

# Increase Your Chapter Member Engagement – Have You Tried A Member Loyalty Program?



According to the online sales platform Shopify, as much as 84 percent of consumers are more likely to stick with a brand that has a loyalty program. And 66 percent of those surveyed say that the chance to earn rewards changes their spending behavior.



Have you thought about applying the same logic to your chapter? You're always looking for better ways to engage member and member guests, so, maybe a loyalty program could help you more effectively get and keep your members.

Here we cover how loyalty programs can work in ways that go far beyond consumer brands. We'll explore them as they apply to chapter organizations and give you ideas to help you create the right loyalty program for your association chapter.

## **What's a member loyalty program and how does it work?**

Loyalty programs reward repeat customers for their devotion to a brand. In return for that loyalty, customers get incentives like discounts on event attendance and free things. The right incentives encourage these consumers to return and purchase from the brand repeatedly, share things – person

to person and online – about the brand they find appealing and get others to join them on their journey and engage with the brand.

These programs can easily be adapted to work for association chapters. Many boards don't realize they're in the business of selling. But board work can be very sales- and marketing-like, working to bring in members and get members and member guests to take advantage of your programs and services.

### **What's the best loyalty program for association chapters?**

There are many different types of loyalty programs, including tiered loyalty programs and fee-based, value-based and point-based ones. Points-based programs are the most common and can often be the easiest loyalty programs for association chapters to implement and manage.

Points-based programs let members accumulate points and redeem them for things like free swag, chapter perks and even cash. When set up correctly, rewards members can earn points from more than just paying for things associated with your chapter.

Chapters can use loyalty programs to reward the devotion of members when they attend chapter events, and they bring people with them, both members and member guests. They can also earn loyalty points for things like following you on social media, sharing about your chapter on social, making a video about their experiences with the chapter, just having a birthday, and even through gamification (using games and contests to get members to do the things you want).

### **Getting started with your chapter points-based loyalty program**

You have a limited number of volunteers in your chapter, and you're already asking them to do so much. The last thing you want to do is add complex, multi-step tasks to their responsibilities.

Points-based loyalty programs can be straightforward to start, run and manage. Get started with a few decisions:

- Set goals for your program
- Determine how members earn points
- Choose the rewards
- Decide on the value of your points.



It's not a great idea to start by trying to assign points to every single activity in your chapter. Instead, think about those programs and activities where you would like to see an increase in engagement. Need more people to attend your monthly meetings? Looking to increase membership? Want to expand your social media or get more people to talk about all the great things your chapter has done for them? You could start by giving points for things like attending meetings, referring new members and micro-volunteering.

Once you see how things are going with these first few, look for ways to incrementally increase your loyalty program by making more activities eligible for perks and expanding your bucket of available perks to get people more interested in participating. Add points for more activities, like answering surveys and recording videos about chapter experiences.

### **What can you give for the points?**

To make a program like this worthwhile for your chapter, you don't want to lose money, so the perks you provide shouldn't be expensive. But we'd bet you can come up with a list of perks that won't cost you much.

All chapters have those boxes of things they've never given away, like sweatshirts and coffee cups with their association chapter logo. Those would be great for lower point redemptions. And, knowing that not all your members will want things, consider offering discounts for event attendance and membership renewals. Some of your members would probably enjoy a meet and greet with a sought-after speaker in your industry and a signed copy of the speaker's book. High points earners could learn about events before the general membership, which could be a draw for any of your chapter's events with a cap on the number of attendees.

### **Could a loyalty program work for your association chapter?**

Unlock a new level of engagement and rewards with a chapter loyalty program. Marketed to members correctly and run appropriately, it can elevate experience members and member guests have with your association chapter, while they earn rewards and connect with other members doing what you want them to do. A loyalty program can deliver the benefits your chapter has been missing, from increasing member referrals and chapter loyalty to higher member retention and overall engagement.

