

The Ultimate Guide to Non-Cash Incentives

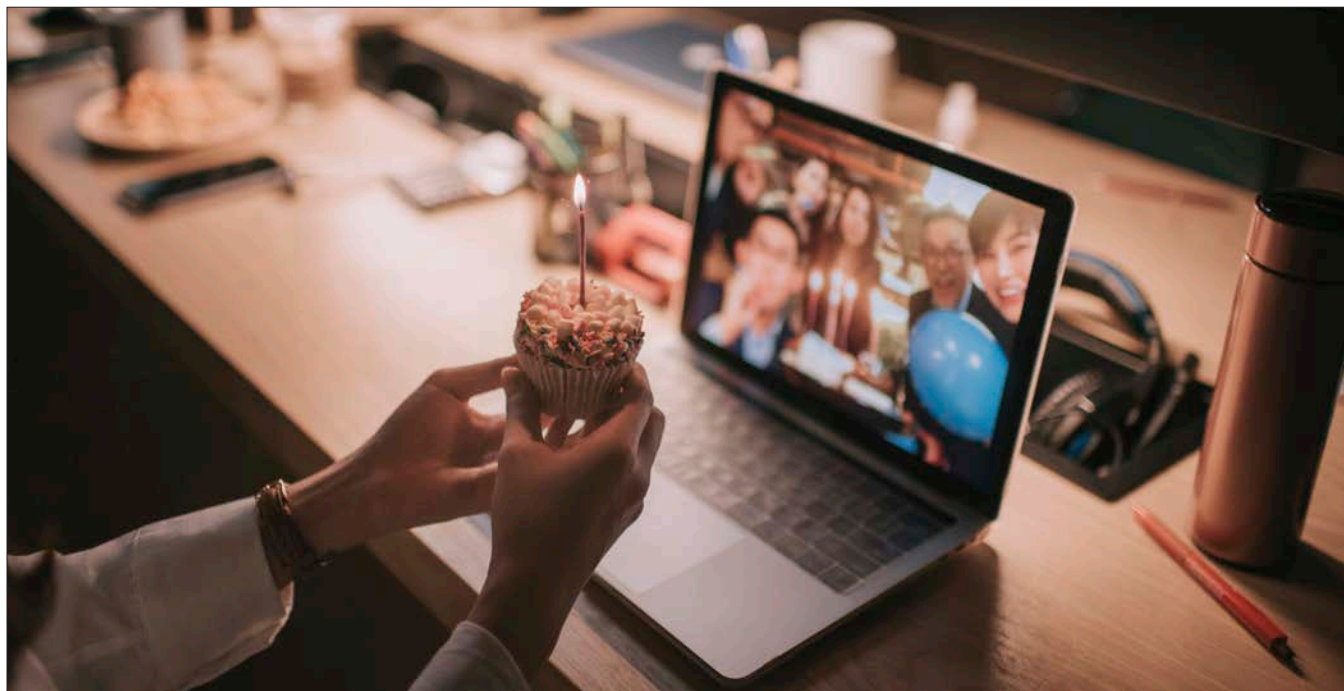
Merchandise, Gift Cards, Experiences and Incentive Solution Providers



Merchandisepage 2
 Gift Cards & Rewardspage 9
 Travel & Experiencespage 12
 Incentive Solution Providerspage 18

Money Doesn't Always Change Everything

Continued remote work, a tight labor market and increased employee burnout have made companies' non-cash recognition efforts more important than ever



There may have never been a more challenging time to lead teams of workers than this pandemic era. Stories in newspapers and magazines reflect this almost daily.

"I've been in H.R. for 30 years, and this is probably the hardest crisis I've had to deal with," Laura Faith, the senior director of people experience and operations at Uber, told the *New York Times*.

"U.S. workers are quitting their jobs at some of the highest rates in years," reports Krithika Varagur, who writes on work issues for *The Wall Street Journal*. The share of people leaving jobs reached 2.7% in June, according to the Labor Department, just short of April's record-breaking 2.8% rate.

Varagur makes clear that it's not just service industries that have been wracked by departure en masse. Professionals in their 20s and 30s are burned out and initiating career breaks with the intent to look for a rebound in a new field.

In July, WSJ writer Patrick Thomas reported that online job platform ZipRecruiter advertised more than 700,000 open sales positions around the U.S., up more than 65% from the same period a year ago.

"The struggle to find sales hires predates the pandemic and may have more to do with the types of roles people are comfortable taking these days than it does with a shortage of workers," Thomas writes. In addition to an off-putting image of glad-handing car salesmen or "Mad Men"-style account reps, recruiters say that early-career hires aren't always attracted to positions where success is measured in new business brought in.

Return to Offices On Hold

Adding to the complexities of managing teams is a delayed return to the office for companies. Many managers were looking forward to their teams returning to offices this fall, but they have been hit with corporate decisions to delay in-person work due to a spike in COVID cases resulting from the Delta variant. The *Times* reports that Uber, Google, Amazon, Apple and Starbucks are among the high-profile companies that have postponed their return dates to next year.

And if managers were expecting to have their teams together full time in a post-pandemic world, that desire has been widely

MERCHANDISE

crushed. “Remote Work Is the New Signing Bonus,” screamed a recent WSJ headline. Large employers such as Target and Allstate Insurance have joined thousands of other businesses in announcing permanent flexible/hybrid schedules for full-time employees. The National Bureau of Economic Research predicted in a report published in April that 20% of full workdays will be completed from home after the pandemic ends, up from 5% prior to the pandemic.

