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How to Build Engaging Loyalty Programs That Secure Brand Preference

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When it comes to achieving differentiation in an oversaturated market, both chain and independent grocers have their work cut out for them. Top product

selection, reasonable prices, and quality customer service are no longer enough to captivate the attention of today's modern customer. As a result, many use loyalty programs in hopes of standing out.

While customer loyalty programs are not a new concept within grocery, not all programs are created equal. From green stamps and key-ring loyalty cards to digital coupons and virtually tracked point systems, the key to a successful loyalty program is to provide consistent, rewarding brand interac-

tions that make your customers feel valued.

But how do chain and independent grocers go about building a successful loyalty program? With the help of the program techniques listed below, you can guarantee your brand will be top of mind when buyers are ready to make a purchase.

1. Define Your Value Proposition.

Identify what your company does well and showcase it. The clearer the message of value, the higher the likelihood of your customers remembering your brand.

2. Make an Emotional Impact. It is said that 95% of purchasing decisions are formed in the subconscious mind, which is largely controlled by emotion. Marketing your loyalty program's value in a way that assigns personality and storytelling to your brand will make it that much more memorable.

3. Create Consistent Communication with Customers.

An online loyalty program opens the door for automated email services and SMS communication. These mediums not only provide a platform for your customers to interact with your brand around the clock, but allow them the ability to choose their communication preference. These digital options are a wonderful supplement to direct mail and other physical marketing tactics, as well as an opportunity to offer surveys that allow the voice of your customers to be heard.

4. Personalize the Reward Experience.

Continuing on the importance of emotional impact, non-cash rewards are a great way to positively impact the customer experience. With today's loyalty program software capabilities, customers can access millions of reward options – from gift cards to incentive travel – by logging into an online reward account, creating a personalized,

memorable experience.

5. Create connected, user-friendly experiences. Combining an e-commerce platform with your customer loyalty program or current online customer portals creates an entire ecosystem dedicated to your products and your rewards. Combine this with a loyalty program mobile app and users can access rewards on-the-go. Incorporate elements of gamification, such as a spin-to-win and other engaging ways to earn reward points to guarantee an enjoyable interaction with your brand.

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