



Financial Call Center: More Budget and Savings Calls, Less Debt Calls in 2004

March 22, 2005 (PLANSPONSOR.com) – Financial Finesse, a call center for financial concerns, is reporting that 2004 trends indicate that employees are increasingly taking control of their finances.

According to compilations of all calls for 2004, Financial Finesse reports that debt calls decreased while budgeting and saving and investing calls increased, reversing trends from a year before (see [New Year Ushers In Financially Optimistic Help Desk Calls](#)) - and that could have implications for plan sponsor communications with participants, according to the company.

The number of debt calls decreased from a total percentage of 42% to 39% from 2003 to 2004, indicating that fewer people are reacting to financial concerns. At the same time there was a slight increase, from 16% to 17%, of participant calls about budgeting and savings. The spread between debt calls and budgeting and saving usually stands at 3:1 ratio; however, this has decreased, and Financial Finesse attributes this to multiple factors, including a stronger economy and better counseling.

Investing calls also increased slightly in 2004, from 2% to 3% of the total, a trend that Financial Finesse attributes to more employees focusing on planning for the future.

The calls also indicated that employees were getting prepared for tax season earlier this year than in 2004. For the first time, there were more tax-related calls in the fourth quarter than in the first quarter (14% to 12%), indicating that employees were willing to plan ahead to both avoid the pre-April 15 rush, as well as save more on their taxes.

Financial Finesse notes that plan sponsors should take note of such results and adapt to such realities. If employees are financially better-off than they were in previous years, the company thinks that employers should focus on marketing financial education effort and initiatives to their employees to encourage retirement and financial planning further. However, the company also believes that employers should not forget to focus on basic money management issues as part of a larger financial initiative.

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