

INTERNET

American Express incentivizes Ritz-Carlton guests with members-only offers

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By RACHEL LAMB



Hotel chain Ritz-Carlton is teaming up with American Express to

provide affluent consumers special perks when they book stays using the credit card and is marketing this partnership via digital marketing.

Ritz-Carlton sent out an email describing incentives to book with the American Express card. The hotel is also detailing the partnership on its Web site and providing additional offers to get customers to spend more while at the property.

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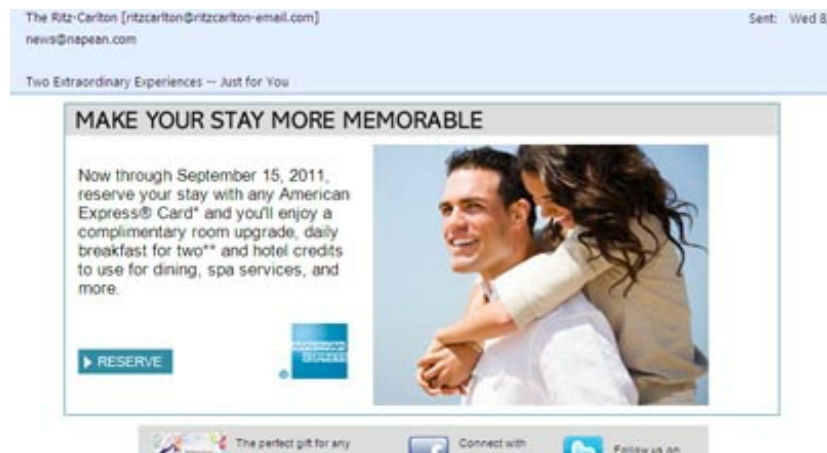
“A working relationship between these two titans is a natural and it benefits both brands,” said Chris Ramey, president of Affluent Insights, Miami.

“We can make the assumption that usage of the American Express card is proportionately

higher at the Ritz-Carlton due to its more affluent consumers,” he said. “This program works because it enhances the relationship for both brands’ customers.”

Ritz decisions

Ritz-Carlton sent an email that promoted the partnership with American Express.



Email from Ritz-Carlton

American Express consumers who book reservations at a Ritz-Carlton property before Sept. 15 are offered perks in resorts or city properties.

Guests who stay in the resorts receive a daily American breakfast for two, resort credit and a free upgrade.

Customers who stay in the city properties receive deluxe accommodations, hotel credit per stay and a room upgrade.

The room credits for a two-night stay are \$50-\$100 and a three-night stay for \$100-\$200 credit.

If guests choose to stay in a suite for two nights, they will receive a \$100-\$200 credit and extending to three nights will receive a \$200-\$400 credit.



Ritz-Carlton Web site

Since consumers will have extra resort credit, they are probably likely to spend more money on hotel events and dining.

This is probably why Ritz-Carlton included its new spa offers in the same email as the American Express incentives.

The hotel has new spa offers focusing on balance, energy and vitality.

Guests can choose from two spa offers and will receive spa credit, dollars toward lunch and discounts on retail items.

Members only

American Express customers are getting a deal at many luxury hotel chains.

For instance, American Express is teaming with Starwood Hotels & Resorts' Hawaiian locations to introduce a bar code in print publications that leads consumers to an optimized site with travel deals at the properties ([see story](#)).

Rather than using print and mobile marketing, Ritz-Carlton has opted to share the new incentives and spa offers via email marketing and on its Web site.

"A program with The Ritz-Carlton elevates the collaborating brand," Mr. Ramey said. "In this case, the beneficiary is American Express."

"American Express has credit policies and a clientele that benefits those to whom they choose to partner," he said. "In this case, the beneficiary is the Ritz-Carlton."

It makes sense that luxury hotels would try to partner with a company that shares its clientele.

Consumers may decide to use their American Express cards at the spa or at restaurants and bars in the hotel because they see a connection with the two. This only benefits both parties.

"Hotel rooms are perishable," Mr. Ramey said. "Every hotelier, even the best of the best, desires to fill their properties with guests that have credit – they spend more money."

"The best luxury marketers know to how to leverage relationships with brands that their best or most desired clients are comfortable with," he said.

Final Take

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