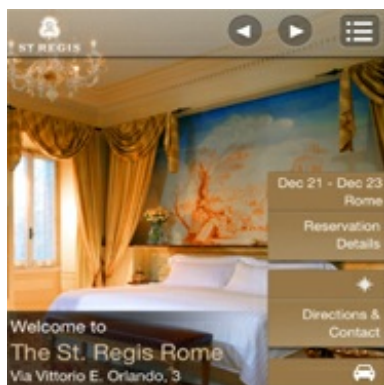


MULTICHANNEL

Starwood entices fourth-quarter bookings via multichannel loyalty bonuses

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By TRICIA CARR

Starwood Hotels & Resorts is encouraging its reward program members to book via its Web site and mobile application through a fourth-quarter campaign that offers bonus rewards when consumers visit properties.

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Starwood Preferred Guest members will get double and triple the Starpoints depending on how many nights they book through Dec. 20 at the brand's hotels including St. Regis and The Luxury Collection, as well as bonus points for bookings on SPG.com and the SPG iPhone app and foursquare check-ins. The brand is likely tapping its existing customers to end the year on a high note.

“Certain elements of this campaign seem to be well-suited for the luxury audience,” said Taylor Rains, account coordinator at [Rawle Murdy Associates](#), Charleston, SC. “In terms of leveraging its luxury properties, integration of the iPhone app into the campaign offers the most potential for generating buzz among affluent consumers.

“Interest in that service, coupled with the potential for earned points, could well drive luxury consumers to book a stay,” he said.

“Once consumers enter into the game mindset associated with points-based loyalty programs, they are likely to transform into repeat visitors.”

Mr. Rains is not affiliated with Starwood, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

Starwood Preferred Guest could not comment before press deadline.

Holiday bonus

SPG's "Better by the Night" campaign lets members accumulate bonus points until Dec. 20. There is no limit to the amount of points that members can get during this time.

Members will get double Starpoints on an eligible stay of up to two nights. They will receive triple points for eligible stays of three or more nights.

In addition, members will receive 500 bonus points for bookings on the SPG iPhone app and 250 bonus points for bookings on SPG.com.

SPG could reach its affluent members through the incentive to book at St. Regis and Luxury Collection via the iPhone app since the demographic is likely to be on the channel.

Guests can also receive 250 Starpoints for checking in at a Starwood property from a membership-synced Foursquare account as long as it is during a confirmed reservation on or before Dec. 20.

SPG members can register for the Better by the Night program at

<http://spg.com/betterbythenight>.

Mobile moves

Starwood has incentivized past interactions with SPG members, especially via mobile.

For example, the brand offered incentives for checking-in on foursquare at its nine hotel brands including St. Regis and The Luxury Collection as part of a contest and promotion that aimed to share the company's summer programming with Live Nation.

By checking in at a hotel location on foursquare, members could earn extra entries in a contest and unlock a \$15 Live Nation discount code ([see story](#)).

In addition, Starwood engaged its guests in Asia-Pacific through a partnership with Chinese social media platform Jiebang to offer added benefits to mobile users who check-in to any of the hotelier's Asia-Pacific properties.

Asian guests could use their mobile devices to check-in to the hotel and earn extra Starwood Preferred Guest points. They could also receive a virtual badge to display on their social networks and had a chance to win special prizes such as free nights and weekend rewards ([see story](#)).

Overall, these efforts can up engagement by reaching members on a channel on which they are familiar.

“The first strategic element of this campaign is to promote stays during the shoulder

season through gamification of the SPG loyalty program,” Mr. Rains, said. “With most loyalty programs, be they frequent flyer miles or hotel rewards, the end of the year is typically the time when consumers feel compelled to spend in order to qualify for a particular loyalty tier.

“By keeping the points potential uncapped over the campaign period, SPG leverages that consumption trend,” he said. “The second strategy at play here is the integration of digital platforms aimed at promoting multichannel engagement.

“Starwood has launched a number of digital ventures over a relatively short period of time and by enmeshing them with this campaign, they are giving consumers a reason to try them out.”

Final Take

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