Keeping workers engaged was a challenge under “normal” circumstances. Today’s remote work world plops an entirely new set of challenges on top of those that already existed. Much has been recommended since the COVID outbreak regarding keeping remote workers engaged; recognizing stellar performances and rewarding them in a timely fashion makes all of these lists.

“We’re in a world that desperately needs kindness, recognition and empathy,” Debra Corey, an employee engagement consultant, told attendees at a 2020 virtual conference held by WorldatWork. “There should be no limits to recognition, as long as it’s genuine.”

Why Non-Cash Recognition Works

In today’s tight job market, with workers feeling empowered to quit on a moment’s notice and confident they can find other work, it’s more important than ever to pay a competitive salary and provide stellar benefits. Once that’s in place, however, research has long shown that non-cash incentives and rewards can be significantly more impactful on employee performance than cash bonuses.

You’re probably aware of some reasons for this. Cash rewards are spent on daily expenses and quickly forgotten. Also, cash rewards quickly begin to be viewed as expected compensation rather than recognition for stellar work. Also consider that:

- Non-cash rewards (travel, merchandise and experiences) have emotional value that make them far more effective in driving employee loyalty.
- The perceived value of non-cash rewards tends to be significantly higher than the actual cost.
- Non-monetary rewards make it easier for workers to celebrate each other’s success and talk about how they were rewarded.
- Millennials and Gen Xers, an important component of today’s work force, particularly appreciate non-cash rewards, including extra time off, wellness benefits and unique experiences.

This guide is a starter kit for non-cash incentive programs. It includes suppliers of the main categories of non-cash rewards—merchandise, gift cards and reward cards, travel and experiences, and providers of performance improvement platforms that can operate your incentive program from A to Z. **SMM**

Motivating Ideas for a Pandemic

Keeping your best workers has never been more important—and for many managers, never more challenging. Employee engagement platform [TINYpulse](#) offers these insights for recognizing remote workers, a proven component of retaining top talent.

Peer-to-peer recognition – Co-workers recognizing colleagues’ efforts strengthens relationships and keeps employees engaged. You can start by encouraging team members to email words of gratitude to each other, but it’s better to initiate a formal program that includes company-supplied gift cards or other rewards to recipients.

Acknowledge employees’ personal achievements – There is less casual catching up with people in the remote work world. It’s important to stay close to team members’ outside-of-work milestones and share those that are suitable for the team to know. Did someone buy their first house or earn a new degree? Let the team know all about it.

Acknowledge quirky milestones – Did you have a virtual meeting without anyone needing to be reminded they were on mute? Celebrate with a quick shout-out as you wrap up. Small wins beget more small wins, which add up to impactful larger changes.

Subscriptions are effective recurring rewards – Reward workers with a subscription to a publication—industry related or not—a monthly box of snacks or another regularly delivered treat is an affordable reminder to the recipient of your gratitude each time a new delivery arrives.



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Recognition Benefits Both the Giver and the Receiver

Addressing the challenges of recognizing remote employees, behavioral economist and *Wall Street Journal* columnist ("Ask Ariely") Dan Ariely stressed why it's important to overcome these challenges:

"Receiving praise has been shown to improve motivation and well-being on one hand and reduce burnout and absenteeism on the other. These benefits extend to the praiser. Recent research found that giving accolades can actually make people happier than receiving them."

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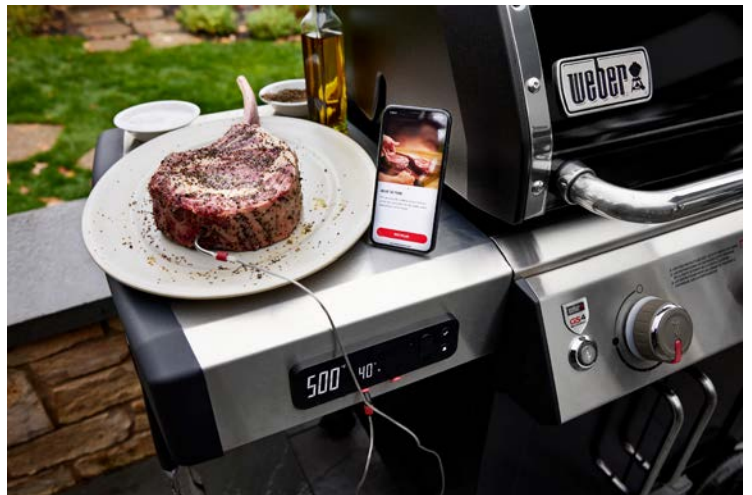
Promaster Navihawk A-T

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3-In-1 Marvel

Fujifilm's LiPLay camera is a 3-in-1 marvel. It is a digital camera with an LCD monitor to capture life's special moments. It's also an instant camera that produces a 2x3-inch photograph on the spot. And it's a smartphone printer that wirelessly generates images from any Android or iOS operating system. Contact: Joyce Harrison of Fujifilm at jharrison@fujifilm.com or visit www.fujifilmusa.com.



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GIFT CARDS & REWARDS

Incentive Gift Cards Get Even More Popular in a Touchless World

BY PAUL NOLAN

Gift card use in corporate America is having a moment.

Actually, as the return to offices has been pushed back by most companies due to another spike in COVID cases, the gift cards moment will likely be extended indefinitely.

The pandemic has generated a steady stream of stories about managing remote teams, and gift cards are invariably mentioned in most. Gift cards were a common component of employee recognition programs prior to the pandemic, but the forced cancelation of incentive travel programs and gift cards' ease of use in a world that is not working together has produced a significant increase in their use. The Incentive Research Foundation (IRF) reported late last year that since the business world went remote in March 2020, there has been a 26% increase in the use of gift cards in workplace incentive programs.

