

ACCESS

AMERICA'S LARGEST PRIVATE DISCOUNT NETWORK



A FREE
eBook *by*
ACCESS

Engaging Consumers with Incredible Value!

The Ultimate Guide to
**DISCOUNT
PROGRAMS**



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What Can Positive, Relevant *Value* Do for You?

Intro

Value. It's what makes the world go 'round. It's the "What's in it for me?" in everything.

Value drives every action we take. Waking up in the morning. Going to work. Eating, drinking, driving, walking, talking, exercising, thinking and so on.

Everything we do has some sort of personal motivation behind it, a type of return or benefit. That's value.

The activities, people, and places you voluntarily go back to? *Those* provide positive, relevant value.

Brands have long tried to tap into positive, relevant value because they want to be something customers will return to time and time again.

Some brands have value that's easily comprehended. For example, it's easy

to be attuned to your smartphone brand when you're staring at the device for hours every day. Grocers and wireless companies have high loyalty because they consistently deliver the positive value customers expect with little hassle.

For others, it isn't so easy.

- How does an association communicate the value of its membership package in a way that will keep people signing up year after year?
- How can an insurance company have a tangible, positive impact on the daily lives of customers who rarely use their services?
- How can an employer offer competitive benefits without breaking the bank?

Enter discount programs.

The idea is to make the provider the hero by helping people save money at restaurants, retailers, movie theaters, grocery stores, and places people shop every day.

That positive, relevant value drives engagement and goodwill back to the provider. The more people save money, the more positive interaction they have with the brand.



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What Can Positive, Relevant *Value* Do for You?

Intro

Three decades ago, Access Development emerged as a pioneer in building one of America's first discount networks. Today that network stands as the largest private collection of merchant discount content in the nation. We've taken just about everything we've learned and compiled it into this simple eBook.

This eBook will teach you everything you need to know about discount programs.

- How are they used?
- What makes a good one?
- Should you build it yourself or source it out?

We'll give you the answers you seek, as well as the actionable tips you need to make your engagement efforts a success.

Why are discount programs so effective at building consumer engagement and driving behavior?

Turn the page to find out.

Who is Access Development?



ACCESS by the Numbers

- 30+ years in business
- 350,000+ merchant locations
- 200,000+ mobile coupon merchant locations
- Local deals within 10 miles of 99% of U.S. consumers
- Deals in each of the top 10,000 cities
- 15 savings categories, including dining, recreation, and shopping

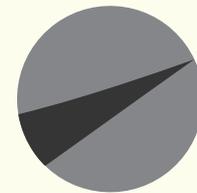
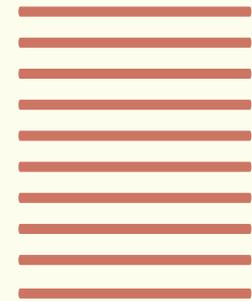


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Why Are Discount Programs Effective?



Why Are Discount Programs Effective?

Section Summary

Money and debt are major sources of stress. Discount programs can have a tangible impact on members by reducing expenses.

Saving Money Hits Home.

If you want to get straight to the heart of consumers, just look in their wallets. Getting ahead financially is a universal struggle.

- 72% of adults report feeling stressed about money at least some of the time
- 54% of adults say they have “just enough” or “not enough” money to make ends meet at the end of the month
- People who struggle with finances are more susceptible to depression, obesity, diabetes, and heart attacks, among other illnesses

Why so much anxiety? Being in hock to creditors, for one reason. The average American adult owes \$7,630 in revolving debt, \$11,244 in student

loans, \$8,163 on vehicles, and \$70,322 on a mortgage.

Meanwhile, the typical household income is just under \$57,000.

More struggles are coming, especially for Millennials and Gen Z. Most new jobs require some level of secondary education, but a basic degree from a public college costs \$10,000, and \$31,000 from a private school. (Those costs in 1972? \$500 and \$1,800, respectively.)

As financial stress persists in the years to come, **companies who help reduce those worries stand to benefit.**

A discount program alone will not cure poverty or solve someone’s financial woes. But make no mistake: a program built around everyday spending can

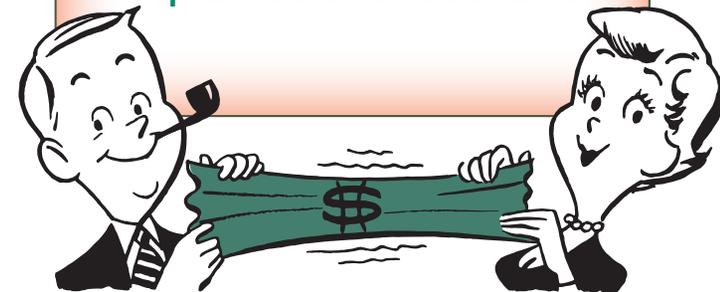
save families **hundreds of dollars on a yearly, if not monthly, basis.**

In this new reality, that kind of benefit is tangible and impactful.

