

## Expand your reach by adding QR codes to your distribution channels

Short for quick response, QR codes are barcodes that can be read by mobile devices. They're often **placed on printed materials to give viewers instant access to online content and digital destinations**. For example, when placed on a poster in a breakroom, employees can scan the code with their smartphones to access employer communications, benefits guides, videos, and more. Many employers use them as part of a multichannel-distribution strategy.



## Considerations for Your QR Codes

### Determining the Right Size for Your QR code

The best print size for a QR code is largely determined by how far away the phone will be when scanning. Place the image so it isn't distorted and all of the dots are legible. It should be at least 2 cm wide by 2 cm long to be accurately scanned by mobile devices.

**A good rule of thumb is the 10:1 distance-to-size ratio when printing or placing your code: Minimum size = scanning distance divided by 10.**

Always test the code to ensure it's legible within the final design and size prior to printing.

### Color and Contrast Affect Reliability

The dark bits in QR codes are interpreted as data so the dots need to be darker in color than the background. The reliability of the code is also determined by the contrast difference between the dots and the background, so pale gray dots on a white background will be difficult for some devices to scan and the code may not function properly.

### Maintain Space Around Your QR codes

A "quiet zone" is placed around the QR code image when it's generated to separate it from its surroundings. The quiet zone is the white area used to separate the code from the background to prevent any adjacent images or text from being interpreted as part of the code itself and interfering with scanning. If you reduce the size of the quiet zone, the QR code should be tested thoroughly in its final setting to ensure it still scans correctly.



Example of an OE poster with a QR code linked to a Digital Postcard with everything an employee needs to enroll in their benefits



**Attention ABC  
Employees!**

Scan this QR code to  
view your benefits  
guide on your phone

### Brand Your QR Code

Customizing the QR code reflect your brand, rather than the standard black and white, is a beneficial best practice. A branded code tends to have a higher conversion rate and helps viewers feel safe and confident when it's personalized with your company's logo. It's common practice to include two brand colors and your logo in the center like the example shown to the left.

### Add a Call to Action

One of the best practices for QR code design that you should never overlook is including a call to action, e.g., "scan here to view your benefits guide." If you place a code on an advertisement or poster without describing what the user can expect to happen, you reduce the chance that the user will take action and scan the code. By explaining the outcome, you keep user skepticism at bay and avoid concerns of unknown destinations or cyber threats.

### Ensure Connectivity Is Available

Place QR codes where people have access to the internet or mobile connectivity. They likely won't be as effective in places like elevators, basements, subways and airplanes, for example, where connectivity may be compromised or limited. Make sure your efforts aren't wasted in areas with poor cell service or wi-fi signals.

### Test and Test Again

Testing your QR codes on multiple devices prior to mass production and distribution is always recommended to ensure they work as intended. You don't want to find out that your codes don't work after you print multiple pieces.

### Track Your Results

Be sure to track the viewer activity of each QR code to see if the campaign is succeeding or failing. Monitoring its performance will help you understand if you need to make adjustments. Any QR code-creation service you use should provide reporting.

