

# How Best Buy Enabled a \$1.5 Million Increase in Employee Emergency Savings

APRIL 2024

As part of BlackRock's Emergency Savings Initiative and in collaboration with Commonwealth and Wings Credit Union, Best Buy utilized a multi-strategy engagement campaign to drive participation in their Savings Builder Program, resulting in nearly **\$1.5 million in increased savings**.

## Executive Summary

A [growing number of employers](#) recognize the importance of workplace emergency savings programs to improve employee financial wellness. [Employees report](#) that needing funds for an emergency expense is their top financial stressor. Employee financial stress impacts not only employees, but also has a significant business impact, [costing employers \\$250 billion](#) annually in reduced productivity. For employers committed to supporting their entire workforce, across all income ranges and job types, a high-quality emergency savings solution is an essential part of holistic financial wellness benefits.

As a forward-thinking employer, Best Buy recognized the importance of financial wellness benefits to their workforce. In 2019, Best Buy, in partnership with Wings Credit Union, became an early adopter of an emergency savings solution benefit for their employees in the US and Puerto Rico by offering the Savings Builder Program. To further signal its commitment to emergency savings and improve the program's effectiveness, Best Buy joined BlackRock's Emergency Savings Initiative.

In collaboration with Commonwealth and Wings Credit Union, Best Buy conducted a comprehensive review of the program, complete with employee research, and implemented a number of interventions. Interventions included enhancements to the marketing content for the program, additional incentives for participation, well-timed awareness campaigns, and changes to the employee onboarding and open-enrollment systems to drive engagement with and participation in the Savings Builder Program.



EMERGENCY SAVINGS



### CHALLENGE

Increase Best Buy employees' participation in and use of the high-quality Savings Builder Program, offered in partnership with Wings Credit Union



### APPROACH

Multiple improvement strategies including program improvement, consumer research with employees, and applying best practices for workplace benefit engagement



### SOLUTION

Awareness campaigns with marketing and messaging enhancements with additional incentives



### RESULTS

Nearly 2,500 employees opened Savings Builder accounts and total savings balances grew by nearly \$1.5 million



Through these interventions from January 2021 to June 2023, participation in the Savings Builder Program grew from about 4,500 employees to more than 7,000. Savings balances across all Savings Builder accounts grew from about \$3 million to nearly \$4.5 million. New account openings were higher than average in months when an intervention was implemented, such as the time-based awareness campaign during [America Saves Week](#), which included multiple communications to employees and additional prize-based incentives.

These results suggest that sustained, multi-strategy engagement campaigns increase participation in workplace emergency savings programs.

## **Building on the Strong Foundation of the Savings Builder Program**

Emergency savings was already a part of Best Buy's holistic approach to employee financial well-being when they joined BlackRock's Emergency Savings Initiative in 2021. Employees could easily open an account with Wings Credit Union and set up automatic savings through direct deposit from their Best Buy paycheck.

Best Buy leveraged Commonwealth's resources, research, and expertise to bring new recommendations, insights, and interventions to build upon the existing Savings Builder Program. The goal of our collaboration was to better understand employees' awareness of the program and motivations to save, as well as to identify strategies and interventions that could increase overall participation in the program, and ultimately improve employee financial well-being.

Many features of the Savings Builder Program make it a high-quality workplace emergency savings program, including:

- No monthly maintenance fee;
- No limits on the number of withdrawals;
- Automatic savings through direct deposit;
- A low \$5 minimum balance to open the account, which is funded by Wings Credit Union; and
- Higher dividend rates for those with direct deposit and electronic statements.

The Savings Builder program also offers a few different incentives to drive employee participation and ongoing savings. The program offers an additional \$100 to employees who complete six online financial education courses of their choice. Every month, employees participating in direct deposit to their Savings Builder account have the chance to win one of four \$250 cash deposit prizes. Providing these initial and ongoing incentives have been shown to be important levers of engagement with workplace emergency savings.

