



Multi-Merchant Loyalty Program

The Power of Cooperative Marketing

Cooperative marketing and advertising refers to partnerships in marketing and advertising that your business or company might make with another business or group. Marketing and advertising partnerships are one of the faster-growing ways to expand your target prospect audience and join forces to create an even stronger, more effective marketing campaign.

While this isn't necessarily a new concept, it is growing in popularity and there are increasingly successful partnerships that help to advance the efforts for all the businesses involved.

Cooperative marketing can be as simple as sharing mailing lists, or it can evolve in a variety of creative ways such as having a shared loyalty program. This may at first seem that it is not a good idea but in fact it can be a very powerful way for businesses to grow their customer base.

The Multi-Merchant Customer Loyalty Card Program

This is cooperative marketing taken to the next level where separate businesses offer and accept the same loyalty card thereby allowing the consumer much greater incentive to frequent those businesses. By creating a membership-based Customer Loyalty Card for your business that is accepted by multiple businesses you offer the consumer the freedom to hold one card for many businesses instead of the dreaded many cards for one business.

Loyalty Cards are catching on fast. According to an AC Nielsen survey, 64% of US households said loyalty programs were important in their shopping decisions although they were frustrated over having to carry so many of them. As a result they often left them home or completely forgot about them until they were in the business.

Whether it's an associations, shopping clubs, or auto clubs; it seems that everyone wants to belong to something. This is one reason why membership cards are the third most popular plastic wallet card in the US today, right behind credit and ATM cards.

Local businesses can now reap these rewards. The card continuously markets your business to those who use it and those who see it. It's a billboard in a wallet. The next time your customers think about that accessory they need, or phone they'd like to get, make sure they don't walk into your competition to make the purchase, but rather come back to you. There is really no limit to the creativity that can be applied with this program.

The bSmart Rewards Shop Local Loyalty Program is designed specifically for small businesses. "bSmart Rewards Shop Local is a groundbreaking loyalty vehicle tailored to the shopping center itself" said Alex Cutrone Marketing Director of bSmart Rewards. The loyalty program benefits all participants. Shoppers receive valuable promotions and discounts and feel rewarded for their loyalty. Merchants enjoy increased traffic and sales.



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One Loyalty Card versus Many

Over the years we have accumulated scads of them — from supermarkets, bookstores, druggists, gas stations and car washes, not to mention pizzerias and pet stores. Lately, even outfits providing personal care have jumped into the act. Many manicurists, for example, offer a loyalty card of some kind after you log ten visits. And the beauty salon I stamps a card every time you make an appointment in advance. After a specified number, you get something or other from them — not sure what.

Apparently we are not alone in our confusion. A new study from ACI Worldwide, a provider of electronic payment software, found that although three out of four Americans over age 18 have at least one loyalty card (20 percent have more than five), 81 percent say they don't know the benefits of the program or how or when they will receive rewards.

Most of the people polled by ACI — some 62 percent — enroll because they are hoping for discounts. But only 36 percent received a reward that made them come back to the store, and 25 percent say that the reward or promotion was for something they would never buy.

Take for example the Borders loyalty program. After a customer bought books at the store, Borders emailed them coupons for bodice-ripping romances and Westerns, which they never read. Twenty percent of those polled said they had a negative experience with a loyalty program. Like when one customer carried around a grubby card for two years that entitled them to a free car wash after 12 visits only to learn when they triumphantly pulled it out of their wallet to collect, the card had expired six months earlier.

Who is to blame? Mostly retailers, say experts, they “are missing the mark when it comes to reaching out to consumers with information and offers that are relevant.” For one thing, retailers don't always bother explaining their program's benefits. One card holder states “I belong to a pet store loyalty program, and for years I've been sliding my card through, but I had absolutely no idea what I was getting”. Another gripe, many consumers have no idea how far along they are toward winning a reward. With the bSmart Rewards Loyalty Program this is never an issue as the rewards are simple and clear and the consumer can see online at any time to check what they have earned and spent.

What's more, a Multi-Merchant Loyalty program is great for getting “Pass Through” business — those out-of-town people who would not normally stop in but do so because see the bSmart Rewards business.