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**The Impact of Project Management Methodologies on Loyalty Program Adaptability  
and Consumer Engagement**

Maximilian Michel CLINCHAMPS

Work project carried out under the supervision of:

Pr. Paulo FAROLEIRO

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This thesis explores how project management methodologies influence the adaptability of loyalty programs to evolving consumer expectations, particularly among younger generations like Gen Z. Using a mixed-methods approach, combining a quantitative survey with qualitative interviews, the research examines both consumer priorities and professional practices. Findings highlight that flexible approaches like Agile offer greater responsiveness and personalization, aligning more closely with Gen Z's values. In contrast, traditional methods may limit program evolution. The study provides insights for companies seeking to improve loyalty strategies and contributes to bridging the gap between project management and marketing in academic research.

### Key Words

Project Management Methodologies  
Loyalty Programs  
Generation Z Consumer Behavior  
Consumer Engagement  
Agile and Waterfall Methodologies  
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## **Introduction**

Loyalty programs have always been important tools for brands to build relationships with their customers, encourage repeat purchases, and stand out from their competitors. However, in recent years, consumer expectations have changed a lot, especially across different generations. Today's younger consumers, particularly Generation Z (Gen Z) and Millennials, expect much more from loyalty programs than just discounts or points. They look for personalization, ethical values, and brands that can adapt quickly to their needs. For example, about 75% of Gen Z consumers now expect brands to understand their preferences and tailor offerings accordingly (IBM 2018), reflecting their demand for more relevant and meaningful engagement.

These changes raise questions about how loyalty programs are developed and managed. Many companies, especially in more traditional industries, still work with structured project management methods like the Waterfall model. These methods focus on long planning cycles and step-by-step execution, which can make it harder to react quickly to new trends. On the other hand, newer approaches like Agile encourage flexibility, faster feedback, and continuous improvements, which seem better suited to today's fast-changing environment.

Yet, despite the obvious differences between these management styles, there is very little research exploring the link between the project management methodology used and a loyalty program's ability to adapt to new consumer expectations. In other words, it's largely unknown whether using an Agile approach actually makes a loyalty program more responsive to consumer needs compared to using a traditional Waterfall approach. This knowledge gap matters because, without clear evidence or guidelines, companies might be unsure of the best way to manage their loyalty program projects in a rapidly changing market. If firms stick with rigid project methods out of habit, they risk rolling out loyalty programs that cannot evolve quickly enough to engage younger customers.

To address this gap, this research aims to understand how the choice of project management methodology influences a loyalty program's ability to evolve and meet changing consumer expectations. In particular, the research compares a traditional linear methodology like Waterfall with a more flexible, iterative approach like Agile. The goal is to see which approach, if any, enables loyalty programs to respond more effectively to the needs of younger consumers such as Gen Z. The study also considers the consumer perspective by examining what different generations, especially Gen Z, value in loyalty programs (for example, personalization, social responsibility, and constant innovation) to ground the analysis in actual consumer priorities.

To investigate these questions, it was conducted a mixed-methods study. First, a survey was used to collect data on consumer expectations across different age groups, highlighting any generational differences in what people want from loyalty programs. Second, it was carried out in-depth interviews with marketing professionals and client managers to learn how loyalty programs are actually designed and adjusted in practice. This combination of quantitative and qualitative insights provides a fuller picture of the issue from both the consumer and company perspectives.

By linking what consumers expect with how loyalty programs are managed, this research aims to highlight better ways to design loyalty initiatives that stay relevant, engaging, and aligned with the values of today's consumers. Companies managing loyalty programs could use these findings to decide whether adopting more agile project methods will help them better meet younger customers' expectations and improve loyalty outcomes. At the same time, the study contributes to academic knowledge by bridging the gap between project management and marketing, two fields that rarely intersect in research. Given these challenges, the central research question guiding this study is: How do different project management methodologies impact the ability of loyalty programs to adapt to new consumer expectations, especially

among younger generations like Gen Z?