When built properly, with everyday needs in mind and a focus on how and where people spend, discount programs can change lives.

Resource

Check out our collection of coupon statistics for more info.



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Why Are Discount Programs Effective?



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People Love Coupons.

With financial anxiety a new reality, we're all looking for ways to save money. Yes, "we." Odds are good that you're a coupon user, since as many as 96% of Americans use them.

In other words, it isn't just the poorer segments of the population that use them. Wealthy folks, Millennials, women, dads, teens — every demographic you want to reach is taking steps to save money.

Saving Enables Better Lives.

Don't discount the significance of enabling people to do things they aspire to, such as taking a vacation and staying in a nice hotel. Even a night out to dinner and a movie or a sporting event is something most families can barely afford without discounts.

Discount programs can help people do more of the things they want to do in life, without paying the same amount as the general public.

Who Uses Coupons?

Coupon usage by demographic



Men - 59%

Women - 73%



Affluent
(those making over \$100k) - 90%



Households
(those making \$35k or less) - 59%



Gen Y - 96%



Gen X - 69%



Boomers - 93%

Redemption methods



Printed (Mail) - 87% of all consumers use print coupons they receive in the mail



Printed (Insert) - 82% of all consumers use coupons delivered via the newspaper



Mobile - There will be 1.5 billion mobile coupon users by 2019



Card-Based Offers - Load-to-Card Redemptions increased 19.2% between 2014 and 2015



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Why Are Discount Programs Effective?

Section Summary

Discount programs create everyday positive engagement and put hundreds of dollars back into members' pockets.

What's In It for Your Brand?

So you know how discount programs can help people, but what do they do for your brand?

Primarily, discount programs create positive experiences built around brands.

Consumers search multiple sources for discounts, often spending hours just to save a few bucks. A good discount program compiles the best deals into a central location. That location becomes the first place members look when they want to save.

That means they're looking to the providing business – your brand.

How often are you able to create positive experiences for consumers? It's harder for some than others. For example...

- **Employers** use discount programs as a low-cost, high-usage benefit to retain and attract talent. Unlike "Accidental Death & Dismemberment insurance," discount programs can be used every day to help stretch employee paychecks.
- **Insurance companies** use discount programs to create positive customer experiences in between paying premiums and negotiating for claims. Discount programs alter the customer's perception of the relationship.
- **Financial institutions** use discount programs to increase engagement beyond the transactional relationship of checking account balances and making deposits. They also drive spending back to local merchants, and help ensure that customers look to their bank-provided debit and credit cards first.



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Why Are Discount Programs Effective?

There are countless more examples of how a simple discount program can do things for businesses that no other benefit can accomplish.

Any company providing a discount program increases engagement each time a member prints off a deal or opens their app.

Even better, it's a positive message, not "give us more money," or "work harder," but "**here's something from us to you.**"

The Impact of Engagement.

Ongoing engagement is a key component of loyalty. It's a pathway to deeper involvement in the goals of the providing organization. It builds trust between a person and an entity.

As the discount program becomes a regular part of the consumer's life – saving a few bucks on the weekly pizza

order, or a swanky pair of jeans – so does the brand providing the program. This frequent, constant engagement pays off in the long term when a customer decides whether to renew a membership or cancel an account. In other words, the organization becomes a welcome part of a regular routine.

There are other great benefits to discount programs as well. These include collecting contact information and offsetting fees/dues. Membership also serves as a tremendous incentive, gift, or reward.

The core benefit is much simpler, though.

What else can a brand give a consumer that will put hundreds of dollars back in their pockets, while also building everyday engagement?

Only discount programs can do that.



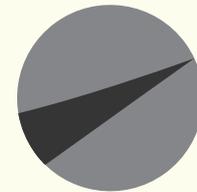
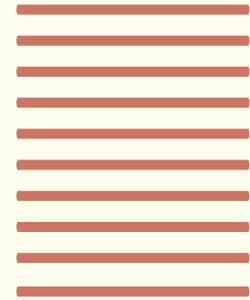
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*How Companies Benefit
From Discount Programs*



How Companies Benefit from *Discount Programs*

Resource

Check out the Access case study page, featuring real world examples.

Discount programs are attractive to a wide array of businesses, for a wide array of purposes. Here are a few of the most common ways in which they've been utilized:

Member Benefits

Popularized by groups such as AAA and AARP, discount programs make for a great enhancement to a member benefits package. The right discount program helps offset membership dues. Strong benefits can also pull members into the deeper goals of an association.

Employee Benefits

As healthcare and other benefit costs increase, discount programs are growing in popularity in the workplace. They cost a fraction of other benefits, yet offer more usage and satisfaction than an accidental death and dismemberment policy. All while helping the employees get more mileage out of every paycheck.

