

MARKETING SOCIETY AWARDS

Customer Engagement & Experience

Real Loyalty Created by Real Transparency

Placing a Focus on our VIPs



What was your objective and why was this important to the business?

By putting an emphasis on our top 1% and allowing them to co-create our latest Tiers programme, we found a way to make our most valuable members even more loyal.

Background:

Majid Al Futtaim (MAF) is a leading shopping mall, retail, leisure and residential pioneer across the Middle East, Africa and Asia. Our leading loyalty programme, SHARE, consists of 3.8 million members.

Our data helped us identify that our top 1% of members contribute a massive 26% of our revenue.

To strengthen our relationship with this small but mighty audience, we created SHARE Tiers; recognising and rewarding our high value members for their custom, crafting a truly customer-first experience and building deep and personal relationships with the most valuable members of our community.

This project epitomises leading loyalty marketing, as it not only delivered exclusive experiences for our highest spending customers, it delivered significant business results and revenue for Majid Al Futtaim.

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What new strategies and creative and innovative approaches did you take?

Introducing SHARE Tiers: Three levels of ever-increasing benefits to recognise and reward our most valuable members, with a VIP tier designed exclusively for our highest spenders.

So far, so predictable?... Well, not so fast.

Rather than adopting an expected *business-out* approach: prioritising ascending benefits based on each tiers members' desired experiences, **we tackled it with a purely customer-in approach.** This epitomised the principles of loyalty, especially in relation to luxury and high net worth individuals who expect to be treated on a one-to-one basis.

Our ambition was to create a personal relationship between SHARE and that exclusive 1%, where expectations were exceeded to such an extent that they would tell their friends about us. We achieved this, not simply through the delivery of products and services, but **by enlisting them into the development and design of our programme to create something truly bespoke.**

Rather than tell our members about this new programme, we allowed them to tell us.

Our research programme captured the nuanced perspectives of our high-value customers, generating rich and detailed insights that guided the design and improvements of the programme. They identified pain points and the data collected served as a foundation for delivering an enhanced customer experience.

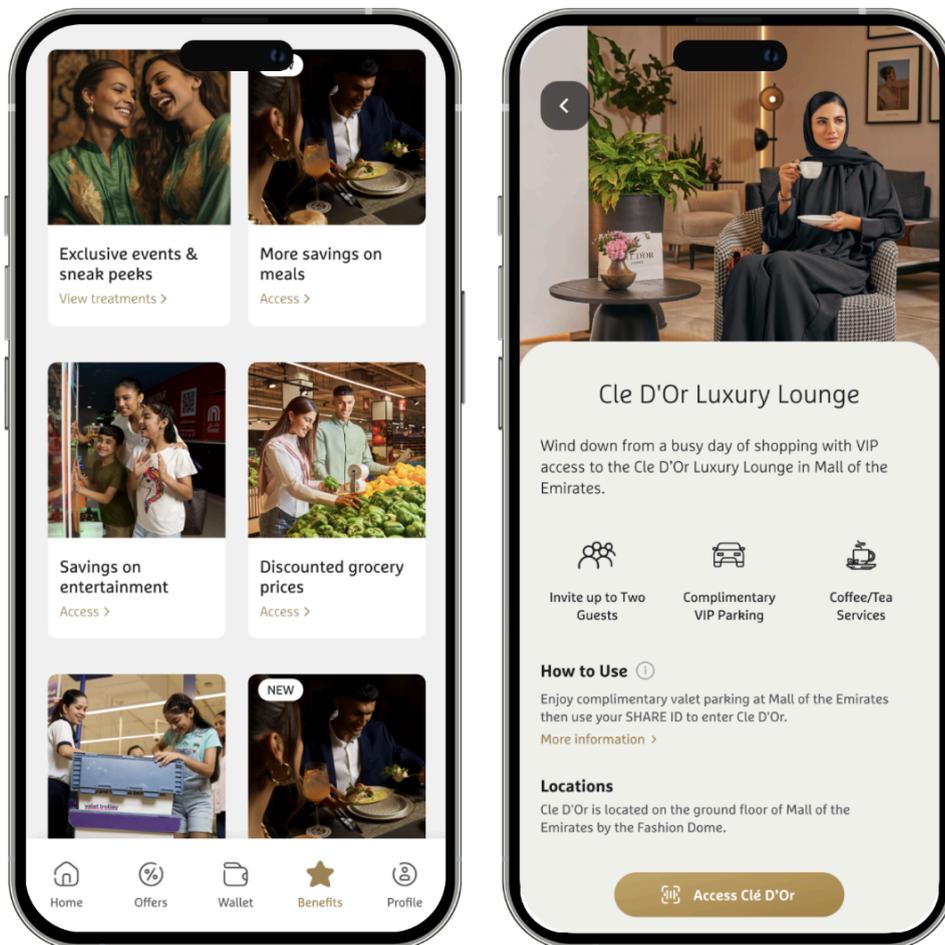
The result: our Tiers proposition was co-created with our members to ensure the bonuses, benefits, and even the branding were exactly as they wanted. One-to-one interviews and surveys helped us design the VIP tier together, then 670 of our most important members were given early access through a Beta experience to help us understand how we could optimise, especially for them.

In summary, we took a holistic, customer-first approach involving them, not just from pre-sales to post-sales, but bringing them inside the organisation itself, so they felt like they were designing an experience especially for themselves and other VIP's like them.