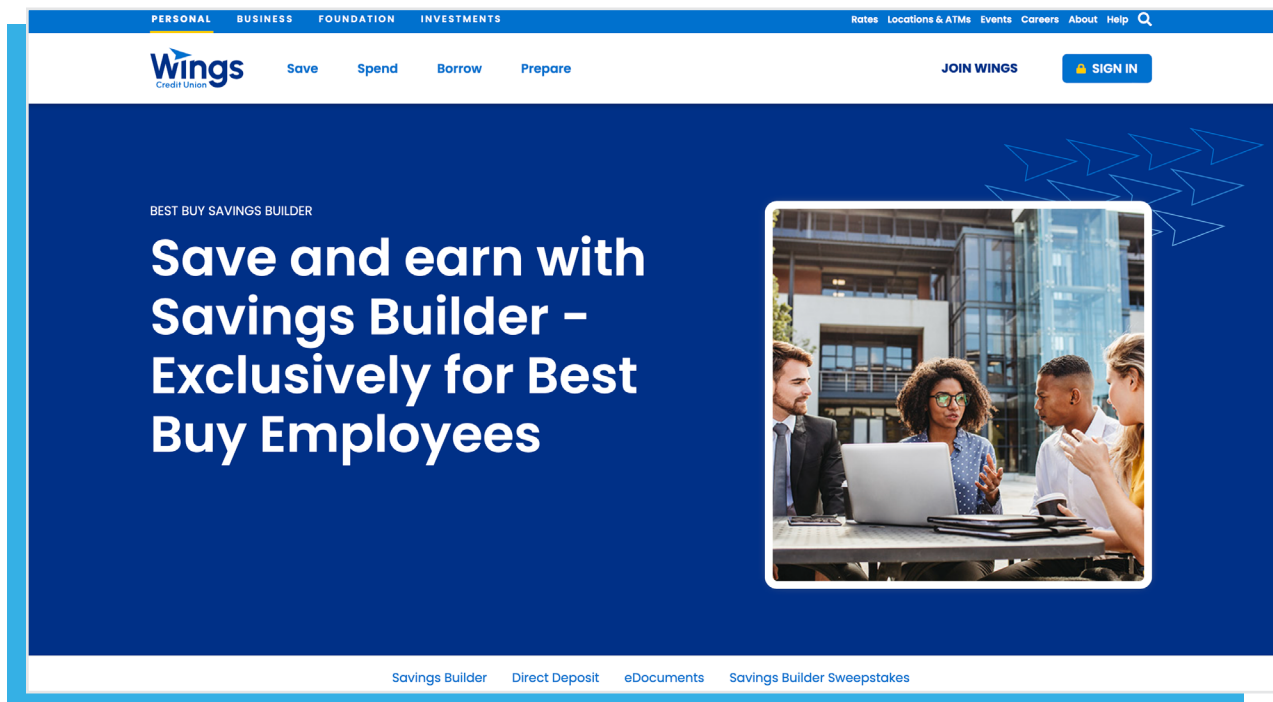
## Developing a Multi-Strategy Engagement Campaign

In January 2021, Commonwealth reviewed the employee journey and existing marketing materials to learn about the program and employee sign-up. We recommended changes to the language and content based on best practices for [inclusive product design](#), leading to targeted updates, such as a refresh of the Savings Builder Program landing page.

Next, Commonwealth conducted a survey of 350 employees to understand how they were interacting with Savings Builder and how to best raise its profile and improve the program. We followed up the survey with in-depth interviews with 10 employees to further understand employee awareness and communication preferences.

Based on the findings from employee research, Commonwealth recommended a multi-channel communications campaign that would:

1. Increase messaging about the program given low awareness
2. Enhance the messaging by emphasizing key features of the program
3. Change the timing of the messaging by embedding it in required employee processes



Informed by these findings, Best Buy, Wings Credit Union, and Commonwealth collaborated on multiple efforts from October 2021 to March 2023 to drive engagement, including:



**ONGOING MESSAGING TO GENERATE AWARENESS**

- Conducting a communications campaign during America Saves Week in February and March 2022, which included an additional incentive funded by Wings Credit Union, of two \$500 cash prizes
- Highlighting Savings Builder as the benefit spotlight in March, which included multiple posts about the program shared with Well-Being Ambassadors, several training calls, and a Bingo card to encourage ambassadors to discuss the program with employees
- Representatives from Wings Credit Union attending Best Buy Benefit Fairs at nine distributions centers
- Spotlighting the program in February and March 2023 through three open forum calls with the ambassadors and a promotional push during America Saves Week, which included an additional incentive of ten \$100 prizes funded by Wings Credit Union, and the distribution of 200+ flyers at corporate headquarters









**ENHANCING MESSAGING TO FOCUS ON KEY PROGRAM FEATURES**

- Engaging Best Buy’s Well-Being Ambassador team through a survey to understand how they communicate about benefits, including the Savings Builder Program and what resources they need to effectively do so
- Partnering with Best Buy’s retirement plan provider Voya Financial, for a Fine Tune Your Financial Picture campaign, which offered a chance to win a \$500 prize funded by Voya Financial for taking several financial wellness actions, including opening a Savings Builder Account and signing up for direct deposit



**CHANGING THE TIMING OF MESSAGING**

- Adding language about the Savings Builder Program to Best Buy’s open enrollment and new hire onboarding platforms to raise awareness as part of required employee processes

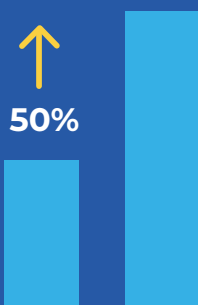
 <p><b>Open an Account</b> Apply Online</p>	 <p><b>Savings Builder Account</b> Exclusively for Best Buy</p>	 <p><b>Quick Loan</b> Cover an unexpected expense with a Quick Loan</p>
 <p><b>Online Financial Education<sup>2</sup></b> Earn \$100<sup>3</sup></p>	 <p><b>Direct Deposit</b> Easier access to your money</p>	 <p><b>eDocuments</b> Cut the paper clutter</p>

## Driving Participation in the Savings Builder Program

The growth in the Savings Builder Program suggests the multi-strategy campaign drove additional participation, enabling \$1.5 million in employee emergency savings. Between January 2021 and June 2023, the number of Savings Builder accounts increased from less than 4,500 to over 7,000. That increase translates to approximately 90 new accounts opened monthly, indicating a correlation between specific interventions and higher-than-average monthly account openings. For example:

- The combination of an additional incentive, promotional efforts during America Saves Week, and engaged ambassadors to spotlight the program was associated with the highest account openings over a two-month period.
- Wings Credit Union hosting a table at nine Best Buy distributions centers along with open-enrollment messaging was associated with the second highest account openings over a two-month period.
- Adding content to both open-enrollment and onboarding with higher-than-average account openings.

