



CASE STUDY

# Brinker International

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## **How Brinker International realized over \$1M in savings with Alight's Dependent Verification Services**

Brinker International, one of the world's leading casual dining restaurant companies, found it increasingly difficult to offer a competitive and comprehensive benefits program to its team members, and was looking for immediate and ongoing cost savings. Read on to learn how Alight addressed these challenges.

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# Brinker's situation

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**“Brinker’s partnership with Alight’s Dependent Verification Services has been a huge win for us [...] Brinker has over 25,000 vendor partners and in 2011, Alight’s Dependent Verification Services won our coveted Supplier of the Year Award for going above and beyond in their interactions with our team members and for having such a huge impact on our plan costs.”**

Lara Kent, Senior Benefits Manager, Brinker International

One of the world’s leading casual dining restaurant companies, Brinker International truly believes in business decisions that balance the interests of both the company and its team members. Brinker has over 1,600 friendly and hospitable restaurants nationwide, such as Maggiano’s and Chili’s, where an immediate greeting at the door shows the company’s “power of welcome”.

With health care costs rising, Brinker found it increasingly difficult to offer a competitive and comprehensive benefits program to its team members, and was looking for immediate and ongoing cost savings. To address these challenges, Alight recommended Plan-Guard®, Alight’s ongoing dependent verification service. Plan-Guard verifies eligibility when a new dependent enrolls in coverage, ensuring all newly added dependents are truly eligible for coverage. By partnering with Alight, an independent third-party, Brinker preserved their relationship with their team members, especially when handling sensitive eligibility determinations.

## Brinker needed to:

- Demonstrate financial responsibility
- Reduce compliance risk
- Help keep benefit premiums low

## About Brinker International

**Headquarters: Dallas TX**

**Industry: Hospitality**

**Revenue: \$3.15 billion**

**Number of employees: More than 100,000 employees worldwide**

## **Alight's approach**

Central to the verification process was a customized communications campaign. Alight sent multiple communications to team members to announce, educate and remind team members of the dependent audit.

Alight also partnered with Brinker's internal communication efforts to ensure all team members were notified and educated before the verification process began. Brinker's executives were first on the list so they could demonstrate their support as the message made its way through the rest of the company. "We prepared our team members well that by the time the first letter from Alight came requesting documents we got very few questions," said Lara Kent, Senior Benefits Manager at Brinker.

Alight's eligibility advocates ensured Brinker team members received superior support throughout the verification process. The advocates proactively reached out to team members that showed signs of needing assistance with the audit and supported those team members until their audit was complete.

Alight provided Brinker's benefits team with end-to-end support. Brinker was initially concerned about the additional workload implementing dependent verification may bring, but quickly recognized with Alight's seamless solution and dependent verification expertise, they were freed to focus on other initiatives.

# Brinker's results and Alight's impact

Alight launched Brinker's ongoing dependent verification service in late 2009 and it did not take long for Brinker to see a significant cost avoidance and return on investment. In 2010, Alight performed a comprehensive audit, Plan-Smart®, of Brinker's nearly 8,000 health plan dependents.

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**“The result was huge! We estimated their first year savings at over \$1.7 million.”**

Melissa Newman, Alight's Client Manager for Brinker.

Brinker was so impressed with Alight's top-notch Dependent Verification Services and outstanding partnership that they presented Alight with their 2011 Supplier of the Year Award and renewed their contract, which continues today.

## Alight's Dependent Verification facts

- Average ineligibility rates:
  - Comprehensive audit: 5–7%
  - Ongoing verification: 10–14%
- Alight's proven communication campaign drives an average 98% response rate
- 99% of our clients are referenceable

## Client experience

Lara Kent, Senior Benefits Manager at Brinker International, shares her dependent verification experience.

