



Media Contact:
Connie Holubar, OutreachPR
903 880 8217

Work Place Trends:

**As Benefits Costs Continue to Rise,
Employers Look for Added Value**

Technology Meets the Need

Fort Worth, Texas – March 10, 2008 -- One of the biggest line items on a corporate balance sheet is the cost of employee benefits. With continuous changes in this arena, companies of all sizes are becoming more dependant on their employee benefit providers, not only to provide the benefits, but to help communicate information about them to their employees.

Using technology to facilitate that communication is a key focus for Fort Worth-based Johnston & Matthews, as company founder Bill Johnston explained during a recent online seminar hosted by Source Media and *Employee Benefit Advisor* magazine.

Johnston & Matthews works with companies both large and small, providing insurance and employee benefit programs. One way the company has set itself apart is by making technology a major focus for delivering information and services.

“All our clients get a custom designed web portal that gives their employees internet access to employee benefit information 365 days a year, 24 hours a day. That takes a lot of the burden off an already over-

taxed human resources staff," explained Bill Johnston, founder of Johnston & Matthews, during a 40 –minute online seminar.

Emeric McCleary, who founded Hispano Employee Benefits, says his agency focuses on the Hispanic niche market, and therefore tailors its communications and program mix to the needs of that population.

McCleary says companies that are willing to shift their focus to reach the end-user can compete against the large corporate benefit companies.

Johnston agreed, noting that making communications and the technology to deliver it a core business practice was how his firm was both addressing the needs of the market and capturing lots of new business. The firm has grown exponentially in the last three years.

"Technology is our competitive advantage. We develop tools that our clients interact with and learn to depend on. We become a partner, not only for the HR staff, but for all employees in providing their benefits. Our technology helps build a client relationship and strengthen their reliance on us," he says.

Johnston & Matthews provides online enrollment systems, online payroll, hiring information online, access to benefit statements, employee orientations, and links to top carriers and information resources. Each client portal is customized for a company's specific needs.

"Our goal is to provide the tools that take clients into the 21st century and provide the 'wow factor' that makes them less likely to want to make a change to their benefits program," Johnston says.

Neil Simons, founder of Independent Benefit Services, says marketing and communications have become a key part of the insurance business.

"Marketing and communication is what makes the difference. With benefits, you're providing something that is relatively intangible until you

absolutely need it, so you have to make it tangible in the ways that you communicate,” Simons said.

“Communications makes people feel better about what they have and it helps make sure they know about everything they have available from their employee benefits program. It can make a big difference in everything from health care costs to employee retention and satisfaction. It’s a part of building the best team.,” Johnston says.

The Employee Benefit Advisor’s Business Building seminar, entitled “How to Build an Agency without Making the Mistakes We Did,” was designed for employee benefit firms and insurance agencies that administer corporate benefit programs. Questions were fielded by presenters, who shared their expertise with a nationwide audience.

Interested individuals can access the archived seminar online at www.johnstonandmatthews.com/education.asp. – end-

About Johnston & Matthews

J&M was established in 1997 to provide companies of all sizes with customized employee benefit programs and value-added services. Serving companies from 10 – 4000 employees, the firm has established a national reputation for excellence through its Strategic Benefit Advantage™ program, which takes a multi-year approach to developing insurance and benefit programs that meet the specific needs of client businesses. www.johnstonandmatthews.com

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL Vicki McDowell, 817 336 6444.