## **Literature Review**

To design and implement projects with marketing objectives like loyalty programs effectively, it requires structured project management methodologies. These methodologies have evolved from traditional ones like Waterfall to more flexible approaches like Agile and Lean. Waterfall, characterized by sequential phases and extensive documentation, offers structured planning but lacks flexibility (Raman 2024). In the Waterfall model, each project phase, such as planning, execution, testing, and deployment, must be completed before moving to the next (Royce 1970). The Agile method emerged as a response to Waterfall's limitations, emphasizing iterative development, stakeholder engagement, and adaptability (Osemeike, et al. 2024). For example, Lean Six Sigma combines strategies from Six Sigma and Lean methodologies (Osemeike, et al. 2024). It aims to eliminate waste, improve process efficiency, and maximize the value to the customer (Womack et Jones 2003). Organizations are increasingly adopting hybrid approaches that integrate Waterfall and Agile methodologies to balance structured planning with flexibility (Osemeike, et al. 2024). While Lean-based methodologies are used with some reservations, Agile methodologies are the most widely adopted (Alves, Tereso et Cruz 2020). Choosing the right project management methodology will depend on the project and its requirements. Each methodology has its own advantages and challenges.

More specifically, in marketing, project management methodologies can greatly improve efficiency. They help control processes, respond quickly to issues, and adjust plans efficiently (Vasylytsova et Romanchyk 2021). When applied to digital marketing, project management can reduce costs by up to 35% and increase competitiveness (Zozulya, Titova et Ciric 2021). Different methodologies like Scrum, Lean, Kanban, and Six Sigma have been analyzed for

their applicability to marketing projects, with Scrum being adapted specifically for marketing organizations (Lovkova et Kashitsina 2022). For marketing project management, the Scrum methodology is identified as the most effective approach, for its flexibility and emphasis on continuous improvement (Lovkova et Kashitsina 2022). Scrum's iterative nature enables better coordination between team members and minimizes communication risks, but it may require adaptation for specific marketing contexts (Lovkova et Kashitsina 2022). Project management in marketing involves setting development objectives, designing marketing plans, collecting and analyzing market information, implementing plans while monitoring market trends, and conducting post-marketing evaluations (Shen 2021). By integrating project management techniques into marketing activities, companies can improve efficiency, systematically approach tasks, and better implement marketing strategies (Vasytsova et Romanchyk 2021). This integration is particularly crucial for complex, resource-intensive projects and new product development (Vasytsova et Romanchyk 2021).

This project management methodologies will be used to effectively design loyalty programs. Loyalty programs are strategic initiatives designed to cultivate and maintain strong customer relationships by offering incentives and rewards for repeat purchases (Bade, et al. 2024). These programs can include personalized offers, exclusive promotions, discounts, and bonuses (Дахдужева et Патахова 2023). The primary objectives of loyalty programs are to identify, reward, and retain profitable customers, while also providing valuable data insights into consumer behavior and preferences (Kumar et Reinartz 2012). Effective loyalty programs not only drive revenue but also help establish close relationships with customers, making them more likely to buy again (Дахдужева et Патахова 2023). However, despite their potential benefits, many studies show that consumers are not always loyal and may not fully enjoy the program benefits (Dimitrieska et Efremova 2021). To maximize effectiveness, companies should focus on key design elements such as reward structure and sponsorship and align

program value with customer expectations (Kumar et Reinartz 2012).

Loyalty programs have evolved from traditional point-based systems to more innovative, personalized approaches. While traditional programs focused on financial incentives for average consumers, modern programs emphasize personalization, social benefits, and gamification to foster emotional loyalty (Dziawgo 2023). The hotel industry, for instance, has adopted innovative loyalty programs leveraging social media and technology to enhance customer engagement (Zhang 2021). This evolution aligns with the progressive development of customer loyalty, moving from cognitive to affective and conative stages (Zhang 2021). Loyalty programs now aim to create commitment through excellent service and special treatment, in addition to monetary benefits (Bijmolt et Verhoef 2017). As the business environment becomes more dynamic, companies must consider emerging trends such as increasing digitalization, empowered customers, and big data to maintain competitive advantage in customer loyalty (Bijmolt et Verhoef 2017). The Artificial intelligence and the machine learning are also new trends that further enhance personalization by predicting customer behavior and preferences, like Amazon who use predictive analytics to recommend products and services that align with individual consumer habits (Kumar et Reinartz 2012). Retaining younger consumers presents significant challenges for loyalty programs, especially Millennials and Gen Z (Generation Z) (Wood 2021). Research highlights difficulties in recruiting and retaining youth for longitudinal studies, emphasizing the need for tailored strategies (Foss, Druin et Leigh Guha 2013). The evolving communications landscape has necessitated innovative approaches, such as combining address-based sampling with online data collection, to engage hard-to-reach youth populations effectively (Cantrell, Hair et Vallone 2017). The key challenges are a decreasing brand loyalty, younger consumers are less loyal to brands, and often switch brands based on price, convenience or value alignment (Parment 2013). Also, a demand for personalization where generic rewards no longer appeal