Corporate use of gift cards in the past year range from helping workers equip their home offices, to buying team members lunches for Zoom meetings, stocking up for Zoom

happy hours, or providing impromptu spot rewards by managers or in peer-to-peer recognition programs.

“Now more than ever, employees, partners and other stakeholders need support, morale boosts and encouragement,” states Juan Ortiz, product marketing specialist at channel incentives provider WorkStride, in an [article for Business2Community](#). “Businesses have been heeding the call with increased communications, creative engagement techniques, and even monetary rewards as part of their approach.”

Embracing Digital Delivery

The ability to digitize gift card delivery has existed for decades, but more companies relied on these capabilities during the past year and a half for obvious reasons. The IRF reports that many lessons were learned about the power of virtual engagement.

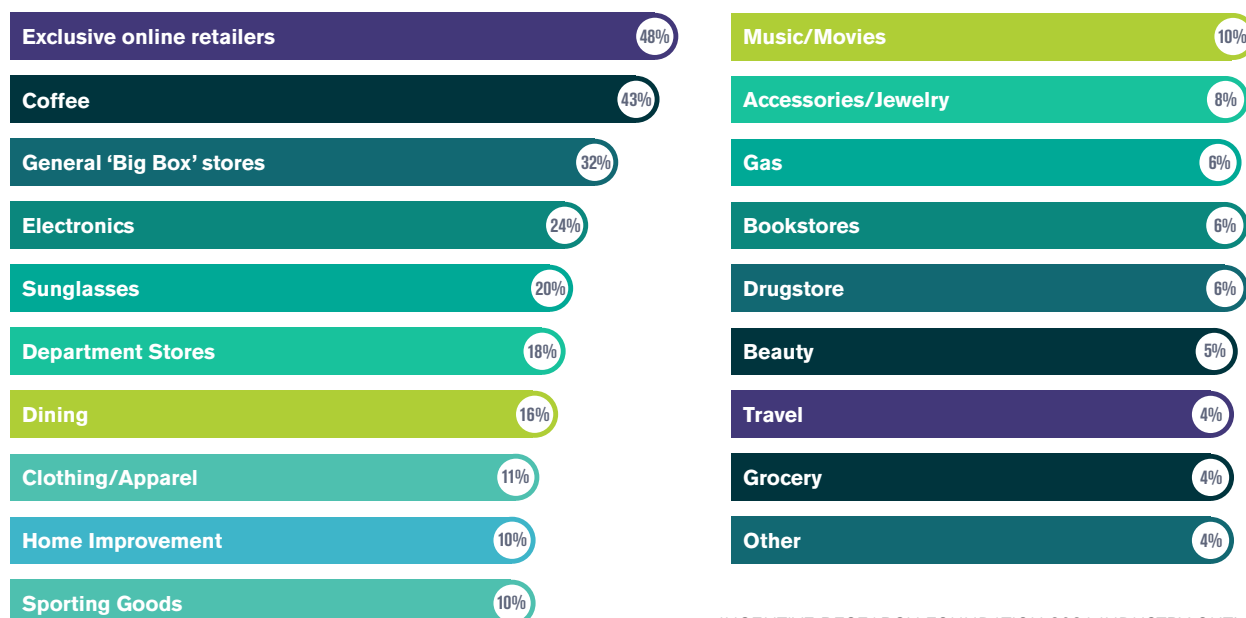
“Digital options enable immediate, coordinated, trackable delivery of rewards regardless of geographic location, and groups of employees can receive their reward at the same time,

Gift Card Trends

The most common denominations for gift card rewards remain \$25, \$50 and \$100. 79% use gift cards of \$100 or less, which is up from last year, (67%)

but identical to 2018. The average value of a gift card was determined to be \$120 compared to \$129 in 2019. The data show that gift card values have not

changed significantly since the pandemic began. The most common gift cards remain for online retailers and coffee.



INCENTIVE RESEARCH FOUNDATION 2021 INDUSTRY OUTLOOK

GIFT CARDS & REWARDS

such as during a virtual meeting. Digital delivery can also increase control, enhance reporting and reduce overall administration time for program owners,” the IRF report states.

Recognizing achievements instantly – or as immediately as possible – is more important in the remote work world. Motivation experts also remind managers that recognizing top performers in front of peers has always been critical. That may have to be done during a virtual meeting these days, but it should be done.

If you sponsor a peer-to-peer recognition program, make it easy to use and promote it frequently. Recognition company O.C. Tanner reports that companies risk underutilization of a program if it’s not meaningful and easy to use.

And don’t adopt a “set it and forget it” mind-set with incentive gift card programs. Refreshing gift card options so they don’t get stale will help engage employees long term. **SMM**

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The IRF Industry Outlook for 2021 predicts a net increase of 33% for incentive gift card use.

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Experiences Will Always Motivate People to Excel

BY PAUL NOLAN

Polls show people want to travel again, but on their terms and timeline



Group travel has been the foundation of sales incentive efforts for almost as long as there have been sales incentive efforts. And for good reason. Travel has long ranked among the most motivational, memorable and appreciated forms of recognition by program participants.

What's more, as with any well-structured incentive campaign, the bump in incremental sales should cover the cost of the program with enough left over to provide a hefty increase to revenue for the period.

When the world went on lockdown in spring 2020 due to the global pandemic, travel rewards for internal sales incentive campaigns, channel partner programs, customer loyalty efforts and other sales and non-sales performance improvement strategies was instantly unavailable.

