



# A CASE STUDY FOR CHANGING CUSTOMER BEHAVIOR WITHOUT A MEGA-BUDGET

Interview with **Nataki Edwards**, Vice President of Digital Strategy and Operations, AARP



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## OVERVIEW

### How AARP is rewarding engaged members

Telemedicine companies, like American Well™, MDLIVE®, and MYidealDOCTOR™ are investing millions convincing patients to see their physicians via virtual house call.

And pizza makers, like Papa John's, Domino's®, and Pizza Hut® are spending as much encouraging consumers to build and order their perfect pie with clicks rather than calls.

It is hard to change consumer behavior. It's even harder when you don't have a multi-million dollar, Domino's-sized budget for marketing and advertising. How will you meet your business metrics and keep management happy?

## INTERVIEW

Nataki Edwards of AARP is meeting her metrics by creatively using a rewards program to drive online engagement with members.

“We have 40 million members, and 11 million of them are interacting with AARP.org,” says Edwards, who is VP of Digital Marketing. “Our goal is to increase the number of members who use our site, as well as to entice visitors to access specific content. Rewards programs are a viable, proven way to drive online engagement.”

Engagement is crucial to AARP's social mission, which is to prepare and educate members about how to live their best lives possible as they age. By driving members to the website, AARP can interact with them about issues related to health, finances and more.



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**Deluxe Rewards is the online consumer loyalty program that drives customer engagement and desired behaviors for the world's most prominent brands in wireless, financial services, membership and other important industries.**



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When Edwards first considered a rewards program, she knew she would get the online engagement she wanted. However, she wondered if the program could be structured to reward very specific behaviors, such as choosing one topic over another?

“We were looking for a deeper level of engagement – at the behavior level,” Edwards says. “For Deluxe Rewards, it was no problem configuring a program that would reward our members at different levels based on their online choices. Driving positive behavior change is part of their business model.”

Deluxe Rewards and AARP built the “Rewards for Good” program so it assigns rewards points based on AARP’s assessment of educational value. For example, using the Retirement Calculator tool earns members 300 points, while members earn 600 points for taking a quiz called, “Can You Spot Investment Fraud?”

“I think Deluxe Rewards is light years ahead of the industry for doing it this way – for having the ability to drive behavior change,” says Edwards. “And I consider AARP the poster child for creatively using a program to achieve multiple business objectives.”

During the program’s first year, 3.5 million AARP members participated in Rewards for Good. And, two million more members are using the tools that qualify for points than the year before. AARP also deepened existing relationships by learning more about its online members while it significantly enhanced the association’s value for members.

“Enrollment is growing and participants are redeeming points,” says Edwards. A full 30% of members enrolled in the program have redeemed their points for rewards. “We have found that members are pleased and surprised by the catalog of rewards, which includes both aspirational and everyday brands – from Michael Kors to Chick-fil-A,” Edwards says.

AARP’s staffers appreciate the program as well. For example, the legal and executive teams are pleased the program doesn’t require AARP to bear any cost or liability for rewards. The digital staff is energized to create more and more interactive learning opportunities for members.

“To any business out there, I would say: Even if you have an existing partner, you should take a look at this approach. Deluxe Rewards offers flexibility, technical know-how, and a true partnership that can help you solve your business issues.” 