Customer Incentives

Discount program membership is an alternative to typical customer incentives such as gift cards and restaurant certificates. One, they give the customer access to deals at thousands of brands instead of just one. Two, memberships can last for months, extending the relationship between customer and the provider.

Customer Upsell Programs

Often found in online shopping carts or at the register in a store, continuity programs are a way for retailers to extend the relationship. Many of these are basically private-labeled discount programs. Programs built around everyday consumer spending can build incremental revenue rapidly.

Points-Burn Solutions

Every year, \$16 billion dollars are tied up in unredeemed points and miles. It's hard to find valuable redemption prizes at a decent cost, which leads

to high redemption hurdles and disengagement. 5,000 points for a \$10 gift card is hard for members to swallow. And yet, "\$10 off a \$50 purchase" coupon holds the same value and can be sold for 250 points. The result? More redemptions and less money held up in accrual liability – and even better, more member engagement.

Customer Rewards

Looking for an inexpensive way to say thanks, or a way to "surprise and delight" someone? Targeted, personalized offers excite consumers.

Fundraising

No one, especially kids, likes fundraising. It's hard to ask people for money, and the gifts donors receive in return are often uninspiring. The potential savings a discount program offers can offset donations plus more. Discount fundraisers typically have higher returns than any other fundraising product.

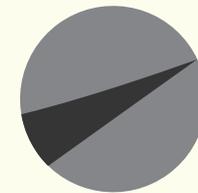
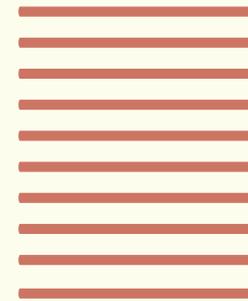


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*What Makes a Great
Discount Program?*



The Essential Elements

What are the essential elements of a discount program that drives engagement? While some of these are more important than others, all nine need to be present to excite members and encourage everyday usage.



Lo

Local, in-store
merchants

Re

Relevant offers on
everyday purchases

Hi

High value offers
(deep discounts)

Bi

Big ticket savings
(big purchases)

Mo

Mobile
coupons

Sc

Scarcity
(hard-to-find deals)

Ma

Marketing
support services

Me

Merchant
compliance

Ms

Member
support services



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What Makes a *Great* Discount Program?

The Essential Elements of a Quality Discount Program

Discount programs aren't just about throwing a few deals together. Quality discount programs that drive usage and engagement all feature these essential characteristics:

- Lo Local, In-Store Merchants**
92% of consumer spending occurs in-store, in local communities. While online spending is growing, brick-and-mortar offers still excite consumers the most.
- Re Relevant Offers on Everyday Purchases**
Food, clothing, electronics, movie tickets, auto care, cell phone plans, hair styling – these are the most common purchases consumers make. The best discount networks are successful at saving its users money on *all* of these and more.
- Hi High Value Offers (Deep Discounts)**
People are attracted to great offers, such as “Buy One, Get One Free,” and “50% off.” On the other hand, “Free Shipping” or “2% Cash Back” aren't going to have the same appeal. Great deals drive more redemptions and generate more enthusiasm.
- Bi Big Ticket Savings (Big Purchases)**
Besides deep discounts, a quality discount network will also enable consumers to save thousands on single, big ticket transactions. Look for a network that features savings on cruises, hotels, and even auto repair.



What Makes a *Great* Discount Program?

Mo

Mobile Coupons

The fastest growing segment of coupons are those that can be presented on a mobile device and redeemed in-store. Five years ago these were a nice item for a discount program to have. Today research shows they're overtaking printed coupons. It's important that mobile coupons can be redeemed on the spot.

Sc

Scarcity (Hard-to-Find Deals)

Has anyone ever told you "you're special," only to discover they say the same thing to everyone they meet? That's what it's like offering discount "benefits" that are available to the general public. Most merchants keep their deepest, most valuable offers private, allowing access to select partners who adhere to strict guidelines.

Ma

Marketing Support Services

You, as the manager of the program shouldn't have to be an expert on driving awareness and educating your audience on the value of your discounts. Quality discount programs promote the deals through email, push notifications, printed materials, and more.

Ms

Member Support Services

It's crucial that a discount program has a seamless method for handling member questions and issues. The alternative is that members can easily disengage from the program after one bad experience. Or even worse, all those issues come to *you* as the program manager.

Me

Merchant Compliance

Getting a coupon rejected while at the front of a busy line, or in the company of friends, is embarrassing enough to keep someone from ever using that discount program again. Ensuring merchant compliance requires a good relationship between the discount program and the merchant.

These traits are non-negotiable if your goal is to offer a benefit that will build engagement. Each plays an important role in the health of the program and the user experience.