Rebound Timing

The Incentive Research Foundation (IRF) reported that as incentive travel programs were canceled in 2020, spending on gift cards and merchandise for incentive use increased. There was some concern that some program sponsors would not return to using travel rewards. Recently, however, a survey of incentive travel buyers, end-users and suppliers shows that while the dramatic drop in group travel will last through 2021, a rebound to 2019 levels or higher is expected within one to two years once post-COVID conditions are reached.

The Incentive Travel Industry Index, a joint survey project by the IRF, the Society for Incentive Travel Excellence (SITE), and Financial & Insurance Conference Professionals (FICP), polled 2,356 incentive travel end-users and suppliers in

September and October 2020. A total of 1,062 responded. Two-thirds (66%) said they expect incentive travel to rebound within two years after the COVID situation is stabilized; 32% said it would take three to four years to fully recover, while 2% felt recovery would require five years or more.

Permanent Program Changes

Approximately three-fourths of respondents (77%) said incentive travel programs post-pandemic will be only moderately different or no different from incentive travel in the pre-pandemic world. Of those who expect permanent shifts, one of the most commonly mentioned changes is increased use of individual incentive travel that focuses on providing award recipients a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

Trends that were emerging prior to the pandemic, such as activities promoting wellness and corporate social responsibility (CSR), are expected to continue to increase in popularity as incentive travel rebounds.

Destinations Then and Now

The pandemic doesn't appear to have changed participants' idea of desired destinations. In a separate poll by the IRF of more than 400 program participants (almost all were residents of the U.S.), destinations that ranked most desirable prior to 2020 remain the most attractive. In order, they are Hawaii, Caribbean (including Puerto Rico), Western U.S., Western Europe (Germany, France and Italy), Alaska and the Southern U.S.

"The biggest 'miss' between preference and demand seems to be Mexico," the [IRF report](#) states. "While Mexico has limited

EXPERIENCES

motivational value to program earners, there is significant RFP activity [through 2023] by program owners. Mexico may be losing its motivational appeal due to factors such as overuse as an incentive award or some of the negative publicity it has received in recent years.”

Destination features that are desirable — beach/sunshine, adventure travel and mountains — reflect the COVID-impacted preferences of participants for open space, according to the IRF report.

Other Enticing Factors

The program participants who responded to the IRF poll said beyond an attractive destination, the ability to bring a spouse/significant other or friend on the incentive trip is a critical component to making the trip desirable. Having expenses covered, going to a destination to which they have never been before, and having luxury accommodations also ranked as highly important.

The data show that over half (52%) prefer an incentive trip lasting between six to nine days, with 27% preferring a trip lasting less than six days.

For Now, Smaller Groups

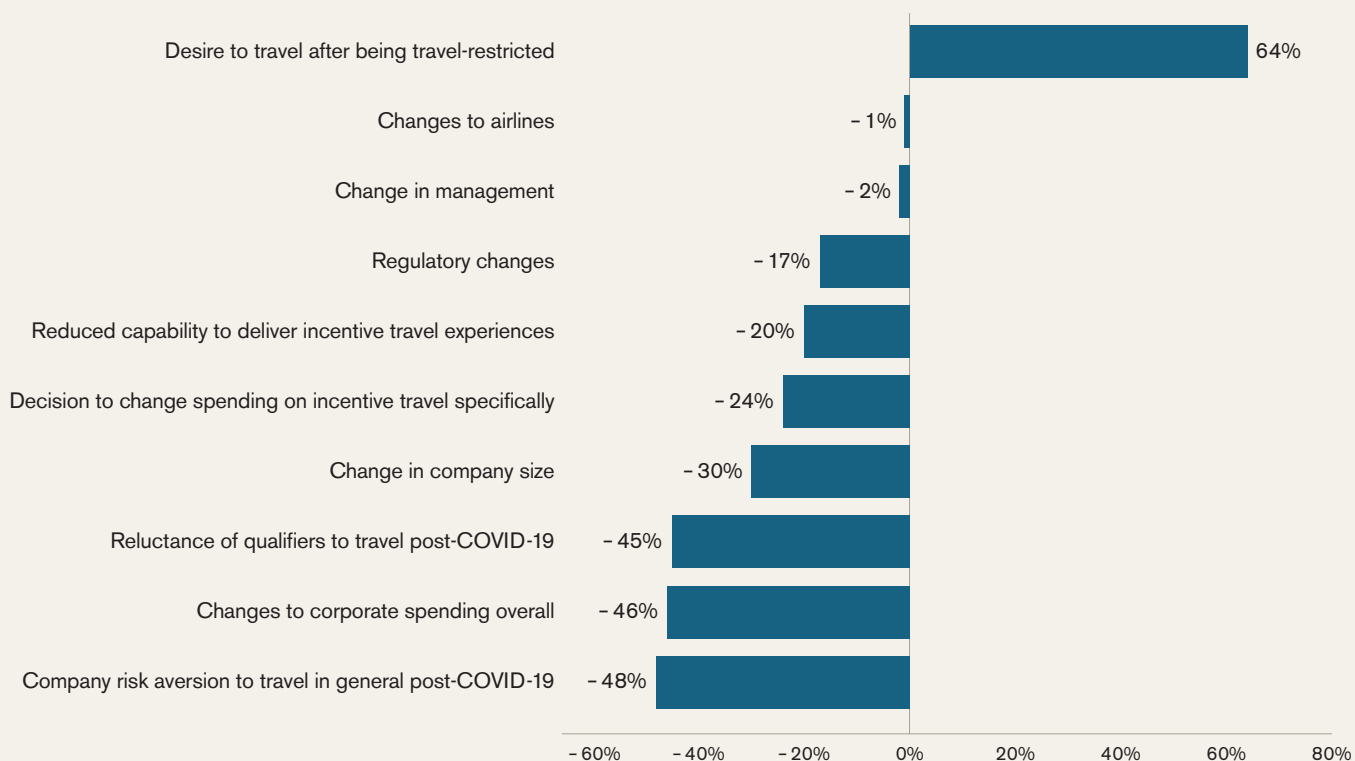
The good news is that travel is still an attractive award. Program sponsors must keep their participants’ preferences in mind when creating a program and understand that what worked in the pre-pandemic world may work again, but possibly not in the immediate future.

