shopriteholdings.co.za/

personalised, member-focused healthcare solutions for the industry that open schemes may not offer.

Another leader in the industry is Retail Medical Scheme, run by Discovery, specifically catering for the retail market. Their clients include Shoprite Checkers, OK Franchise Division, Medirite Pharmacy, Computicket, Rainmaker Media and Uniq.

Remaining well-informed on employee benefits in South Africa is important for both employers and employees. Familiarising with both mandatory and commonly provided benefits, as well as upcoming trends, individuals and companies can make well-informed choices when it comes to improved benefits and career paths. **SR**

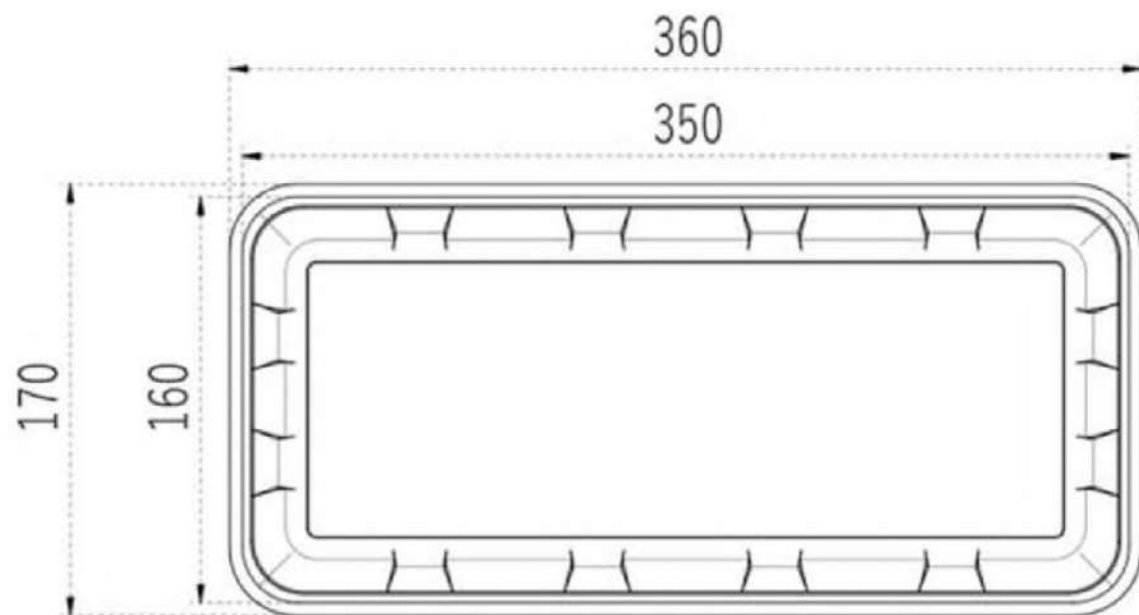
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