Section Summary

Discount programs that people actually use require far more than a handful of aggregate offers.

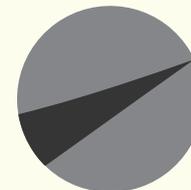
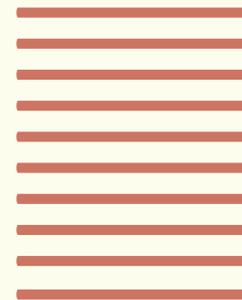


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Discerning Types Of Offers



Discerning Types of Offers

It's also important to understand that not all deals are equal. To discern the quality of a discount program, you need to know the different types of offers that comprise them.

Five Types of Offers

Across the spectrum of coupons and discounts, there are five basic types of deals. Certain types of deals excite customers, while some deals aren't "deals" at all. It's important to understand the differences.

1. Private, Brick-and-Mortar Offers

are negotiated directly between the program and a merchant for use by members of a closed group. 92% of consumer spending occurs in brick-and-mortar locations, so these coupons are of the highest value.

Since they're negotiated on a location-by-location basis, these are costly to acquire and thus scarce.

Example: A buy-one-get-one-free offer from a discount program to a local restaurant.

2. Private, Online-to-Offline Offers are redeemed online or by phone and fulfilled in a brick-and-mortar location. This category includes items like discounted gift cards, movie tickets, online pizza orders, and so on.

These offers are difficult to acquire because they're sourced directly from merchants.



Example: A hotel room booked through the hotel's website, with a "promo code" given to discount program members for 25% off their stay.

3. Third Party Online-to-Offline Offers are sourced via third parties, who compile offers from merchants.

These aggregators include such specialty providers as SpaFinder, and Liftopia, to name a few. These deals tend to be neither private nor exclusive, but they are still somewhat popular among consumers.

One downside is that these offers are labeled under the aggregator, not your brand. Another is they often come with strict fine print about when and how they can be used.

Example: Discounted ski passes purchased through Liftopia.



Discerning Types of Offers

Section Summary

Not all deals are the same. Some are in-store offers negotiated directly with merchants, while others are purely advertisements.

4. Private Affiliate Links are a form of online advertising, built around percentages off specific items. The discounts are usually 5% or less, with the referrer keeping a slice of each discount for itself as revenue.

Usage on these offers is low, which isn't surprising considering less than 8% of spending occurs online.

These offers come from affiliate networks, whose goal is to maximize the number of people exposed to the offers.

Example: 5% off a toy at Target.com, enabled by clicking a specific link provided by the affiliate network.

5. Public Affiliate Offers are public deals collected from merchants and promoted by affiliate networks.

They're usually low value, and often don't include a true deal at all.

Many are just a link to the clearance section of a retailer's website.

Like private affiliate links, these offers kick back a few cents to the publisher on every transaction. This means they're incentivized to expose the offer to as many people as possible.

That's otherwise known as advertising.

Example: A courtesy link to the Walmart.com clearance section.



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The Discount Program *Quality Spectrum*

Let's illustrate this concept of quality graphically. On the far left of this scale are private, in-store offers, which receive the most usage, yet are scarce. These are purely beneficial to the member, since there typically isn't revenue going to the provider.