to younger audiences. According to an Accenture study, 75% of Millennials expect personalized rewards and offers based on their purchase history (Accenture 2021). The social and environmental awareness is also a challenge for Gen Z consumers who prioritize brands aligned with their values (Francis et Hoefel 2018). A last big challenge is the short attention spans because young consumers quickly lose interest in programs that have no immediate value or that don't involve them in a dynamic way. (Fromm et Garton 2013).

The example of Australian clubs shows the complexity of attracting younger populations, and their attempts have come up against several obstacles, which are internal factors such as structure, systems and staff support that play a crucial role in the success or failure of the product (Baker 2006). To meet these challenges, organizations need to take into account the concept of brand communities and value co-creation to better target young consumers (Halliday et Astafyeva 2019). Understanding the unique characteristics and preferences of younger audiences is essential for developing effective retention strategies across sectors.

Gen Z, born between the mid-1990s and early 2010s, represents a distinct consumer segment that is defined by its digital nativity (Prasanna et Priyanka 2024). This digital nativity makes Gen Z more attentive to authenticity, transparency and personalized experiences. They will expect brands to use up-to-date data to enable more personalized interactions (Gutfreund 2016). Research by IBM shows that 75% of Gen Z consumers expect brands to understand their preferences and provide tailored recommendations (IBM 2018). Loyalty programs that use data analytics to deliver personalized rewards, exclusive offers, and relevant content perform better among this demographic (KPMG 2021). Gen Z prioritizes social and environmental responsibility, favoring brands that demonstrate commitment to sustainability and ethical practices (Dahlquista et Scott Garver 2022). Brands that incorporate purpose-driven initiatives into their loyalty programs, such as allowing users to convert points into charitable donations or offering eco-friendly rewards, are more likely to resonate with Gen Z

(Cone Communications 2017). Gen Z relies heavily on social media platforms like TikTok and Instagram for engagement, preferring short-form, visually appealing content (Prasanna et Priyanka 2024). While company social behavior significantly influences their purchasing decisions, other product attributes remain relevant (Dahlquista et Scott Garver 2022). To effectively market to Gen Z, brands must adapt their strategies to align with these preferences, focusing on authentic storytelling, social responsibility, and personalized digital experiences (Prasanna et Priyanka 2024).

Gen Z consumers exhibit distinct preferences and behaviors that significantly influence loyalty program success, they are highly aware of loyalty programs offered by e-commerce platforms and respond positively to personalized experiences (Kumaresan et John 2022). Online retailers can segment Gen Z shoppers into three categories: disloyal shoppers, staunch loyals, and vacillating shoppers, with factors such as shopping frequency and service quality influencing their loyalty (Soni et Vohra 2022). To effectively engage Gen Z and foster brand loyalty, marketers need to focus on digital engagement, authentic communications and interactive marketing strategies that align with this generation's values and preferences (Prasanna et Priyanka 2024). In addition to the digital experiences, gamification and interactivity like Gamified loyalty programs that offer immediate rewards, challenges, and social sharing features are more likely to engage younger consumers and encourage continued participation (Gomez, Sanchez et Gallego 2021).

