



**Background:** Every year, hundreds of newly hired University employees select their benefits – then staff does the necessary processing to get them enrolled in everything from insurance to retirement. Employee benefits are one of the most valuable assets offered to new hires, so this is a high-priority process. It’s also an important first impression, because the benefits enrollment process is one of the first big interactions that new employees have with their new employer.

**Process improvement:** To make this a great process for everyone, leadership chartered a team of employees who work in and with benefits enrollment. Their goals were to reduce work steps, reduce enrollment time, eliminate duplication of effort, and ensure a smooth process flow from start to finish. Team members completed the entire project in an intense five-day blitz known as a Kaizen Event. They mapped the current process, pinpointed inefficiencies, and developed a future-state process with high-impact improvements. The team also built implementation plans and a scorecard of key measures and projected results. Team members concluded their very full and productive week with a team presentation on July 29, 2016.

**Making it simpler:**

The new approach has **44 fewer steps** – it streamlines the process from 100 to 56 steps. (44% reduction)

**Serving people faster:**

When the improvements are in place, the process is expected to move **12 days faster**, averaging 20 days vs. 32 days. (38% reduction)

**Using time wisely:**

The leaner process will free up an estimated **1,073 staff hours** yearly for value-adding work.

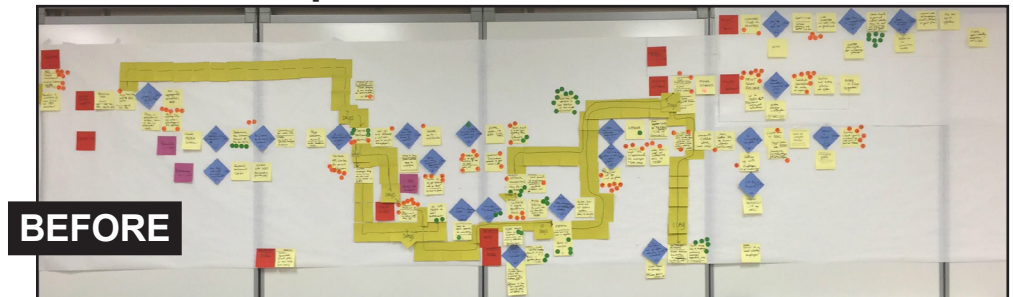
**Ending the paper chase:**

The new process will be virtually paperless, **eliminating 2,800 pages** per year by using electronic files instead.

**Key improvements include:**

- Provide HR contacts and new hires with clearer information and prompts at the very start of the process – through a “Benefits Enrollment Roadmap” that serves as an all-in-one collection tool
- Use a consultative “high-touch” process for new hires who need extra guidance – and a quick transactional process for straightforward enrollments
- Create an enrollment dropbox for docs/forms from new hires – to establish single-point entry and make the process paperless
- Modify the Benefits Accountability Control tracking log to support the new process flow
- Improve online resources for new hires, with additional information, docs, and links
- Develop a clear standard operating procedure for HR Contacts showing the new process – along with training
- Include benefits verbiage in job postings and offer letters.

**Current-state process for benefits enrollment**



**Future-state process**



**Team:** (L to R) Nick Elzy, Lesley Nussbaum, Becky Padgett, Ro Kelly (Team Leader), Jennifer McKay, Belinda Ogorek, Kelli Gowder, Felecia Paxton, June Lewis

**Sponsor:** Caroline Agardy, Associate Vice President for HR Programs and Services

**Contacts:** (Sponsor) Caroline Agardy • agardy@mailbox.sc.edu • 803-777-7550  
(Team Leader) Ro Kelly • rovimak@mailbox.sc.edu • 803-777-6650

