

VICINITY IS A WIN-WIN

MAKING LOYALTY EASIER AND CONSUMER-FRIENDLY

Although Loyalty programs are only about 10 years old, and no denying that it's potent marketing tool for some giants like Subway, Starbucks and airlines, it has also become an extremely pricey and cost-prohibitive proposition that most small to mid-sized business could never consider.

Random stacks of rewards cards have become so popular that they are often a consumer problem, or at least a nuisance. There are too many! Bulky stacks of loyalty cards are cluttering consumer wallets.

Especially for small to mid-size businesses, it was a glaring and irresistible problem-solving opportunity for Rogers' Vicinity.

"Canadians want to be rewarded and recognized for their loyalty at small and medium businesses," says the upbeat Fiona Lake Waslander, Vicinity's general manager. "Businesses with a rewards program are proven to be more profitable than those without. They get more customers coming into their store more often, and spending more money."

She explains that Vicinity is unique and cost-effective. "It provides local retail businesses across Canada with the opportunity to provide a loyalty program that recognizes, rewards and communicates with THEIR customers to drive repeat business."

Consumers register for Vicinity card at any of the businesses involved. The program integrates with the retail businesses' point-of-sale systems to compile cloud-based customer databases, it generates automated targeted offers and customer messages.

By using the Vicinity app on an iPhone or Android smartphone, shoppers can find businesses on a map, and track their point and reward balances easily and conveniently.

Vicinity has been an instant hit for about two years, so far with more than 400,000 consumer cardholders and more than 1,500 small to medium sized businesses.



Coast to coast, and particularly in Calgary, Vicinity's clients are surging and include coffee shops, hair salons, dry cleaners, recreational facilities, car washes, and independently owned bakeries and restaurants.

Various surveys have shown that the average Canadian consumer is a member of 7.3 loyalty programs. One of Vicinity's targets was to simplify the process for consumers, provide a single card to use across multiple merchants, while giving the businesses the opportunity to run their own, unique rewards.

"Vicinity is like carrying a full wallet of loyalty cards---in one account," she points out. "And it is customized and specific to that business. Vicinity gives the business the option the set-up and customize THEIR program. Because every business has different goals. What makes sense for the bakery or the jewelry store might not make sense for the car wash, the shoe store or the hair salon."

It's potent, state-of-the-art marketing. As Vicinity's Lake Waslander says: "What reward and incentive do you want to give your customers to make sure they keep coming back. Because coming back for a second time is crucially important."

ABOVE: FIONA LAKE WASLANDER, GENERAL MANAGER OF VICINITY.