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GET TO THE POINT(S)

How to make loyalty programs work for your corporate travel program

by Charlene Brooke



Loyalty travel programs are more than just a means to free flights and hotel stays for your employees; they can help drive support for your corporate travel program, boosting compliance—and your travel partners' market share. Everybody wins. The rub, of course, is how to get your employees loyal to your travel partners.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Reward programs can help your colleagues travel more comfortably and, better still, save your company money. For example, iPrefer, a new loyalty program for independent hotels from Preferred Hotel Group, offers their members early check-in/late check-out privileges and free Wi-Fi (which can save your company up to \$20 per day). Gold and Platinum Members enjoy free room upgrades upon availability, among other benefits.

Airline programs can even help your colleagues avoid getting bumped from overbooked flights. According to Shelly Lewchuk, a corporate travel manager for Canadian Natural Resources Ltd. in



Calgary, “travellers who’ve achieved a high status with airline loyalty programs tend to get higher priority on overbooked flights and are far less likely to get bumped. Fewer missed flights translate into fewer last-minute bookings or worse, missed meetings.”

EVERYBODY LOVES REWARDS

Reward programs don’t just offset some of the drawbacks that come with travelling; they also promote a sense of accomplishment that comes with redeeming and having earned the reward. This isn’t just a casual observation, but the findings of the TD Travel Rewards Survey conducted for TD Canada Trust. According to the survey, more than a third of Canadians say they feel happy when they redeem travel rewards because they love to get a good deal, with the next most common emotion being satisfaction (26 per cent).

7.3

THE AVERAGE NUMBER OF LOYALTY PROGRAMS EACH CANADIAN BELONGS TO

—The 2013 Maritz Loyalty Report

PROMOTE YOUR PARTNERS' LOYALTY PROGRAMS (THE SIMPLE WAY)

With little effort, you can use company communications such as email (for example, booking confirmations) or intranet to encourage your employees to sign up and stay connected to your partners' loyalty programs. Here are a few things you may want to include in these communications:

- a call-to-action that encourages colleagues to enrol (if they haven't already), read more or check their balance
- a link that drives users directly to the program's loyalty microsite
- the reward program's logo, tag line or main benefit line
- a link to the program's Facebook page or mobile app to increase engagement



41%

of high-frequency hotel travellers have four or more hotel loyalty cards

—A Restoration in Hotel Loyalty, Deloitte research paper, 2013

51%

of Canadians modify when and where they buy to maximize loyalty benefits

—The 2013 Maritz Loyalty Report



A QUESTION OF LOYALTY

Getting your employees to sign up with your partners' loyalty programs is no small task when they may have already accumulated points with outside programs. Perhaps the solution lies in how you think about your partners' loyalty programs—could they be a tool to help you get compliance? For example, while it's ultimately up to your

employees to sign up and manage their own points, it may be worthwhile to communicate how and why they should do so. By getting employees to engage with your partners' loyalty programs, they will support the long-term health of your corporate travel program, ultimately saving your company money. And that's best for everyone.



MILEAGE VS. MONEY

Starting January 1, 2015, Delta Airline's SkyMiles redeemable miles will now be calculated based on ticket price, rather than miles flown. Depending on their SkyMiles status, members will earn five to 11 miles per dollar spent on fares. The airline says "the updated program will better reward the customers who spend more with Delta and give them improved mileage-earning opportunities." Delta is not the first airline to depart from the mileage-based structure. At Porter Airlines, for example, points are based on the fare class. *

90%

of Canadians are a member of one or more loyalty programs

-The 2013 Maritz Loyalty Report

Nearly **half** of hotel loyalty members' annual hotel spend is not with their preferred brand



-A Restoration in Hotel Loyalty, Deloitte research paper, 2013



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