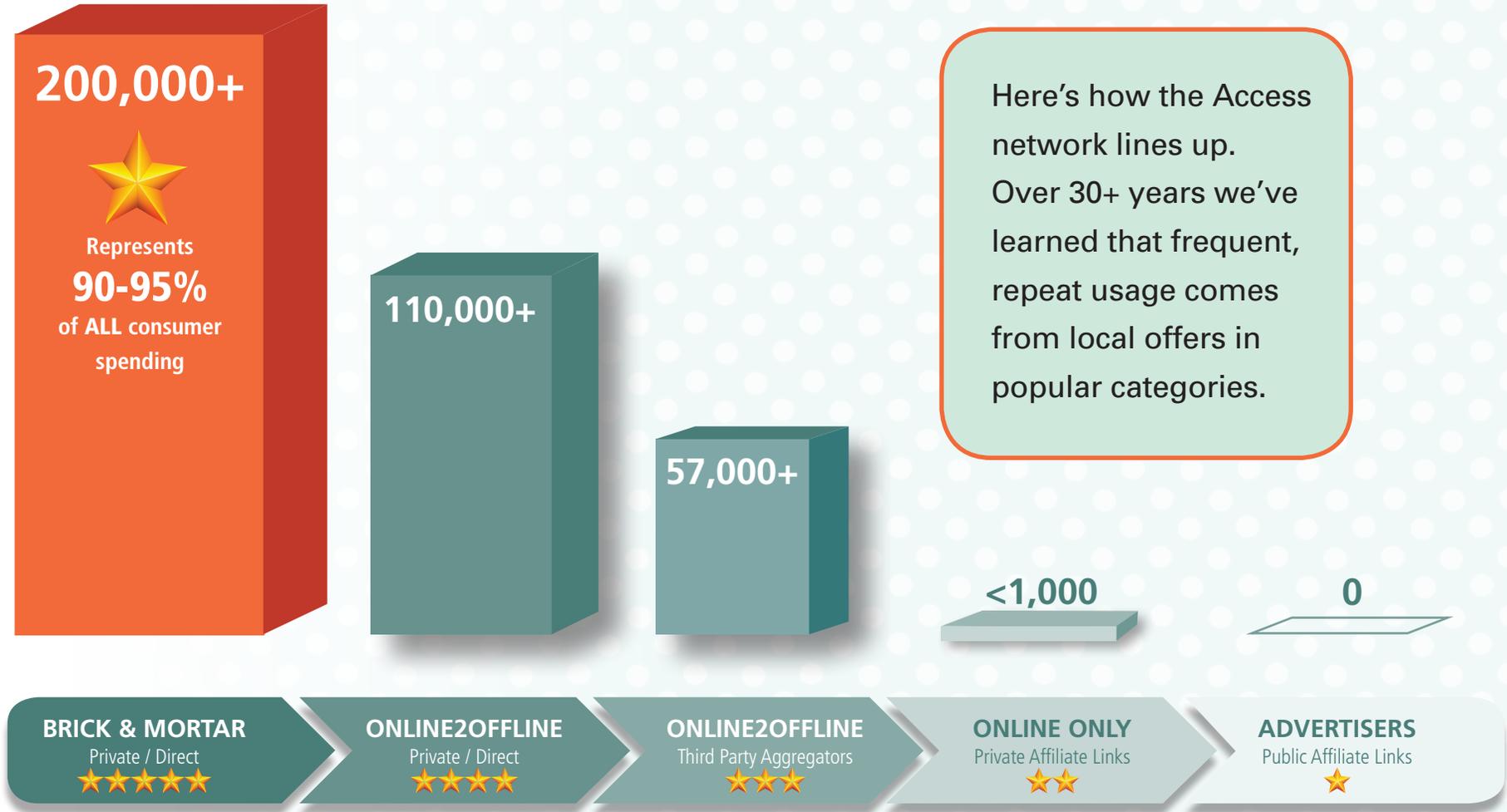
On the right, the affiliate offers and deals that have no cost to acquire and receive little usage. These generate revenue for publishers, and most people recognize them as ads.

Ideally, the majority of a program's offers will be on the left side of the spectrum. These are the deals people are most likely to get excited about and use.

The more offers that fall on the right, the more you'll be providing advertising to your members. These are where the "free" and cheap discount programs line up. Their motivation isn't to drive engagement, but to generate small shards of revenue. That's why they're willing to give their discounts away for free.



The Discount Program *Quality Spectrum*



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The Discount Program *Quality Spectrum*

And here's a chart from another discount program provider, who focuses primarily on online offers.

Free and cheap discount programs like this one earn money through transactions generated from public offers.

In these models, members and their data become the primary product.

Click here to learn more about the many risks behind this model.

If you plan to evaluate discount programs, then use this chart to measure where each falls on this spectrum.

Ask each provider to share how many of each offer they have. Those that skew to the left end are those worth considering. Everything else is unlikely to do much for your members.



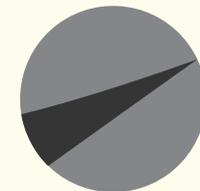
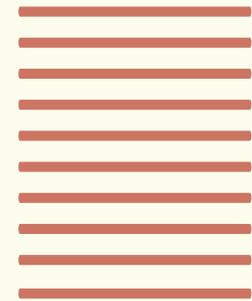
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Promoting Your Program



Member Marketing *Dos & Don'ts*

Some members will latch onto a discount program and become instant fans the first time they log in. The higher a program's quality, the higher that percentage of instant fans will be.

Habits take a few repetitions to form, so most members will need encouragement to enroll and save. That means a provider's ability to generate usage is almost as important as the discount content itself.

Some members will need simple reminders that the deals are available. Others are content to wait for the right deal to appear. Either way, discount programs need a frequent stream of communications with members.

This is an important area to test potential discount program providers on. It's their job to drive usage and redemptions - not yours. The provider should be able to show relevance and value to members in a personalized, clear manner.

Emails, printed materials, texts, contests, and social media posts are just a few important channels. Push notifications and location-based messages promote high levels of engagement for mobile users.



Discount Program Member Marketing Essentials

What good is a discount program if members don't use it? Use these promotional channels and topic ideas to generate awareness and excitement around your discount program.

