

Brands gather at Leaders in Loyalty Summit 2023 to share insights

By [Amanda Cromhout](#)

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The Leaders in Loyalty Summit 2023, hosted by Truth, a global loyalty consultancy, based in Cape Town, saw a lineup of loyalty experience, as over 160 loyalty executives gathered from around South Africa and international markets to listen to loyalty insights and panel interviews from some of the best-known brands in South Africa.



Leaders in Loyalty was hosted by the Truth team in Cape Town. Image supplied

The day commenced with Michael Levinsohn, MD of Legacy Lifestyle, who took the stage and engaged with the audience through a compelling overview of how multi-partner loyalty programmes work.

Partnership strategies in the loyalty world are critical and more and more brands are adopting a multi-partnership approach. From the outset, what is apparent is that loyalty partnerships can yield more commercially sound results for the operating brand and of course, a more compelling customer experience and value offering to loyalty programme members. It is, at the end of the day, a win-win scenario for customers and programme operators.

Switching from travel and partnerships, Mateboho Malope from Vodacom Group opened the eyes of the audience to the power of loyalty and rewards programmes in the telco industry. Amongst other critical success factors, Malope stressed the importance of technology in the loyalty approach, especially as Vodacom is successfully scaling the VodaBucks (in its 3rd year) success story to new markets across Africa.



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Investec presented its rewards programme by Dr Cindy Carvalho, allowing the audience to focus on rewards success for the higher income customer. What was unavoidable from Dr Carvalho's presentation was the mindset that wealthier

customers are also looking for value which loyalty and rewards can offer. She stressed the need for simplicity, transparency, and exclusivity being key for their time-starved, goal-orientated and status-driven customers.

Shifting gear completely from premium banking to everyday restaurants. Michael Emanuel from Famous Brands impressed the audience with his reflections about leveraging technology to drive customer loyalty across the multitude of brands within the Famous Brands stable. These include Wimpy, Mugg & Bean, Debonairs and Steers to name a few.

"The business needs to serve customers across all touchpoints, whether that is in the restaurant (sit down or quick service), through app orders, telephone orders or via third-party ordering platforms like Uber Eats and Mr Delivery. This is not an easy task for a loyalty strategy but when they get it right, it certainly pays off for customers and the business itself, added Emanuel.

The final presentation of the day did not disappoint. Celeste Williams, head of Discovery Vitality's marketing team, generously shared the evolution of Vitality Active Rewards since its launch in 2015 and how it changes customer behaviour.

Across Vitality's focus on health, banking and insurance, they can prove that behavioural change is activated through the rewards structures they have in place. This aims to improve stats like one in two South Africans are not active enough, four out of 10 credit customers have an account which is overdue and 27.5 road deaths in 100,000 (leaving South Africa with the highest road fatality rate amongst BRICS countries).

Loyalty fraud is an enormous issue in loyalty programme management. I had the privilege of interviewing Wojciech Kempny from Comarch, which was the Platinum sponsor of the event. Wojciech deeply understands this subject, as does Comarch which provides loyalty technology and manages such fraud complexities daily for clients. Fraud is apparent, particularly in staff teams operating loyalty programmes and of course, customers themselves who find loopholes to deliberately or sometimes accidentally defraud the loyalty system. Because there is real money in a loyalty programme, fraud is real and needs to be managed carefully, as Wojciech and I discussed intensely.

Empowering the loyalty programme industry

I shared an update with the industry about Blind Loyalty, the company of which I am the founder and a trustee of The Blind Loyalty Trust.

After a terrifying eye condition, which left me temporarily blind in 2022, my ambition is to empower the loyalty industry in South Africa and globally to support the trust which supports under-privileged patients who may be struck by any similar corneal illness as I endured. We have raised over R500,000 in 12 months. The latest fund-raising opportunity is to buy my loyalty book: [Blind Loyalty - 101 Loyalty concepts radically simplified](#) as all profits go to the trust.

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South African Loyalty Awards

The Leaders in Loyalty Summit concluded with the celebration of the South African Loyalty Awards winners announcement. Headline awards for “Best Programme of the Year” were awarded to:

- Best Loyalty Programme of the Year: Retail – The Shoprite Group Xtra Savings
- Best Loyalty Programme of the Year: Financial Services – FNB eBucks
- Best Loyalty Programme of the Year: Restaurant/QSR – Spur Family Card
- Best Loyalty Programme of the Year: ‘Other’ – MySchool MyVillage MyPlanet
- Best Partnership Programme of the Year – FNB eBucks
- Best Programme of the Year: Newcomer – Sasol Rewards
- Best Programme of the Year: Relunched – Absa Rewards
- Programme with the Biggest Impact on SA Consumer Behaviour – FNB eBucks
- Best Long-Term Loyalty Programme: FNB eBucks

There is no question that one brand dominated the awards in 2023.

FNB eBucks was awarded a total of six awards in various categories. This has never been achieved before and the South African judging committee honoured the eBucks team with ‘Best Loyalty Team of the Year’ in recognition of this outstanding achievement.

eBucks was also recognised on the international stage in June this year when they received three awards at The International Loyalty Awards. DStv also received an international loyalty Award.

This is a reflection of how the loyalty world sees the South African loyalty industry – leading the charge.

ABOUT AMANDA CROMHOUT

Amanda is the founder & CEO of Truth. Amanda's extensive experience in the field of Loyalty & CRM has put Truth at the forefront of loyalty in South Africa. She enabled customer-led sales and marketing strategies across the UK, Africa, Middle East and India, at British Airways for 11 years. She has also spearheaded the Customer (CRM) division at Woolworths, South Africa's no. 1 premium retailer.

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