Generational differences significantly influence loyalty behaviors and research on generational loyalty behaviors reveals mixed findings. While some studies suggest differences across generations, others find similarities. Millennials and Gen Z show stronger green loyalty compared to older generations (Dabija et Bejan 2017). However, in the hotel industry, no significant differences were found in loyalty models across generations, with all cohorts valuing similar benefits like upgrades and personalized service (Whalen, Bowen et Baloglu

2023). However, the researchers noted that, contrary to what one might expect, Millennials, Gen X and Boomers don't show much difference in brand loyalty, even if the relationship between brand resonance and loyalty is weaker for Millennials (Olga, David et Elliott 2018). These findings demonstrate the complexity of loyalty behaviors across generations and show the importance of considering cohort and individual factors in brand management strategies. The research papers highlight various engagement strategies and their effectiveness across different contexts. Hardy et al. identify four strategies of engagement: collaboration, compliance, contention, and contestation, emphasizing that collaboration is not always beneficial and conflict not necessarily detrimental (Hardy et Phillips 1998). Arjomandi et al. found that non-traditional students generally show higher engagement than traditional students, but active teaching strategies have a stronger impact on traditional students (Arjomandi, Seufert et Anwar 2018). Hartley III et al. stress the importance of mobilizing and impactful methods to promote student participation in academic settings (Hartley III et Jobson 2018). Conley focuses on the commitment of nurse managers, revealing in his study that length of leadership experience and advanced degrees correlate with higher levels of commitment. The study also shows that expert communication, autonomy and influence are key factors in nurse manager commitment (Conley 2017). These findings and examples clearly demonstrate the complexity of engagement strategies and the need to adopt approaches tailored to different projects and contexts.

To conclude this literature review, loyalty programs are a fundamental element in customer loyalty strategy for brands, but their design and execution must evolve to meet changing consumer expectations. With the help of appropriate project management methodologies, brands can effectively develop loyalty programs that are tailored to the distinct behaviors of different generations. To achieve this, it is essential to understand generational preferences, particularly the digital nature, and also to focus on the value of younger consumers, in order

to improve program effectiveness and long-term customer loyalty.

## **Methodology**

For my thesis, it was selected a mixed-methods research methodology that integrates both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis. This approach will be of particular benefit, as it will enable the analyzes of management of loyalty programs and the methodologies used to manage them in a more nuanced way. It will be possible to combine statistical data with the personal stories and experiences of professionals, to get a holistic view of the impact of these programs on consumer behavior, while also examining the strategic frameworks and best practices employed by project managers in terms of methodology. This dual perspective will provide a richer, more detailed understanding of how loyalty programs operate and evolve in today's competitive environment.

## **Research Design**

This study is structured into two main phases: Phase 1 will employ qualitative research through in-depth interviews, while Phase 2 will focus on quantitative research via an online survey.

In the qualitative phase, the main objective is to gather rich and detailed information from project managers and marketing professionals experienced in managing loyalty programs. To do this, semi-structured interviews will be conducted with targeted participants, providing an opportunity for in-depth discussion of their experiences and viewpoints.

For the quantitative phase, the survey will target consumers from different generational cohorts: Generation Z, Millennials, Generation X and Baby Boomers. By comparing their preferences and behaviors in relation to loyalty programs, this will enable a more systematic analysis of how different age groups engage with loyalty programs, and what important points

they take into account in order to be loyalty program members.

### **Data Collection Methods**

For the qualitative interviews, two marketing project managers were interviewed, who oversee loyalty programs, one in the airline sector and the other one in the food sector. They are both working at Epsilon, a data marketing agency part of Publicis Group. The last interview will be on the client side of this agency with the CRM project manager and communications managers for an airline loyalty program. These interviews will be semi-structured, allowing flexibility while ensuring that essential topics are covered. They can be conducted either in person or through online platforms like Microsoft Teams to accommodate the availability of professionals. The interview questions will delve into several areas, including:

- Discussion of methodologies employed in designing and managing loyalty programs, focusing on Agile approaches while also considering Lean and Waterfall methodologies. Insights will be gathered on the perceived advantages and disadvantages of these methodologies.
- Examination of specific challenges and strategies used to adapt loyalty programs to align with the preferences and expectations of Generation Z consumers. Interviews will delve into how quickly programs can be adapted under different methodologies.

Exploration of trends towards ethical and personalized loyalty programs and how these aspects influence consumer loyalty across various generational cohorts, with a focus on Generation Z.