Printed Materials

- Statement Stuffers
- Direct Mailers
- Welcome Kits



Web Banners

- On Your Site
- In Emails
- In Targeted Ads



Email

- New Offers
- Savings Reports
- Deals for Inactive Members



Push Notifications

- Nearby Offers
- New Offers
- Offers for Inactive Members



Texts

- New Offers
- Personal Appeals
- Savings Milestones



Social Media

- Merchant Additions
- Messages to Members
- Limited-Time Offers



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Member Marketing *Dos & Don'ts*

When it comes to member communications, there are a few essential requirements that must be kept in mind:

- **The branding should be yours, not that of the discount program provider**

Why should their brand earn the benefits of engagement? Your members should see your brand first and foremost.

- **Comply with merchant branding requests**

Most merchants have branding guidelines on how their logos and images should be used. Failure to follow these requests endangers the merchant's participation in the discount program. Worse, it can expose you to potential legal actions.

- **Eliminate competing brands**

It's critical that you're able to remove competitors' offers from your discount program. For example, if you offer insurance, then all other insurance companies should disappear from your program.

Following these protocols ensures your brand receives the best exposure within the discount program.

Combining your brand with merchant brands members already love is crucial to positive engagement.

While it isn't critical, personalization is a great way to increase engagement and usage. At minimum, this means using a member's name. The best personalization presents deals from members' zip codes or based on previous redemptions.

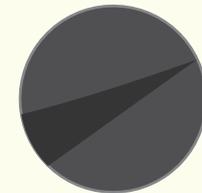
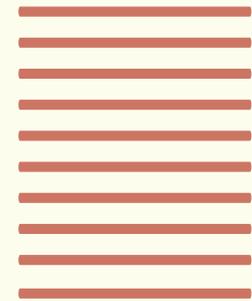


The important thing to keep in mind is **you benefit when they save money.** The more relevant and timely an offer is, the more likely they are to redeem. Whether you're operating your own program or working with a partner, member communications should be considered a high priority.





*How to Build Your Own
Discount Program*



How to Build *Your Own* Discount Program

Section Summary

Building your own discount program requires a time investment, as well as a basic knowledge of how merchants operate.

The great thing about discount programs is *anyone* can build one.

The bad thing about discount programs is they're *very* difficult to build and even harder to maintain.

It's a manual and complicated process that requires a heavy investment of time and money.

It's taken Access 30 years to build our network of 350,000+ merchants. Here's what we've learned along the way.

1. There are no shortcuts.

Quality discount programs are built on relationships. This is an industry that doesn't feature too many hacks or shortcuts. Affiliate deals can be added easily through networks. But deals people actually use come from direct relationships.

Another aspect of building relationships with merchants is ensuring they'll recognize your offers.

Few things enrage a member more than having their coupon rejected at the point of sale. It's important that the managers and staff at a merchant are familiar with your program.

2. Understand the world of merchants.

Convincing merchants to offer a quality discount to your members takes more than just working the phones. Do some homework first. Have they offered other coupons elsewhere? Is there a time of the week when business drags? Do they have a high-price, low-cost item that, if offered free, will entice crowds to enter?

Most managers are multitaskers who are dealing with customers, employees, and vendors at the same time. They're doing what they can to make their business profitable.

Come armed with knowledge and a way to help, and you're more likely to walk away with a quality offer for your members.

3. Have a clear, concise contract.

Once the merchant has agreed to join your discount program, you need to sign them to a contract.

First, contracts cement the relationship between the discount program and the merchant in clear terms.

Second, contracts provide evidence of a merchant's agreement to participate. This comes in handy when a new manager comes in and wants to know who authorized the deal.

Third, contracts outline details such as permission to use the merchant's logo in marketing materials.

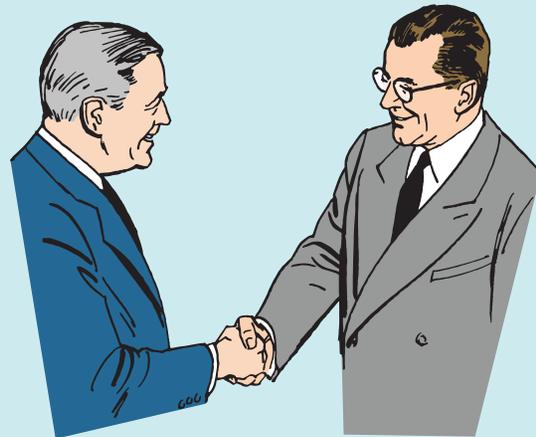
Contracts are worth the investment because they're a tool to ensure the merchant honors the deal your members expect.

Talk with your legal representative about drafting a contract.

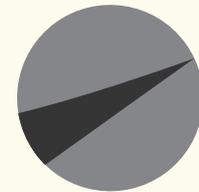
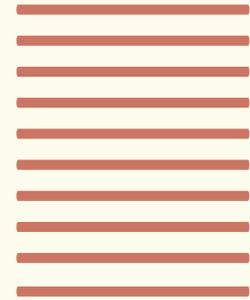


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*Working with a Third
Party Provider*



Working with a Third Party Provider

Resource

Why is a discount program a great investment? Click here to see how a little investment can go a long way.