“A major goal of many incentive travel experiences is the opportunity for top performers to network with their peers and leaders. For the time being, this may need to be tamed a bit. Smaller trips that offer greater flexibility may replace large group experiences,” the IRF report states. Although participants still want luxury accommodations, they also want some distance from their fellow travelers in the form of private residences and bungalows within large resorts. In some cases, individual travel experiences may be more motivating than the more traditional group experience.” **SMM**

The Renewed Prestige of Travel

The Incentive Travel Industry Index shows that a year without travel (more for most people) has increased the desire to get back to it, confirming travel’s intrinsic merits and its effectiveness as a motivational tool. Travel’s attractiveness

is the greatest net positive factor expected to influence a rebound in incentive travel. However, it will be balanced against factors that will continue to hinder companies’ ability to sponsor incentive travel campaigns.



SOURCE: 2020 INCENTIVE TRAVEL INDUSTRY INDEX

EXPERIENCES

Regaining Trust and Engagement for In-Person Events

The Incentive Research Foundation convened a group of incentive professionals in Florida this summer to discuss factors that are impacting corporate decisions regarding relaunching incentive travel programs. Here are some of the highlights.

Safety Protocols Increase Confidence

The IRF implemented its own COVID-related best practices and participants said it positively impacted their decision to attend. These included:

- Mandatory pre-event testing for all participants
- Daily health screenings, including temperature checks
- Socially distanced transportation
- Socially distanced seating
- Masks at indoor events, on transportation and whenever distancing was not possible

Overcommunicate

Pre-event communication about the safety protocols that would be in place were cited by attendees as critical to creating a sense of comfort and confidence in attending. Communications should be frequent, short and staggered to ensure the key points are taken in easily and attendees understand what will be required of them and their fellow participants.

One attendee noted that in the current environment, spouses and other family members are more engaged in decisions around event attendance. The attendee recommended a communication directed to family members regarding protocols and safety measures to help create comfort.

Employer Concerns

Many employers are encouraging vaccination, and some have made it mandatory. However, when it comes to making a decision whether to proceed with in-person events, vaccination rates are just one factor. Reputational risk is driving the decisions in many cases. Some company leaders are concerned about moving too quickly, while others are concerned about not moving quickly enough. One industry professional noted there is often a difference of opinion between the CEO and program owners, who are ready to move forward, and the legal and compliance departments within their organizations, which are taking a more conservative approach.



Group Experiences Are Too Valuable to Give Up

Although 2020 saw incentive travel cancellations and substitute rewards, the overall sentiment among the incentive professionals was that substitutions such as individual travel vouchers, merchandise or even cash will be the exception. Most organizations that previously offered group incentive travel as the primary or only reward are planning to return to that by 2022 at the latest, with the hope that comfort levels with travel will rise.

Getting Around With Ease

Destinations that are being booked have easy access by air with minimal flight connections needed. Ground transportation should also be researched. Having trusted and reliable transportation partners that observe COVID protocols will enhance participants' sense of safety.

The Talent Challenge

The pandemic has devastated staffing in the hospitality industry. Incentive professionals indicated that a major decision driver is the level of staffing at host properties and offsite venues. Having more site visits or even unannounced visits to hotels and venues to “audit the staff for compliance to the playbook” is now part of the decision process.

Lasting Changes

The group of incentive professionals was quick to point out that many changes could be here for good. Mask wearing will likely become more commonplace, especially on flights during flu season. Food safety practices, cross-contamination prevention and enhanced cleanliness will continue to enhance attendee comfort. Outdoor venues with stunning views will always be a top choice.

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Not every component of your corporate offsite will produce a memorable moment.

See why that's not what you should worry about in the story on page 16.

Making Travel Memories

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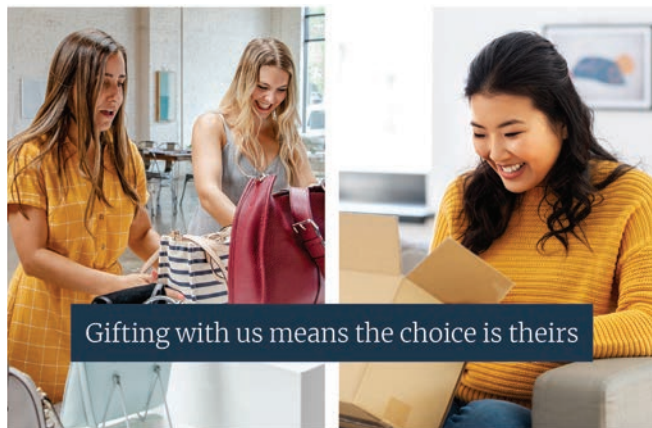
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Plan for Peak Moments and Don't Sweat the Misses

Think about your last trip to a Disney amusement park or any similar outing. The majority of the day is spent battling crowds, waiting in long lines and overpaying for mediocre food.