Our top 1% created an exclusive Tier with distinctive treatment, exclusive access and unique customer privileges. Members enjoy benefits such as VIP parking, access to our Cle D'or luxury lounge, fine dining discounts, as well as sneak peeks, sale previews, exclusive event invites, priority on waitlists and early access. All supported by our tailored app and lifecycle marketing programme.

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What were the risks?

Risk 1: Sentiment

Bringing members 'inside the organisation' and giving them the opportunity to shape the programme is a bold strategy and one that could easily backfire. What if they ask for something that can't be delivered? What if we make a promise we can't keep? This could easily have the opposite impact we were seeking and create a negative sentiment amongst customers. We mitigated these pitfalls in two key ways. Firstly, by carefully guiding the discussion and getting their input on best-in-class benefits and new innovations that had already been benchmarked and business-cased. Secondly, our dialogue didn't stop once we had finished co-designing the Tier proposition. We continued to contact our test group, both during the Beta and after launch, to ensure it was still resonating in reality, and made relevant refinements and changes where necessary to optimise member engagement and experience.

Risk 2: Delivery

Creating Tiers within SHARE was the single largest undertaking since the programme launched in 2019, so it had huge implications on capacity across the entire business - from Programme Design and Economics, CX, Product, Marketing, right through the Training and Operations. Balancing that against our scaled agile delivery model, where squads are typically

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focused on our small-to-medium sized initiatives and experimentation, was no easy task. We spun up a specific cross-functional project team that sat separate from the other squads so that business-as-usual delivery was not impacted.

Furthermore, we were, and continue to be, reliant on other Business Units that have completely different infrastructures and ways of working. We couldn't control what they did; only influence them to the best of our ability. This required tight coordination and deep collaboration to ensure seamless and timely delivery.

Risk 3: Impact

Building a business case is all well and good, but Tiers require significant investment - both in time and money - so if they don't deliver the expected results, then impact to the bottom line can be significant. The benefit of running the Beta, as well as ensuring the optimal engagement and experience for our members, was the opportunity to also test the theory and prove the business case. Our Beta exceeded expectations and that allowed us to release further investment for the full roll out.

What were the measurable results?

Early feedback from the Beta test phase was very positive, with a level of recognition that exceeded the high standards set by our competitors. Member feedback also indicated that the proposition would result in positive behaviours, such as increasing their frequency of visit, frequency of purchase and spend.

Customer Satisfaction Scores for each individual element of the experience were all very positive. However, what was particularly encouraging was how the process itself created a deep appreciation for the brand and a stronger, more personal relationship with these extremely important members.

Third party research summary:

Members felt a strong sense of being valued by SHARE/MAF, feeling themselves considered valued and recognised for their loyalty. This perception was primarily driven by the invitation to provide feedback and actively contribute to the development of the SHARE VIP program. By involving members in shaping the program, SHARE/MAF is fostering a deep sense of belonging and allowed members to feel that their opinion is listened to.

The most definitive measurable result, however, was that the programme achieved an incredible customer Net Promoter Score of 93*. With 93% of respondents likely to recommend it to family and friends and with the few remaining 7 being passive, this was a world-class result. This satisfaction was also echoed by an increase in our Engagement Score (+10).

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**The creators of NPS, Bain & Company, suggest a score above 0 is Good, above 20 is Favourable, above 50 is Excellent, and above 80 is World Class.*

And, whilst our ultimate objective was to recognise and reward our top 1% in a way that was truly tailored to them, the success of the initiative extended to the business, with Average Transaction Frequency (ATF) increasing significantly for these members versus the control group. This resulted in an incrementality of 27% for this audience.

Member verbatims:

"I love the fact that Majid Al Futtaim worked to make the customer feel special, for a long time Emaar had us spending our money at Dubai Mall because of their parking and lounge, but Mall of the Emirates finally came and did it better in almost everything"

"...speechless to be part of this. 100% thrilled and surprised. Very honored to be part of this amazing privilege."

"I usually do not respond to feedback surveys but you're doing a great job and I want to help. It's one of the best programs I've tried so far."

In summary, our unique approach enabled our most valuable customers to co-create a program especially for themselves. In doing so, we created a loyalty marketing solution, which was not only optimised to their specific wants and needs, but one that exceeded the expectations set by our competitors. This holistic, customer-first approach has created a much deeper relationship with this incredibly important group. Our VIPs now truly feel like they are part of the brand and are rewarding us with their continued business and loyalty.

How does your work advocate the importance of the Marketing industry?

Since the advent of marketing, the industry has continued to come under scrutiny for "trying to sell people things they don't need". Even after the 'Purpose' revolution, where brands shifted to why they exist rather than what they make or do, consumers cried of purpose-washing and many businesses were still seen to be prioritising profit over people. This scrutiny has become more intense and more public with the rise of social media.

In our approach, by closely collaborating with our customers, we literally put them at the heart of the programme. We didn't give them what we thought they would want - we created something *with* them, that they told us they wanted. And they continue to tell us that they love it. In this way, we've created advocates not just for our brand, but for marketing done right.

We also want to highlight the power of collaboration. The launch of Tiers was truly a team effort. Both across the entire SHARE team (whilst a separate team was spun up, as stated, due to its scale and nature the project touched almost everyone in the business), as well as across the Majid Al Futtaim organisation. Can you imagine the positive power of marketers if they came together more often?