### **Alight Solutions: Why did Brinker engage in dependent verification?**

**Lara Kent:** In early 2009, Brinker was looking for plan cost savings for the next fiscal year without cost shifting to our team members. Many companies had already started utilizing dependent verification and they were consistently getting a high ROI. In addition to the immediate cost savings, we knew that an ongoing verification process would ensure we were meeting our fiduciary responsibility as a self-funded plan sponsor.

### **Alight Solutions: What challenges did you face in getting approval for a dependent verification audit?**

**Lara:** Our biggest challenge in getting approval was getting past the “big brother” perception. Brinker has a very strong culture and we strive to balance the needs of our team members with the needs of the company. In the end, the decision to move forward was made based on the expected cost savings and the confidence that Alight could implement a dependent verification process with little to no disruption for our team members.

### **Alight Solutions: What was your stakeholder communication like?**

**Lara:** Our communication plan was pretty extensive. We started at the top by notifying our executives and gave them information on why we were implementing a dependent verification process and a high level timeline. Then we talked about it in our company newsletter and mailed a letter to the home address of all team members who would be asked to provide documentation. We stressed the need to reduce costs and talked about the fact that ineligible dependents on the plan cost all team members more. We prepared our team members well so by the time the first letter came from Alight requesting documents, we got very few questions. This process worked well and I highly recommend announcing the new process internally first.

### **Alight Solutions: Initially, what were your most sensitive areas of focus and concern?**

**Lara:** I was most concerned about the additional workload this type of project would have on my team. In the end, my team was completely unaffected. The service provided by the Alight call center, the ease of document submission and the communications that are triggered after each submission made for a completely seamless process.

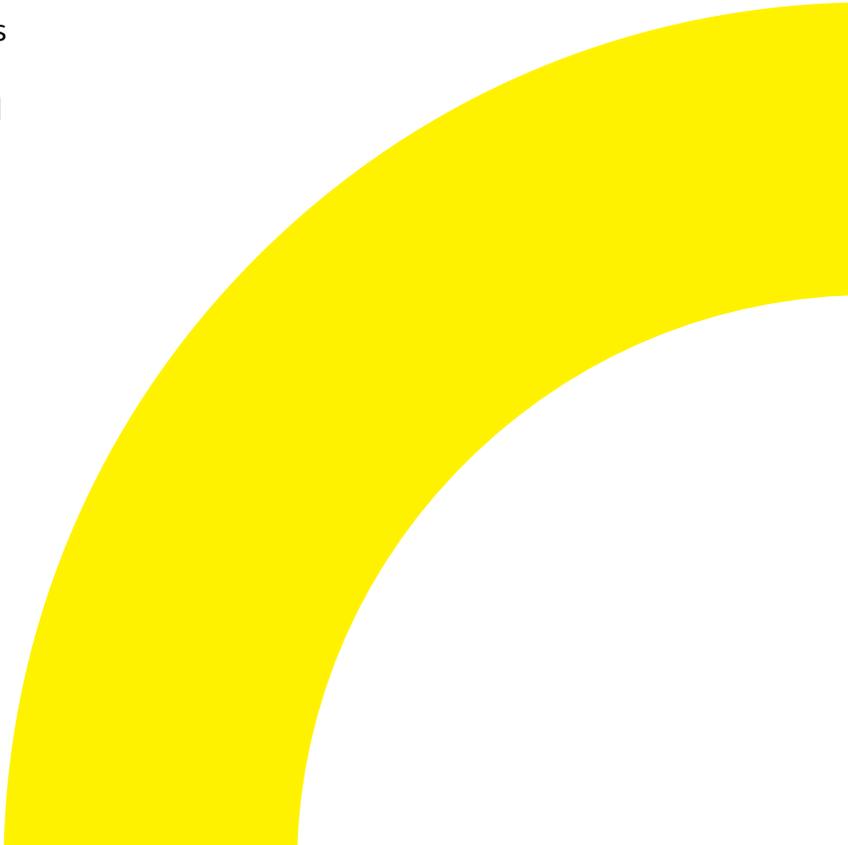
## CASE STUDY: BRINKER INTERNATIONAL

**Alight Solutions:** What effort is required to maintain Plan-Guard ongoing dependent verification? Is it more or less than you expected?