Odds are you're reading this eBook because you're not a discount program specialist. Your job is most likely acquiring, engaging and retaining customers or employees.

The big benefit to working with a discount program provider is you don't have to interface with merchants. You don't have to worry about building out a search friendly deals website or mobile app. And you don't have to take calls from members wanting to know why a coupon isn't being accepted. Discount program providers already have staff and processes in place to deal with those issues.

If you want a high quality discount program, it's important to know a few things about working with a third party provider.

First, there are hard costs.

If you've read the rest of this eBook, then you're aware that there are costs associated with discount programs. Acquiring and retaining merchants, building the distribution platforms, and so on are all costly.

Many groups set out to build their own program, but most find that the perceived cost savings simply aren't there. HR and marketing pros don't have time to build out deal sites or take calls from upset members.

And just as often, the deal value can leave a lot to be desired. Merchants are hit up all the time for discounts, and they only have a limited interest in offering them to organizations that aren't already prominent.

By partnering with a third party, you'll be able to take advantage of scaled efforts. The cost of managing merchant relationships, building technology, and so on, is shared among many clients – not to mention the influence you get from working with a larger base of consumers. On the whole, sourcing the program out will save you time and money.

That said, you should know what to look for in pricing.



ACCESS DEVELOPMENT

AMERICA'S LARGEST PRIVATE DISCOUNT NETWORK

Working with a Third Party Provider

Section Summary

Treat discount program vendors just like any others – evaluate them thoroughly, set expectations, and proactively manage the relationship.

Discount programs are priced in a variety of ways. Some divide their content into categories (dining, shopping, automotive, hotels, etc.) and will charge per member, per month.

Others will offer flat rate pricing based on tiers. Member marketing, customer service, and fulfillment may be additional.

There are free and cheap discount program providers, but it's important to know what you're getting into with them. Their models depend upon advertising to your members, so they rarely feature offers that aren't already available to the general public.

Free programs are also known to take liberties with member data, opening your organization to potential legal issues. (Not to mention that people don't really like having their information shared.)

Second, evaluate your provider on the quality of their deals and ability to drive usage.

If you're going to invest in anything for your business, you should expect a return. The only way you'll see a return on a discount program is by generating usage.

Discount program adoption and usage occur as a result of quality offers and promotional efforts.

Carefully evaluate each of your vendors for quality. Find out how many local, in-store offers each has, for example.

The higher the quality, the more your members will use the program to save.

Third, stay involved with your discount program provider.

As with any corporate vendor, the best results come when you actively work with them as a partner. "Set it and

forget it" works for rotisserie chicken cookers, but it isn't a great idea in a business environment.

Frequent contact with your provider will ensure members are cared for, new merchants are being added, and your needs are being met. Set goals around usage and activations, then follow up on the progress toward them. Challenge the provider to add more local content in your target region. Ask to review the marketing executions they have planned to drive more usage with your members.

A relationship with a discount program provider is like any other business relationship. You hire them for a purpose, then evaluate the relationship to ensure the fulfillment of that purpose.

We've given you some key characteristics that are essential to a successful discount program. But as



Working with a Third Party Provider

you begin to evaluate programs, it's important to identify how well they embody those characteristics.

Like every industry, discount programs have techniques to make them seem superior to their competitors. Some will combine their "merchant locations" and "merchant offers" into a massive number. Others will claim they have a high "participation rate," a number of their own invention.

Don't settle for their verbiage. Evaluating programs requires some very specific questions that have very specific answers. It's essential that you receive separate numbers for "merchants" (brands), "locations" (brick-and-mortar stores), and "offers" (actual deals).

For example, Denny's is one merchant, who may have 150 locations, with 450 offers (three at each location) across a network. Target.com is a merchant with no physical locations

because it's a website, and at any given time it could have 10 offers.

These are important distinctions to make. Some providers will claim brick-and-mortar locations for all Target stores, when they just have offers from the website.

Evaluating discount program merchants can be a complicated process with a lot of insider language. Put your potential vendors to the test. Ask them to be specific on the breakdown of their network (local, in-store offers vs online offers, how many "show your phone" mobile coupons they provide, etc.). Find out how their offers can be integrated into your existing website and mobile app. If you don't have those, see if they have a turnkey product that can be branded for your company (and not just theirs).

Be clear on pricing as well. Some discount program providers charge flat fees, while others charge per member, per month. Look for extra fees and ongoing setup costs, which are sometimes buried in contracts.

Finally, know exactly what the provider will be doing with your member's info. Some discount programs supplement their income by selling member data. Obviously, you'll want to know if that's the case with your potential partners.

