

Travel Loyalty Programs - US - 2022

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This report looks at the following areas:

- The pandemic's effect on FTP membership
- How consumers want to accrue and redeem loyalty points
- What makes for a successful FTP
- What a good loyalty app looks like
- How FTPs can remain relevant in the current landscape

Despite the pandemic all but halting travel for a time, membership in frequent travel programs increased from 63% in 2020 to 71% in 2022. The biggest increase came in membership through credit cards that offer travel rewards, indicating that loyalty program members were eager to accrue points despite COVID-19 limiting their ability to travel. For their part, credit card providers were successful in acquiring new loyalty members looking to get travel points through non-travel means. Enthusiasm for gaining loyalty points is especially important at a time when high inflation threatens the discretionary budgets of many households, and therefore can limit travel even as the country's health crisis subsides.

Administrators of travel loyalty programs need to be aware of the shift in how consumers view travel loyalty, particularly since half of FTP members under age 55 think that such programs are out of touch with the world today. Considering that the pandemic is driving loyalty programs to cater less toward business travelers and more toward leisure, programs need to adapt to stay relevant to the travelers of the future. Adaptation includes expanding loyalty partnerships to more everyday relevant brands, increasing the breadth of redemption options and bringing a community aspect to their loyalty apps.



"Just as the pandemic caused changes in travel writ large, so too, it has changed travel loyalty. A movement away from an emphasis on travel frequency and toward partnered spending has already occurred, and consumers are satisfied with the shift. Changes in business travel are forcing loyalty programs to shift their focus to the leisure traveler."

– Mike Gallinari, Travel & Leisure Analyst

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