

MOBILE

Starwood Hotels brings MLB partnership into gamified loyalty contest

March 8, 2016



SPG members can celebrate the beginning of baseball season

By [Alex Samuely](#)

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Starwood Hotels & Resorts is furthering its loyalty program perks via a partnership with Major League Baseball, giving Starwood Preferred Guest members the ability to play a responsively designed game for a chance to win World Series tickets.

Consumers belonging to the SPG program can partake in the interactive game online or on mobile through March 18. Starwood, which has long been a purveyor of mobile loyalty in the hospitality industry, believes the partnership will help the brand offer another fun way for customers to connect to their passion points, especially prior to the start of baseball season.

"With nearly eight-and-a-half billion minutes streamed to MLB's mobile app in 2015, it makes sense that brands want into the game," said Jeff Hasen, founder of [Gotta Mobilize](#) and author of [The Art of Mobile Persuasion](#).

"Gamification is key here, but so too is exclusivity as well as personalization."


Batting up American pastimes

Starwood Preferred Guest members are now able to receive a slew of items and experiences from Major League Baseball in exchange for redeeming their existing rewards points. Consumers can trade in their Starpoints for exclusive Opening Day access, ballpark experiences and premium regular season tickets, highlighting Starwood's dedication to keeping its prize pool fresh and engaging at all times.

The full lineup of MLB rewards is available at spg.com/moments.

Starwood is also bringing a gamified twist to the collaboration, attempting to target on-the-go individuals via a responsively designed microsite. SPG members can visit the site on their mobile devices or desktops to access an interactive, baseball-themed game.

Site visitors must sign into their SPG accounts before picking a home team and an away team. Then, they are asked to choose a curveball, fastball, knuckleball or changeup pitch.



Baseball fans can pit a variety of MLB teams against each other

The cartoon-version players will then pitch the baseball. If the chosen home team gets an out, consumers are invited to return to the site daily through March 18 for another chance to win the grand prize: two tickets to Game One of this year's World Series.

Consumers will also receive a grand prize entry each day they play the game.

Daily instant prizes are available as well, including Amazon gift cards, additional Starpoints and subscriptions to MLB.tv Premium.

If individuals do not win one of the daily prizes, they are taken to another page inviting them to make a winning play by taking advantage of a 15 percent discount on MLB.com.

SPG members can also leverage their existing Starpoints to bid on MLB moments, such as watching batting practice directly from the field, or throwing the first pitch at an MLB game.

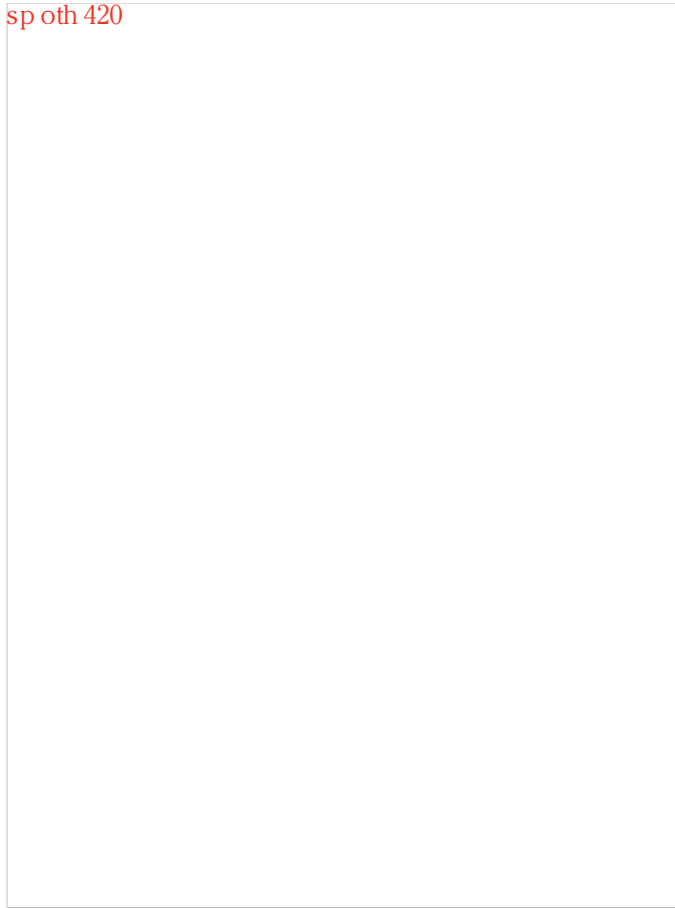
Major League Baseball has been doing plenty on mobile recently, likely in an attempt to capitalize on millennials' growing reliance on smartphones.

Last year, Esurance signed on to be the exclusive auto insurance partner for Major League Baseball across its smartphone and tablet platforms as well as Web, which included sponsoring new mobile voting capabilities and an awards platform ([see story](#)).

Creating memorable experiences

Starwood Hotels has been one of the foremost hospitality leaders when it comes to mobile loyalty programs, as evidenced by its frequent collaborations and cross-partnerships that give SPG members additional rewards options.

Over the summer, Starwood teamed up with dating app Hinge as the first major partner for the HingePerks program, which rewards loyal users with branded experiences and products ([see story](#)).



Participants can watch the cartoon players throw one of four types of pitches

Additionally, Starwood and Uber joined forces last year to offer the hotel brand's Preferred Guest members the ability to earn more rewards points each time they take a ride with an Uber vehicle ([see story](#)).

Venturing into the world of gamified loyalty is likely a smart move for the hotel marketer.

"These experiences are unique and surely will create viral components given the desire to share and boast of the access," Mr. Hasen said.