Psychologists propose that if you ask a family to rate its experience at various times during a single day at a Disney park, with 1 being lousy and 10 being fantastic, you would receive a wide range of responses. The daily average may fall in the 5 to 7 range — OK, but not a resounding endorsement for a day that is undoubtedly expensive. However, psychologists predict that if you ask that same family to rate their overall Disney experience one month later, the rating will likely shoot up toward 9 or 10.

In their 2019 book “The Power of Moments: Why Certain Experiences Have Extraordinary Impact,” brothers

and best-selling authors Dan and Chip Heath explain that when it comes to experiences, people remember the peak and the ending. Memories of long lines, hot sun and so-so food tend to be overpowered by positive moments — defining moments.

“Moments matter, but not every moment matters,” Dan Heath says. “Great experiences hinge on peak moments.”

That’s a critical insight for those who sponsor and plan experiential rewards. No company is shooting for — or satisfied with — any part of a corporate experience to be rated a 5 or 6. But, 5 and 6 moments occur.

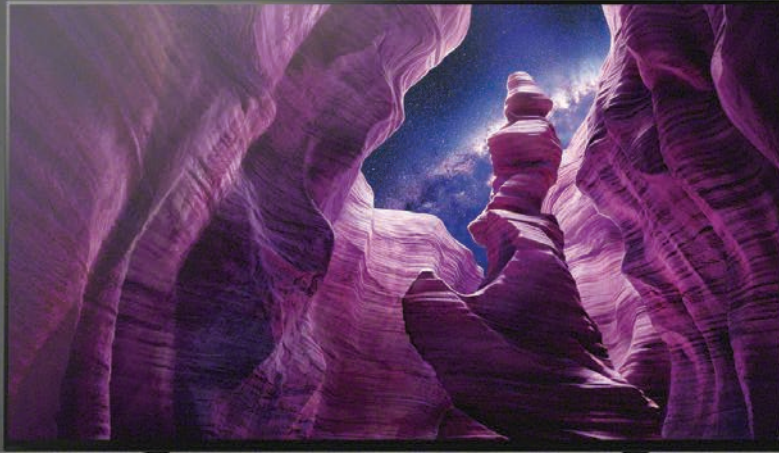
“When you look back on experiences that you consider great in your life, what you’ll notice is they’re usually not end-to-end great,” Heath says. “Much more frequently, those occasions are mostly forgettable and

occasionally remarkable.”

It’s important to focus less on fixing or preventing problems, and more on creating overpowering moments. Fixing problems doesn’t impress. A road without potholes doesn’t thrill anyone, it “whelms” them, Heath says.

“Whelmed sure beats disappointed and angry and frustrated. But if we want employees that are delighted, that are proud, that are loyal and engaged, we’ve got to go beyond whelmed.”

Heath offers three strategies for creating peak moments for employees (whether it’s in the office or during an offsite) in a podcast that is available on their website’s Resources page. In exchange for your email address, you can also access the first chapter of “The Power of Moments” and other goodies.



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How Does Your Incentive or Loyalty Program Measure Up?

New benchmark study from the IESP reveals expectations for program success

Every company that sponsors an incentive or brand loyalty campaign wonders the same thing: How does our campaign measure up to benchmark results? Are there benchmark results?

A new study by the Incentive & Engagement Solution Providers (IESP) was designed to help answer this daunting question. The IESP is a strategic industry group within the Incentive Marketing Association (IMA). We wanted to learn more about the study results, which were previewed at this summer's IMA Summit, and what it means for the industry going forward.

The following excerpts are from an interview with Chris Galloway, content chair for the IESP board of directors, and executive vice president of strategy and design for [Brandmovers, Inc.](#), an Atlanta-based provider of B2C and B2B customer loyalty programs.

First, why was this research important, and what were the findings?

Sales and marketing executives want to know what they can expect in return for investing in an incentive, B2B, channel or loyalty program. That is a fair question, and one that we as an industry have had trouble answering succinctly. We can pull from dozens of published case studies and examples, but these are best-case scenarios and not necessarily helpful in setting a minimum expectation – we need a baseline.

In order to create that “line in the sand,” we needed to first establish a qualifier – that the incentive or B2B loyalty programs are well-designed. Our industry is often clouded by examples of programs that didn't work, but that are later found to be poorly designed and executed. Our goal, therefore, was to

establish benchmarks for success based on well-designed programs.

Respondents for this survey included program owners and managers from sponsoring brands, as well as design strategists and program directors from

companies that provide incentive solutions. The respondents shared experience gleaned from their work with over 470 programs throughout their careers. The three most tangible company benefits of well-designed

Survey: Establishing Benchmarks – What Kind of Results Can You Expect from Incentive or B2B Loyalty Program?

1



9 out of 10 programs achieve 5-10% YOY Lift



2/3rds of well-designed programs achieve greater than 10% revenue lift

2



82% of programs increased retention by 5-10%



Half of our expert respondents cited retention rates of higher than 10%

3



90%+ of programs achieve ROI of 2:1 to 4:1



One in three well-designed programs exceeded a 4:1 return on investment

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Survey of incentive and B2B loyalty program experts representing a history of over 470 programs, conducted July 2021

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incentive and B2B loyalty programs include:

- 1. Revenue lift** – Programs should generate a minimum of 5 to 10% year-over-year lift. Many programs achieve better than this, and the incremental lift should be over and above market growth.
- 2. Increased retention** – Again, a minimum of 5 to 10% increase in retention of people (employees, indirect salespeople, customers, etc.) should be expected based on survey findings. Retention is essential for growth, as we know the cost of churn is higher than just the revenue that is lost.
- 3. ROI** – At a minimum, programs should generate an ROI of between 2:1 and 4:1. This is significant. Because of the data-filled nature of incentives and B2B loyalty programs, we can truly measure ROI and isolate what is truly incremental. What other marketing interventions have this level of return (not to mention the fact that one-third of programs in the survey achieved even greater ROI than 4:1)?