**Lara:** Maintaining Plan-Guard is simple. We send automated weekly files to Alight and they send us reports back on a weekly basis. We have one person who is dedicated to reviewing the reports we get and she spends less than 30 minutes per week making sure we remove ineligible dependents from coverage.

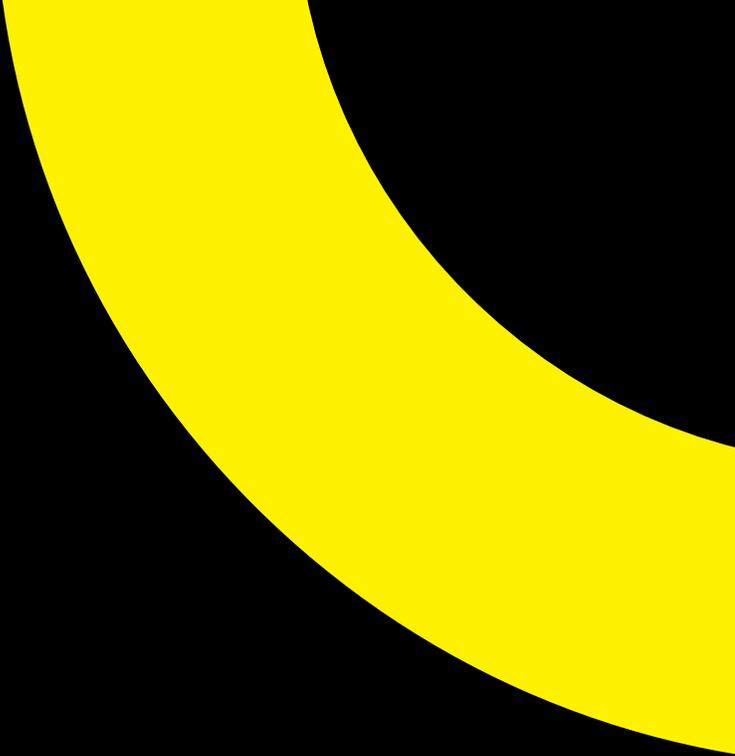
**Alight Solutions:** What was the overall experience from your eyes?

**Lara:** Alight is constantly evolving to keep up with changing laws and new technology and our Client Manager, Melissa, is top notch. The employer web portal is fantastic and allows us to answer questions from team members and research past verifications. Alight's Dependent Verification Services won our coveted Supplier of the Year Award for going above and beyond in their interactions with our team members and for having such a huge impact on our plan costs.



## **Why Alight?**

With over 800 completed one-time audits and more than 8 million dependents audited to date, Alight Solutions is the industry leader in dependent eligibility verification. Alight's Plan-Smart<sup>®</sup> service is a one-time dependent eligibility verification audit that ensures qualified, eligible dependents maintain access to benefits and removes ineligible dependents from coverage as soon as possible. Employers can preserve the integrity of their benefits plan with Plan-Guard<sup>®</sup>, Alight's ongoing service that verifies eligibility as new dependents enroll in coverage. Alight's dependent verification clients include public, private, and not-for-profit organizations, as well as large governments and more than 20 percent of Fortune 500 companies.



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## **About Alight**

Alight Solutions is a leading provider of integrated benefits, payroll and cloud solutions. With more than 15,000 professionals across 29 countries, Alight provides leading-edge benefits administration and ERP technology and services to more than 3,250 clients including 50% of the Fortune 500. Alight's combination of data-driven insights and technology expertise creates unique value for clients. Alight is a six-time member of IAOP's Global Outsourcing 100. Learn how Alight drives better business outcomes and employee wellbeing for organizations of all sizes at [alight.com](https://alight.com).

**Discover how your organization can benefit from Alight's dependent verification services.**

**To learn more, contact us at [alight.com/contact-alight-sales](https://alight.com/contact-alight-sales).**