

Frequent flyer checklist:

13 must-dos to get the most out of loyalty programs

Are your travel points maxed out? Don't be so sure. There are rewards hiding in plain sight on every flight, hotel stay, and car booking. This checklist is a quick cheat sheet to help travel arrangers find better savings and business travel perks for their travellers.

Here are 13 ways travel arrangers can help their teams maximise loyalty points while still achieving great business value:

Initial setup:

Do these steps once, and benefit forever.

Know your numbers. Create a master loyalty tracker in a spreadsheet or your booking system with traveller details, loyalty numbers by program, and status levels. Update it quarterly.

Rack up rewards with the help of a TMC. Set up integration between internal tracking and corporate loyalty programs offered by your TMC. Some loyalty programs are only available through a supplier network and not via DIY booking. Get treated like a VIP without needing to ask.

Enroll in corporate loyalty programs for flights, accommodations, and any other perks that are available. Don't leave money on the table by sticking to personal loyalty programs

Set standardised loyalty programs to consolidate spending and rewards. This can mean frequent travellers reach elite status faster or a wider range of potential volume-based discounts.

Look for loyalty-friendly travel cards. Get the most out of all the unexpected travel expenses with credit cards that maximise loyalty points and offer added perks and trip protections.

Quarterly maintenance:

Spend 15 mins every 3 months on key maintenance tasks.

Update status levels. As travel happens, are points and rewards levels being updated? Add in any current data that's missing, then track progress and celebrate wins.

Unlock more upgrades. Confirm with travellers that all of their membership numbers are correct and entered in the travel system, even the ones that they use for personal travel. Look for status matches and fast-track offers to unlock elite benefits early. It all adds up!

Evaluate program changes and check that your big three are still worth prioritising. If you've newly added a program, there may be more info about how to stack up rewards coming after employees have been out on the road.

During booking

Streamline the booking process, and you're set for success!

Stick with approved booking channels to avoid loss of points or status credits due to online travel agency (OTA) restrictions and to maintain policy compliance.

Keep a clear-cut list of contacts. Some levels of loyalty status might have a dedicated number to call if flights are cancelled or if travellers need assistance. Keep a list of your top-tier travellers and their specific point of contact, or contact your TMC's travel expert to handle these details.

Use points for strategic savings. Smart points redemption helps avoid unnecessary upgrades or spending by using loyalty points for flight upgrades, hotel stays, or future travel.

Look out for red flags. Don't prioritise loyalty points if the cost of a flight or hotel is way out of policy and you've got better options.

Try out time-saving automations. Working with a TMC gets you access to a travel platform that can auto-populate loyalty numbers, load seat preferences, and keep track of meal requests without lifting a finger. Auto-population saves travellers from having to call or manually add their loyalty numbers in the system.

That's how it's done. With just a bit of effort, you can make your travel program way more rewarding (Literally!). Keep an eye out, stay curious, and don't be afraid to get scrappy with savings. Keep chasing those points, and soon, you'll be sharing the wins with your team and your company.