



HOW TO ADAPT YOUR **LOYALTY PROGRAM** TO CHANGING CUSTOMER SHOPPING HABITS



"At the end of the day people won't remember what you said or did, they will remember how you made them feel."

– Dr. Maya Angelou



THE BAR HAS BEEN RAISED

With evolving mobile retail tech, customer expectations are at an all-time high. Thanks to buy-online-pickup-in-store (BOPIS) services, your customers have more options for where and how they make purchases. And they're shifting between brands and retailers with ease. So, **how can you adapt and create a loyalty program that sets you apart from the competition** — and truly makes your customers feel valued and special?

It's no secret that loyalty programs help brands differentiate themselves from their competitors, but these programs themselves must evolve from their simple origins. In years past, a discount code, punch card, or points system was probably enough to keep many customers coming back. But that's not the case anymore.

In fact, we'd go as far as to say, that's not a loyalty program in today's retail ecosystem. Sure, everyone loves a discount, but discounts don't build emotional loyalty. Points programs don't forge relationships. For your loyalty program to do its job, **you need to adapt it and expand it to fit evolving consumer shopping habits.**

That means, to make changes that move the needle, you need to do more than add a few more perks to your loyalty program. It's time to evolve how you think about loyalty programs and how they operate. **Loyalty can make or break your business – both online and in store.** So, if you haven't started yet, it's time to overhaul outdated strategies. It's time to start anticipating shifting consumer behavior and integrating loyalty into all you do.

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UN-SILO YOUR LOYALTY PROGRAM

The first step in an evolved loyalty program? Integrate loyalty into everything you do — and every part of your company. Brands that implement a company-wide definition for engagement and loyalty success are already a step ahead of the competition. To do this, you need to focus both on technology and the human element of engagement and loyalty. When you un-silo your loyalty program and get your teams and employees on board (especially customer-facing employees), you can build a loyalty program that does more — for you and your customers.

This means looking at all channels. Collaborate across all departments and functions. Implement continuous testing and deeper analysis. Your loyalty program should be closely connected to your sales and customer service departments, and you should have the technology and insights to take a data-oriented approach to loyalty efforts. Measure what's working, what's not, and look for areas to improve.



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ENHANCE THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

BY ADAPTING YOUR LOYALTY STRATEGY


While assets, tactics, and specific loyalty strategies will come and go, one thing must stay top of mind: the customer experience. If your goal is not to enhance and continuously improve the customer experience, no loyalty program can succeed. **Prioritizing customer experience and customer satisfaction is paramount.**

As we mentioned earlier, BOPIS services have been on the rise for some time. They were already increasing in 2019 and early 2020, and the pandemic has only accelerated their popularity with consumers. One of the perks of BOPIS services for customers is person-to-person interaction. This has been especially important during the pandemic, as people have missed much-needed human interaction with social distancing and shelter-in-place orders. Beyond the pandemic, though, positive in-store interactions will continue to be crucial.

While your BOPIS options give people an excuse to get out of the house, that perk only goes so far. They don't just want to leave their homes — **they want to be engaged, and they want a warm, welcoming experience.** If you can accommodate a great experience every time a loyal customer walks in the door, you're on your way to creating a quality loyalty program.

This means ensuring that you're accommodating the customer's schedule, but that's not all. You may have their orders ready as soon as they walk in the door, but what else are you doing for your loyal customers? Are you making it easy for them to choose your brand? Do you give them top priority when they arrive?

Your priority should always be to offer a seamless, frictionless, and personalized experience — across all channels. A great customer experience builds deeper relationships and engagement – leading to more loyalty.

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PRIORITIZE POSITIVE, ENGAGING IN-PERSON EXPERIENCES

Currently, a lot of the buying journey begins online. With that in mind, successful brands will implement a hybrid of online and in-person engagement efforts. This includes online consumer education and engagement, along with educated associate staff who can further educate and assist with the in-store experience. The right staff with the right training and knowledge will help customers feel special while guiding them to the right products or services for their needs and goals.

We cannot overemphasize the importance of in-store engagement. Sure, people chat online, send DMs, and watch TikTok videos, but they need and want in-person interactions. How many people have you heard, over the last year, talk about how much they miss seeing friends and family in person? Online interactions only go so far — **so it's essential to focus on the in-store, in-person experience.**

Your customers want to be in a place that's fun and welcoming. They want friendly, engaging staff, and they want to be in an environment that feels comfortable with good lighting and an easy-to-navigate layout. You may not typically think of your in-store displays or your customer service policies as part of your loyalty program, but they play a huge role in customer experience. **And that's a huge part of loyalty!**

So, what's the best strategy for in-store customer engagement? **Connect with them and provide a service that they can't get online** — and that your online competitors can't come close to. Focus on the human element and face-to-face interactions. Engage customers with connectivity. When a customer feels engaged and connected, they'll come back again and again — online and in person.



Design your in-store experience to include attractive displays, a shopper-friendly layout, and engaging sales and customer service staff. Prioritize making customers (and especially returning loyal customers) feel like VIPs as they walk through the door. That feeling simply cannot be matched online.

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WEAVE **LOYALTY** INTO YOUR BRAND'S PURPOSE

Finally, we've alluded to this before, but loyalty is a whole-company effort. Today's consumers aren't just looking at what you produce and sell—they're looking more closely at your whole brand and company. They want to know that they're building a relationship with a brand that shares their values.

To be successful, brands must lead with purpose. That means, as a brand, you must find and define a genuine driving purpose behind all you do. Develop a voice and define what you stand for. Then, weave that purpose into your loyalty program. Doing this shows authenticity and strengthens customer relationships.

Are you listening when your customers ask for more sustainable products and less wasteful packaging? Will you respond with actions that show your purpose and values are authentic?

Build communication into your loyalty strategy. Show your customers how their purchases make a positive impact for their values. Communicate that impact specifically to your loyal customers and show them how their continued loyalty helps them, their communities, and potentially the whole world.



As you define your purpose, think about a few important questions.

- Are you giving your customers a voice and listening to what they have to say?
- What are they asking of your brand?
- How are you prioritizing your loyal customers' needs and wants?
- How are you communicating to them that you hear them and that they matter?



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Are you ready to un-silo your loyalty program, enhance customer engagement, prioritize your brand's purpose, and create the experience your loyal customers crave? **Karrot can help.**

CONTACT US TODAY TO SCHEDULE A DEMO



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GREAT SERVICES

TOP NOTCH

SUPERFINE

I AM HAPPY

SUPERB

HIGH QUALITY

EXCELLENT

IMPRESSIVE

FIVE STARS

PERFECTLY

VERY GOOD

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