

Industry News

Lift & Shift offers loyalty rewards programs

By Clint Engel

AT THE MARKET — The president of Lift & Shift is at the High Point Market this week, promoting his company's expanding offering of mileage and other loyalty rewards programs to industry retailers and suppliers.

Graham Farrell said he has seen strong early support from retailers, but even more interest from industry suppliers who see the program as a great way to reward their customers with miles and other



Farrell

“favorite currencies” they covet through the one-stop platform.

Here's how it works: Lift & Shift has developed relationships with about a dozen rewards programs, including the frequent

flyer mileage programs of all the major U.S. airlines (except Delta) as well as the Priority Club hotel program and Best Buy's rewards program.

Participating retailers can promote these programs in-store and through their advertising and their website, offering consumers the miles

or points of their choice free with their purchases.

A typical consumer reward — though retailers are not tied to any set program or offer — would be one mile or point rewarded for every \$2 spent at the store. So a customer spending \$1,400 on a leather sofa, for instance, would receive, say, 700 American Airlines Advantage miles or United Mileage Plus miles or whatever currency they collect.

The Lift & Shift program can be run through the retailer's point-of-sale system, but it also has a Web-based interface, Farrell said, making it easy for salespeople to deposit the miles or points directly into their customers' reward accounts.

The cost to the retailer is five cents per mile or point, so the above example would equate to 2.5% of the sale. Retailers only pay for the miles they use and only after they have been awarded to the customer, Farrell said.

Lift & Shift and Farrell began marketing to the industry this year during the Home Furnishing Industry Conference in New Orleans. During that event, Farrell said he received so much interest from other HFIC exhibitors that he developed additional marketing materials targeting industry suppliers, who could offer the rewards to their retail customers. He followed up with a series of supplier appointments in Las Vegas and will be doing the same here in High Point.

The programs with retailers and suppliers will probably go live early next year, he said.

Farrell used to run a similar company in Canada that offered similar loyalty rewards to furniture and other retailers. It's a common and successful practice there, he said, adding that with nothing similar was available in the United States, so he created Lift & Shift to develop the market fill a void.

Furniture retailers have tried to launch their own loyalty programs in the past, but see Lift & Shift, p90

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Industry News

Market Authority brings back Style Spotters ▶ *Lift & Shift*

AT THE MARKET — The High Point Market Authority is bringing back past competition participants for the latest edition of Style Spotters. In this market's program, Style Spotters — Rewind!, some Style Spotters from markets past will revisit their past picks and provide an update on the top products and trends they spot. Market attendees can also participate by voting on pin-

boards and products, generating "likes" or re-pinning their favorite Style Spotters pick on the market Pinterest board. Style Spotters will present exhibitors with signs that highlight their name with a QR code and URL.

The returning Style Spotters include Michelle Wiebe, Gretchen Aubuchon, Tobi Fairley, Lisa Ferguson, Shay Geyer, Janel Laban, Lisa Mende, Stacy

Naquin and Traci Zeller.

Style Spotters, launched during the fall 2011 market, are home fashion trendsetters that showcase their favorite products and top trends from market exhibitors on Pinterest, a website that lets users organize and share photos on virtual pinboards.

More about the Style Spotters is online at www.highpointmarket.org/stylespotters.

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they usually fail, Farrell said, because furniture and bedding purchases are infrequent.

Instead of trying to develop their own reward, retailers stand to do better offering a variety of the most popular plans, he said, noting that 90 million people collect

United miles — the largest of the programs — while 70 million people collect American Airlines miles.

"When a furniture retailer can say, 'Come in here and buy from us, and we'll give you the currency you want,' that's very compelling because the average transaction size is relative big," Farrell said. "People realize they can quickly earn a lot of their favorite frequent flyer miles."

As a result, the program does a good job of attracting new customers seeking that reward whenever they need whatever it is the retailer is selling, he said.

Retailers also can adjust the reward any way and any time they choose. For instance, if the store is overstocked on an item it wants to move, the retailer can offer double miles on that particular item. Likewise, they can use a more lucrative reward as an upsell mechanism — say double miles when the consumer buys leather upholstery, instead of fabric, or double miles on purchases over \$1,500.

"So merchants can create all kinds of special offers to get people to focus on purchasing certain things to maximize their profit," Farrell said.

He said the cost is "pretty affordable relative to other things I've seen in the marketplace in recent years." The program can be promoted via a retailer's existing advertising, and there's also the added benefit of word of mouth.

"People love to brag when they travel for free somewhere," he said, adding that they also like to tell their friends how they accumulated their miles.

The Toronto-based Lift & Shift recently added Gift Card Points to its rewards slate — a program that gives consumers the opportunity to use points collected through retail purchase on \$25 and \$50 denomination gift cards to places such as Target, Barnes & Noble, AMC Theatres and the Outback Steakhouse.

Farrell said this ensures customers who are not members of rewards programs partnered with Lift & Shift can still be rewarded by the merchant.

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