

Travel Loyalty Programs

Fall/Winter

Within days of Hurricane Katrina, executives at several travel loyalty programs like United Mileage Plus and American Airlines AAdvantage among others, had set up ways for program members to donate their points to the relief effort.

According to Jill Noblett, vice president of loyalty and direct marketing at The Cendant Hotel Group, it's also the first travel-related loyalty program geared toward helping leisure travelers get rewards faster, with fewer nights. "We found that the leisure traveler is a demographic that's been largely overlooked," she said.

The business traveler can benefit even more than leisure travelers from TripRewards' generous program simply by spending more nights in Cendant-franchised hotels.

The "open earn" structure of the program allows members fast access to point earning by staying in Cendant-franchised hotels, renting Avis® and Budget® rental cars and purchasing everyday products and services from program partners.

To earn TripRewards points even faster, sign up for the TripRewards MasterCard® affinity card. Participants earn 13 points for every dollar spent on qualifying hotel stays – 10 points for the stay, plus three additional points for using the card for that stay. All other purchases earn two points for every dollar charged.

TripRewards members may elect to earn TripRewards points, airline miles or rail points for their hotel stays. A hassle-free online system allows members to check points and redeem for rewards 24 hours a day. For more information, visit www.triprewards.com.

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and family members, and organizations will be able to purchase TripRewards points for distribution as incentives to customers, business associates, employees and charities. You can earn TripRewards points at the Super 8®, Days Inn®, Ramada®, Travelodge®, Howard Johnson®, Knights Inn®, Wingate Inn® and AmeriHost Inn® brands.

Also new is an Inter-Continental Hotels loyalty program that allows U.S.-based members of Priority

Club Rewards, its customer loyalty program the opportunity to stay at "any hotel, anywhere." Priority Club Rewards members can redeem their points for prepaid lodging cards, which then can be used as payment at more than 500,000 lodging establishments worldwide.

American Express Corporate Travel has also unveiled a new loyalty program that targets the small- and mid-size business travel segment. This offering features a Webfare guarantee, which promises that American Express' online and offline offerings will match or beat any airfare available online. Also included is a new travel management loyalty program featuring double Membership Rewards® Points for individual travelers who book their trips with an American Express Card.

What works for the leisure traveler benefits the business traveler, too.

TripRewards® is the world's largest loyalty program, based on the number of participating hotels (6,000, from budget properties to high-end resorts).

This creative application of points is a continuing trend in which travel purveyors are making rewards choices more flexible, faster and easier to redeem (often via the Web, and in hours or days rather than weeks or months) and much more attuned to customer preference.

An easy way to apply points toward humanitarian causes isn't the only new chapter in the loyalty game. Several industry giants have launched completely new programs or features that are transforming the way travelers can be rewarded for their patronage.

Boost the purchasing power of your points.

TripRewards® members now can exchange points and miles between disparate loyalty programs. Thanks to an agreement with Points.com, the rewards management portal, program members have access to more than 3,600 exchange opportunities and 270 point-redemption partners. And in the near future, TripRewards members will also be able to transfer points to friends