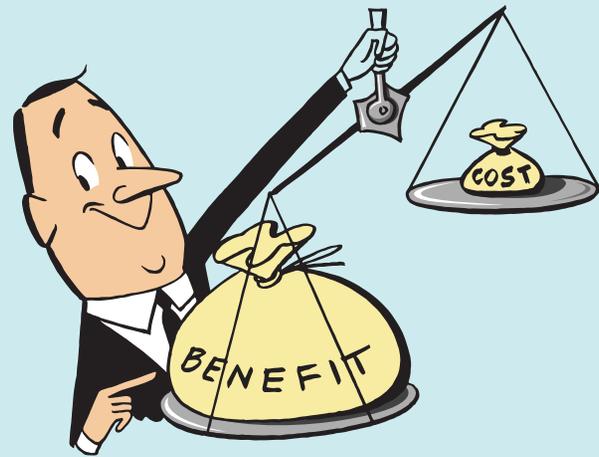
Resource

Why are discount programs worth investing in? Besides giving your customers the best savings available, you'll protect yourself from potential legal exposure. Check out the top ten reasons you shouldn't just go with the cheapest option available.

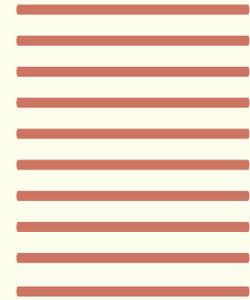


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*Measuring Your
Discount Program ROI*



Measuring Your Discount Program *ROI*

As with any business expense, it's important to know what kind of return on investment your discount program is bringing in.

Many of the benefits of discount programs are hard to quantify. How exactly does one measure loyalty? Is it possible to decipher what leads someone to renew a membership, or stay with a workplace? And what role does a discount program play in those decisions?

Unfortunately, there is no sure-fire statistic to measure the success of your discount program. The most important measures are activations and redemptions — the key ingredients of usage. But there are other engagement measures to watch, as they can reveal how members are using the program.

Here's what you need to track:

1. Activations

This is how many people are signing up for the discount program. While activating 100% of your customers or employees sounds easy, aim for incremental sign-ups. Aim for 25% initially, then talk to your discount program provider about some specific actions you can take to encourage more activations.

2. Offer Redemptions & Money Saved

This is where the rubber meets the road. How much is your audience engaging, using and saving with your discount program? (Disparate POS technologies across merchant types prevent most discount programs from truly measuring redemptions, or how much a member spent/saved. You may have to assume that redemptions occur when a member hits the "Redeem" button on your deals site.)

3. Visits

Are people logging in and snooping around the offers? If you're seeing lots of visits and low redemptions, then it's an indictment of the quality of offers. Conversely, high redemptions and low visits may mean you need to promote your network more.

4. Promotion Metrics

Are your emails being opened? Are people registering after seeing your printed mailer in their mailbox? Find what increases activations, visits and redemptions, then repeat the process.

5. Customer Engagement

No, there isn't a single customer engagement metric. But an effective discount program will pique interest in your business. Social follows and likes, website visits, even customer service traffic are all signs that people are engaging.



Measuring Your Discount Program ROI

6. Retention

If retention is your goal, all the above measures should correlate with your retention rates. Loyalty is rarely the result of one element; it requires a bigger picture. Having a discount program that offers positive value impacts people in their wallets. It makes the amount they spend with your brand less important.

7. Merchant Feedback

Merchant relationships drive great offers. Take every opportunity to talk with them and use their feedback. The end result will be better offers, easier merchant retention, and painless redemption for members.

8. Offer Compliance

Offer compliance is the rate at which merchants accept your offers. Too many rejected coupons is a sign of lagging merchant

compliance. Or worse, a sign that the discount program is sourcing offers from disreputable sources.

9. Data Acquired

For many companies, a major appeal of a discount program is the ability to acquire customer data. Physical and email addresses in particular are valuable for your brand.

Talk with your discount program provider about setting goals for each of these fields, and find ways to work together to reach those goals.



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Click here to contact us for a free personal trial of the Access discount network.

Now that you know everything there is to know about discount programs, check out the company that started it all.

Since 1984, Access Development has helped hundreds of businesses build engagement through our network of 350,000+ offers. We also have a network of over 200,000 “show your phone” mobile coupons.

Looking for relevance? The network features local, in-store offers for 99% of the country, including all 50 states and the top 500+ markets.

Our discount programs engage modern consumers with a focus on exclusive local, in-store content. We’ve also partnered with some of the biggest brands in the world for in-store offers, as well as the most popular affiliate deals.

THE ACCESS DISCOUNT NETWORK

Over 10,000 Cities

All 366 U.S. Metropolitan Areas

All 576 U.S. Micropolitan Areas

Serving 99.6% of Entire U.S. Population



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