- Gathering of insights and lessons learned from previous loyalty program projects, identifying both successes and obstacles. Particular emphasis will be placed on examples where adaptation to consumer preferences led to notable improvements in engagement, especially among Gen Z.

In the quantitative phase, the online survey will be distributed through multiple channels, including social media platforms, email lists, and professional networking sites. It will aim to gather a broad array of data regarding consumer preferences, behaviors, and perceptions of loyalty programs.

Survey questions will focus on topics such as:

- Assessment of how frequently respondents participate in loyalty programs and the number of programs they actively engage with.
- Exploration of the factors driving respondents to join loyalty programs, including specific incentives, rewards, exclusive offers, and emotional connections to brands. Respondents will also identify the most important factors influencing their decision to engage with a program.
- Investigation into consumer expectations regarding personalized experiences, transparency, and ethical practices within loyalty programs. The survey will rate the impact of these elements on loyalty and engagement.
- Analysis of engagement differences among various generational cohorts (Gen Z, Millennials, Gen X, Boomers), highlighting their unique preferences, behaviors, and expectations. Particular emphasis will be placed on identifying trends specific to Generation Z and their influence on loyalty program strategies.

### **Data Analysis Methods**

The analysis of the collected data will utilize distinct methods for qualitative and quantitative data. For qualitative analysis, interview transcripts will undergo systematic coding to extract common themes related to project management practices and the adaptation challenges of loyalty programs. Particular emphasis will be placed on identifying themes unique to

Generation Z, as understanding their perspective is vital for the study.

In the quantitative analysis, survey results will be subjected to statistical evaluation to uncover trends in consumer behavior across different generational cohorts. This analysis will specifically underline the distinctions between Generation Z and other generations, providing enriched insights into how their preferences and expectations differ.

### **Limitations of the Study**

One of the primary limitations of this research centers on the potential for response bias inherent in the survey methodology. The participant pool may not be fully representative of the wider population, which could skew the findings and limit the generalizability of the results. Additionally, the qualitative interviews may face constraints related to the availability and willingness of industry professionals to engage in the study. This factor may hinder the depth and richness of the insights gathered, potentially leaving out crucial perspectives that are essential for a thorough understanding of the topic.

Furthermore, it will be conducted a meticulous review of the data collected, scrutinizing it for any inconsistencies or biases that could affect the study's integrity. By employing a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative data, this research aims to provide a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of how various project management methodologies can effectively facilitate the adaptation of loyalty programs. This, in turn, seeks to satisfy the evolving and intricate needs of Generation Z consumers as well as other generational cohorts.

### **Case studies**

Before analyzing the data and results and fully understanding the services of the brands named, it will be presented the 2 loyalty programs for which Epsilon's 2 project managers are

working. The company have an airline loyalty program, Flying Blue, the loyalty program of Air France KLM group. And then it has “Ma Vie En Couleurs”, the loyalty program of Mondelez, a food company.

### **Flying Blue – Air France KLM loyalty program**

Flying Blue is the loyalty program of Air France and KLM, designed to enhance the travel experience for millions of passengers worldwide. It offers a tiered membership system with benefits that grow as members accumulate miles and Experience Points (XP) (Air France 2025). Members earn Miles not only by flying with Air France, KLM, or SkyTeam partners but also through everyday activities such as hotel bookings, car rentals, and credit card usage (Flying Blue 2025). The number of Miles earned depends on spending and membership level since the loyalty program have different membership levels that are determined by the number of Experience Points (XP) that the member can earn. Members gain XP based on flight type and cabin class, with higher XP earned for premium cabins and longer flights. Each tier offers increasing perks such as priority boarding, lounge access, free baggage allowances, and exclusive services like the Platinum Service Line (Air France 2025). Miles can be redeemed for flights, upgrades, seat options, hotel stays, car rentals, and even online shopping. For flexibility, the program offers a “Miles & Cash” option that allows members to combine Miles with personal funds for ticket purchases (Flying Blue 2025).