The relationship between these dedicated Savings Builder promotion activities and higher-than-average account openings suggests that targeted communications about the program via organization-wide campaigns, newsletters, ambassadors, and open enrollment activities spurred engagement by employees.



The total amount saved in accounts opened through the Savings Builder Program grew from about \$3 million in January 2021 to nearly \$4.5 million in June 2023, **an increase of almost \$1.5 million or 50%.**



The number of employees using direct deposit to build savings **grew 38%.**



The average direct deposit amount as of June 2023 was **over \$100**, and the average balance was **over \$600.**



**About 85%** have positive balances under \$500, suggesting engagement with the program.



Employees are withdrawing **less than once per month** on average.

## Insights for Workplace Emergency Savings Programs

Commonwealth's collaborative effort with Best Buy and Wings Credit Union on the Savings Builder Program offers a few key insights for those looking to improve enrollment of their own emergency savings solutions. This collaboration also demonstrates the opportunity for employers to explore partnerships with banks and credit unions for out-of-plan emergency savings offerings. The most applicable insights include:

- **Increase messaging to generate awareness**
  - Use ongoing, multi-channel communication strategies, such as activating engaged employees (i.e., ambassadors), and organizing onsite activities
  - Deploy a variety of communication forms to reach all workers, including a distributed frontline workforce (e.g., flyers, emails, content for intranet landing pages, and virtual and in-person presentations)
- **Enhance messaging to prioritize specific program features**
  - Emphasize incentives for joining the program and consider additional short-term incentives during specific promotional periods
- **Change the timing of the messaging**
  - Leverage key moments such as America Saves Week or a benefits spotlight month
  - Embed messaging in required employee processes like onboarding and open-enrollment
- **Evaluate the impact of your efforts**
  - Identify metrics for success and data sources with programmatic partners for evaluation ahead of promotional deployment efforts to accurately capture which interventions definitively increase engagement and participation in the program



To improve the financial security of your employees through an emergency savings program, reach out to us at [info@buildcommonwealth.org](mailto:info@buildcommonwealth.org) to learn more about how we can help.



Commonwealth is a national nonprofit building financial security and opportunity for financially vulnerable people through innovation and partnerships. Black, Latinx, and women-led households disproportionately experience financial insecurity due in large part to longstanding, systemic racism and gender discrimination. Addressing these issues is critical to Commonwealth's work of making wealth possible for all. For nearly two decades, Commonwealth has designed effective innovations, products, and policies enabling over 2 million people to accumulate more than \$8 billion in savings. Commonwealth understands that broad changes require market players to act. That's why we collaborate with consumers, the financial services industry, employers, policymakers, and mission-driven organizations. The solutions we build are grounded in real life, based on our deep understanding of people who are financially vulnerable and how businesses can best serve them. To learn more, visit us at [www.buildcommonwealth.org](http://www.buildcommonwealth.org).



At Best Buy, our purpose is to enrich lives through technology. We do that by leveraging our unique combination of tech expertise and human touch to meet our customers' everyday needs, whether they come to us online, visit our stores or invite us into their homes. We have more than 1,000 stores and more than 90,000 employees in the United States and Canada.



Wings Credit Union is a not-for-profit, member-owned credit union headquartered in Apple Valley, Minnesota. Wings provides custom financial solutions for our nationwide partners. With over \$9 billion in assets, Wings is Minnesota's largest credit union and serves over 367,000 members in all 50 states.

Wings members enjoy some of the area's best savings and lending rates, convenient mobile and online access, over 80,000 surcharge-free ATMs and 26 branch locations throughout the state of Minnesota, plus offices in Atlanta, Detroit, and Orlando. Founded in 1938, Wings' membership eligibility has grown to include anyone who lives or works in 34 Minnesota and Wisconsin counties, plus broader eligibility options. You can learn more about Wings by visiting [wingscu.com](http://wingscu.com). You can learn more about the Wings custom partner financial solutions by visiting [wingscu.com/partnership](http://wingscu.com/partnership).



BlackRock announced a \$50 million philanthropic commitment to help millions of people living on low to moderate incomes gain access to and increase usage of proven savings strategies and tools — ultimately helping them establish an important safety net. The size and scale of the savings problem requires the knowledge and expertise of established industry experts that are recognized leaders in savings research and interventions on an individual and corporate level. Led by its Social Impact team, BlackRock is partnering with innovative industry experts Common Cents Lab, Commonwealth, and the Financial Health Network to give the initiative a comprehensive and multilayered approach to address the savings crisis. Learn more at [www.savingsproject.org](http://www.savingsproject.org).