To be clear, were these findings based on documented data from programs?

No, because most program results are proprietary and are not reported in any public way. In order to establish our baseline benchmarks, we were able to query the anecdotal experiences of experts with, collectively, over 500 years of history connected to these kinds of programs. These findings are not intended to be final, but rather the starting point for future research on how to ensure these benchmarks are achieved by companies and brands.

Ensuring that companies reach these benchmarks requires an understanding of what constitutes “well-designed” does it not?

Without question, and that is the direction the IESP is taking for our research. The IMA offers a great deal

of training on how to design effective incentive programs, and I recommend the [Incentive Professional](#) designation to my industry colleagues every chance I get. But how do we educate sponsoring companies and incentive program buyers? It begins with establishing a value proposition for running well-designed programs, which is the subject of the current research.

Program buyers do not need to be certified experts (that’s what they hire IESP solution providers for) but should be armed with the essentials to ensure maximum ROI. This fall, we hope to launch a study that delves deeply into the topic of effective program design and provide a roadmap, supported by data and statistics, that helps them make great choices for their company and their audience.

Aside from the tangible benefits you mentioned, did the survey highlight any less-tangible benefits to companies for utilizing incentives or B2B loyalty programs?

Absolutely. The findings showed that the top three intangible benefits from running well-designed programs were:

- 1. High-engagement communications channels** – Program members consume communications at a much higher rate, and are great sources of feedback
- 2. Increased brand loyalty** – Increasing the preference of your audience toward your brand even in the face of competitive offers
- 3. Enhanced long-term relationships** – Building an emotional connection with the people that matter most to your success

Actually, there are tangible benefits for companies that arise from these more intangible aspects, but they are longer-term in nature and somewhat harder to isolate and measure.

Incentive or loyalty programs should generate a minimum of 5 to 10% year-over-year lift and generate 2:1 to 4:1 ROI or more.

For people who are interested in this study and in future research from the IESP, are there opportunities to get involved or stay plugged in?

Yes, 100% yes! We encourage anyone and everyone who is interested in incentive and B2B or loyalty solutions to take a look at the resources on the [IESP website](#), including a white paper on this research. You can also sign up to receive updates on future research, white papers and podcasts from the IESP.

This first study and our upcoming research is directly aligned with the IESP’s mission of serving as a trusted resource for business leaders globally in helping their organizations achieve results through engagement and incentive solutions. The IESP welcomes new members to contribute their expertise. It’s the best place to have your voice heard related to our future research and receive visibility for your expertise. In fact, I am seeking volunteers to join our content and corporate outreach committee, so feel free to reach out to me via [LinkedIn](#) or via email (cgalloway@brandmovers.com).

IESP members have first and full access to study results. Results of future studies will be shared on the IESP website, LinkedIn, and in future reports from Sales & Marketing Management. **SMM**

Chris Galloway is the head of strategy and design at [Brandmovers Inc.](#), an Atlanta-based technology solution provider that develops and executes engaging incentive and brand loyalty campaigns. He serves on the board of the Incentive and Engagement Solution Providers, a strategic subset of the Incentive Marketing Association.

Gifting Opens Doors In Sales and Marketing

BY JENNY MCGEE

What marketing and sales strategies are your organization utilizing when it comes to opening doors, making genuine connections and starting conversations with potential clients? Gifting—particularly in B2B marketing or high-value sales—can get the attention of your target audience, accelerate your prospecting funnel, and strengthen your marketing and sales strategies.

Marketing: Gifting Gets People's Attention

Most people don't like the gifts they receive from businesses, but the right gift options can help marketers motivate people to give their time and attention.

Say you want to engage your target audience with a webinar, so you create an email marketing campaign to promote it. While the right design and copywriting are important, studies show that 95% of full-time professionals receive multiple emails each week inviting them to attend a webinar. Knowing that, you need to come up with a way to make your email stand out. The solution: Gifting.

Another study found that if your email mentions a gifting opportunity (i.e., a giveaway or everyone who attends gets a gift), people are more likely to open the email, join the webinar and give you their attention.

Whether you're promoting a webinar, stoking brand awareness or trying to increase engagement at your next marketing event, using a unique channel like gifting can increase your reach and generate more conversions. Gifting helps marketers win people's attention—half the battle of any successful strategy.

Sales: Match Gifting to Your Funnel

A well-timed gift can do more than motivate people into giving you their attention; it can also nudge them into doing business with you.

For successful sales strategies, the goal is to move prospects through the funnel and close deals efficiently. With gifting as a

connector, prospects have an incentive to act, resulting in qualifying more leads and closing deals faster. Here's how gifting can nurture and accelerate your sales funnel:

- High in the funnel, gifting and high-value marketing collateral perform the best. Gifts show that you're motivated to win their business. The number of people you're gifting at this stage will be high, so while gifts are important, don't deplete your total budget quite yet.
- As prospects move further down the sales funnel, gifting helps ensure executive buy-in and brings more people into the sales cycle, accelerating the deal.
- Toward the bottom of the funnel, gifting becomes key to generating total buy-in across the company and turning the tide of opinion in your favor.
- After a deal is closed, gifting can be used as a way to say thank you and an opportunity to celebrate.



The Secret to Successful Gifting Strategies

At Cultivate, we know the most common problem with gifting strategies is that people often want something completely different than what they receive. Rather than guessing what they may like, you can invite people to select a gift of their choice. Do they want a new watch or a pair of sunglasses? Would they prefer to select a gift for their significant other?