### **Ma Vie En Couleurs – Mondelez and Unilever loyalty program**

Ma Vie En Couleurs is a loyalty program created in 2011 by Mondelez and Unilever, designed to engage consumers with discounts, recipes, and interactive content. It targets everyday shoppers by offering practical benefits and fostering a sense of community (Ma Vie En Couleurs 2025). Members can access printable coupons, mobile cashback offers, or direct loyalty card reimbursements for discounts on over 80 iconic brands such as LU, Milka,

Magnum, Babybel, and Dove. The Discounts are valid across various shopping methods, including in-store purchases, drive-throughs, and home delivery (Ma Vie En Couleurs 2025). There is a big interactive engagement with games and contests, members can participate in year-round contests and instant-win games to win prizes like weekend getaways, exclusive products, or high-tech gadgets. There are also community interactions where members can share tips, recipes and comments on the platform's website and social media channels. The program also features seasonal recipes and household tips to inspire members in their daily lives, as well as beauty tutorials and DIY ideas to enhance the appeal of the program and make it truly a “life style” program. Everything is available via a user-friendly mobile app where members can, upload receipts for cashback, scan product barcodes for reimbursement and save coupons for later use or print them directly from the app (Ma Vie En Couleurs 2025). In term of rewards, the program rewards its most active members with initiatives like "Ma boîte en couleurs," a surprise box containing new products for testing and personalized offers based on purchase history ensure relevance to individual preferences (Ma Vie En Couleurs 2025).

## **Findings & Discussion**

### **Survey**

The aim of the survey was to explore how different generations interact with loyalty programs in today's dynamic marketing landscape. This questionnaire enable us to understand the influence of ethical practices, personalization and the use of technology in loyalty programs, to see how these trends affect different generations on consumer loyalty and engagement. It may also influence different methodologies in loyalty program management. The responses help understand how different generations are affected by different loyalty programs and what is important to them.

The survey was shared across generations and received 56 responses, with 14.3% Boomers (8 people), 17.9% Gen X (10 people), 30.4% Millennials (17 people), and 37.5% Gen Z (21 people), with 48.2% identifying as women, 50% as men, and 1.8% opting not to disclose their gender. In this sampling, 85.7% of respondents say they are members of one or more loyalty programs. Of these 85.7%, most have less than 5 loyalty programs (44%). But a large number still have between 5 and 10 different programs (36%), and 20% have more than 10. However, when we look at the difference between people who are members of a loyalty program, we see that 100% of Gen Xers are, followed by Millennials with 88.2%, Gen Zers in 3rd place with 81% and Boomers with 75%. One might expect Boomers to be less of a member than other generations, but we can see that it's Gen X and Millennials who are the most frequent program members. Gen Z isn't necessarily a generation that's much into loyalty programs, but when they are members of lots of different programs: 31.6% are members of more than 10 programs, compared with 13.3% for Millennials, 10% for Gen X and 16.7% for Boomers. We can therefore see that Gen Z is a generation that may be less loyal to just a few brands, but is more likely to seek out the discounts that suit them best, perhaps at different times and with more brands/loyalty programs. We can already see that Gen Z is a generation less loyal to 1 brand in particular.

When we now look at the main reasons for choosing the different loyalty programs, we see, of course, that the main reason, regardless of generation, is the discounts and savings that the different programs offer (94.1%). Access to exclusive products and/or services is also an important reason for all generations in general for choosing a loyalty program (54.9%). But when we look at the other reasons, we notice a difference between the generations, particularly with Gen Z. 37.3% of respondents find that more personalized offers will influence them to join a certain loyalty program. In total, Gen Z is 58.82% more likely than all other generations, Millennials 26.67%, Gen X 20% and Boomers 17%. We can even see that this appeal becomes