The concept of choice allows the gift to be more engaging and personalized to the person on the receiving end.

Leveraging gifting for prospecting, engagement, pipeline acceleration and relationship building will help you stand out from competitors, create opportunities and close deals more efficiently. **SMM**

Jenny McGee is the marketing and communications specialist at [Cultivate](#), a virtual gifting and corporate events gifting partner.

The Choice is Yours.

Choose Success for Your Sales Incentive Program.

BY RICHELLE SUVER,
VP STRATEGIC MARKETING, ONE10

You have many choices when creating and executing a successful sales incentive program. One wrong choice, and you risk enacting a bad strategy, which ultimately leads to ineffective results, low ROI and an unhappy sales force, channel partners and leadership team.

You've already made an important choice—the choice to build your program around non-cash incentives. There are many reasons why this is a good decision. Most importantly, cash is transactional, not memorable. Your team or channel partners will quickly spend the cash on everyday purchases like gas or rent, and they will soon forget how they received the extra cash in the first place. This simply isn't motivating.

But your list of to-do's isn't complete just yet. To build an effective sales incentive strategy, you'll need to make many more significant choices. Here's our guide:

Choosing the Right Rewards Mix

Your team is diverse. Think about the different personalities, ages and job functions you work with every day. Consider the various locations your channel partners represent? As the face of the workplace changes, examine the different work settings of each of your employees from various hybrid or work-from-home environments. This wide range of employees and channel partners also means they have wide-ranging expectations when it comes to individual rewards. A one-size-fits-all approach to rewards simply will not motivate your team. Offering a mix of reward types is critical to appealing to all audiences and embracing your team's diversity.

Your employees or channel partners want the gift of choice, and you can give it to them with a rewards platform that offers a magnitude of rewards including name brand merchandise, gift cards, experiences and event tickets, or even the



opportunity to contribute charitable donations. Also, look for a rewards platform that is easy for you to manage and even easier for your employees to navigate.

Choosing the Right Technology

How do you know if your employees or channel partners are actually engaged? Reward redemption shows program participation and audience engagement. This is why it's important to create a reengagement strategy with communication tools to reach all audiences throughout the sales incentive program. Technology can make this easy. From an easy-to-use online portal, to regular communication via SMS, you can reach your internal team or channel partners in the right ways to make the program enjoyable for all participants and motivate them to participate throughout the duration.

Clunky websites that don't load correctly when you're on the go are also a detriment to a successful sales incentive program. To keep engagement high, your participants need to be able to access your portal quickly, especially on mobile devices. Look for technology that was created with a mobile-first design, which means it was designed with the smallest screen in mind.

Choosing the Right Partner

A successful sales incentive program goes beyond simply rewarding your team for a job well done. Instead, you must create a comprehensive sales incentive strategy, and this starts with keeping the end in mind. What are your goals? What will drive your participants to act? A trusted partner will help you analyze all of this so you can build and execute a sales incentive program that builds meaningful relationships with your internal team and channel partners, motivates your audiences, and enhances your bottom line.

A set-it-and-forget-it approach might seem like an easy solution, but who will be there when there are problems? Look for a reliable partner who can help you troubleshoot problems, as well as respond to and manage inquiries. This partner should also constantly review and analyze program measurement in real time rather than waiting until the program is completed. This way, you can work together to modify the program based on this data, ensuring your sales incentive program is successful.

Richelle Suver is Vice President of Strategic Marketing at [One10](#), an industry leader in marketing, incentive and travel services. One10 works with leading brands to develop programs that inform, engage and reward stakeholders.

Looking for ways to motivate and engage your team?

Explore how to re-energize your approach and design a strategic sales incentive program in today's environment.

Download a copy of One10's, ***Your Ultimate Guide to a Killer Sales Incentive Program: A Step-by-Step Workbook to Drive Program Success.***



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- Tap the banner that appears

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Replink provides an online sourcing tool that makes finding brand name products for business gifts and incentive programs easy and affordable. Search from over 100,000 products in 2500 brands, priced from \$10 to \$10,000. Updated daily by industry suppliers. Contact: Mary Hanson at 877-757-4321, ext. 88, email mary@replink.com or visit www.replink.com.



- Gallup found employees who are not adequately recognized are 2x more likely to say they'll quit in the next year.
- Glassdoor reports 53% of employees would stay at their jobs longer if their employers showed them more appreciation.
- Qualtrics says those who have managers that regularly acknowledge them for good work are 5x more likely to stay.
- The Harvard School of Public Policy found companies with peer-to-peer recognition are 35% more likely to report lower turnover.

Optimize Channel Incentives

360insights is a leading provider of cloud-based, channel management and incentives automation platforms, helping brands to manage, measure and optimize consumer rebates, SPIFs, volume incentives, MDF/CO-OP, sales allowances, points programs and associated spending using data-driven channel insights to optimize business performance through their channel partners. Learn more at www.360insights.com.



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Beauty Rewards



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The Importance of Recognition Hasn't Changed

The team at One10 believes in the power of human potential and that every employee, channel partner or influencer can have an exponential impact on improving results. One10 works with leading brands to develop programs that inform, engage and reward stakeholders. Contact: Sydney McPherson at 763-445-3187, email sydney.mcperson@one10marketing.com or visit www.One10marketing.com.



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Lack of recognition is one of the “seven deadly sins” that leaders commit that leads to a feeling of meaninglessness among their employees, according to research by MIT Sloan School of Management. “Feeling unrecognized, unacknowledged and unappreciated by line or senior managers was often cited in interviews as a major reason people found their work pointless.”

[Read the full report.](#)



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