more important to the younger the generation. We can see that Gen Z has a strong attraction to personalization, especially since 52.94% find that personalization has an impact on their loyalty and commitment to a brand, a product/service or even a loyalty program in general. The other reason marked by a difference between generations is brand ethics and values, where Gen Z also shows greater appeal to brand ethics and values in making their choice of loyalty programs (35.29%). For all generations, this reason stands at 25.5%, with Millennials having the lowest appeal for this reason (6.67%) or Gen X with 10%. Furthermore, 88.24% of Gen Z survey respondents said that ethical brand practices were important to their brand commitment and loyalty. This is well above the other generations for whom this importance decreases with age group, 46.67% for Millennials, which shows that they also consider ethics to be an important issue for them, but less so than Gen Z. Then we have 10% for Gen X and 16.67% for Boomers, showing that brand ethics will affect their commitment and loyalty less. To conclude this quantitative study, Gen Z has a much more ethical vision of the evolution of loyalty programs than other generations, with 53% of Gen Z respondents expecting that loyalty programs will focus more on ethical programs, more than twice as many as other generations. Coming back to personalization, the generations are more aligned, with Gen Z still the most convinced, expecting at 94% that loyalty programs will focus more on personalization. For the other generations, this is also an important expectation, with 76% for Millennials, 80% for Gen X and only 17% for Boomers.

Finally, it's clear that expectations are aligned with changes in consumption patterns, and that loyalty programs are expected by the new generations to adapt to their expectations in order to gain loyalty and commitment from their customers. This shows that loyalty programs are projects that need to be constantly evolving to attract the maximum number of consumers, and it's important to adapt as generational expectations change.

## **Interviews**

Looking now at the interviews, they revealed strong differences in the project management methods used depending on the client. For example, Flying Blue, as explained by both Sébastien Ford and Amélie Couque, still relies a lot on traditional Waterfall project management, mainly because of their aviation background and their more cautious, risk-averse culture. Even though Epsilon uses Agile-inspired processes internally to try to be more flexible, the structure on the client side often slows things down and makes it harder to evolve the program quickly.

On the other hand, for Ma Vie En Couleurs, Agile is much more integrated into how projects are run. Jérémy Lacour explained that flexibility is really present in their way of working, and the speed and creativity that Agile brings, with two-week sprints, quick prototyping and data-driven decisions, makes a real difference in keeping the loyalty program relevant for consumers, both in communication and in the benefits offered. Amélie Couque also added an important client perspective that is Flying Blue does see the advantages of Agile methodologies, like faster iterations and tighter data loops, but internal governance and validation processes still slow down the changes.

From all of this, it's clear that companies who fully embrace Agile, like Mondelez, are much more adaptable and consumer-focused. In comparison, more traditional structures like Air France-KLM risk slowing down innovation and delaying time-to-market unless they start moving toward more flexible models.

All three interviewees stressed that loyalty programs need to be able to react fast to changing consumer expectations. However, how fast they can actually adapt seems linked to their project management culture. At Flying Blue, changes can take weeks or even months because of internal validation cycles, even though small updates are sometimes possible within running campaigns. At Ma Vie En Couleurs, changes can happen much faster, within a week,

for example, by adjusting rewards based on trending topics like health and wellness. This shows very clearly that Agile methods help teams move quicker and stay more relevant for consumers, reducing the risk of losing engagement.

The interviews also showed that expectations around loyalty programs vary a lot between generations. Baby Boomers and Generation X are more focused on traditional benefits like stability, savings, miles, or upgrades. Millennials expect seamless digital experiences and a better match with their lifestyle. Generation Z stands out: they are much more demanding in terms of ethics, personalization, gamification, and emotional connection.

Sébastien and Amélie both pointed out that Gen Z's loyalty is not automatic, it has to be earned constantly through relevance. Jérémy gave good examples of how Agile allows teams to experiment quickly and find what works best with younger audiences, like gamified campaigns and eco-friendly reward options. Here, Agile proves to be a real advantage when it comes to targeting Gen Z, because it allows teams to test, learn, and adapt campaign elements based on data and behavior trends.

Another important point that the interviews also highlighted was the growing importance of personalization and ethical practices in loyalty programs. Elements like personalized dashboards and rewards suggestions based on individual behavior are becoming the norm. But also gaining in importance are ethical factors, such as the possibility of donating points or miles to NGOs, or contributing to carbon offset programs. With, of course, transparent communication, which is considered essential for building trust.

Jérémy noted that these ethical and personalized options are particularly well received by Gen Z and Millennials, while older generations still prefer more traditional reward choices, but appreciate having some ethical options available. The key takeaway here is that personalization is now the minimum expected, and ethical rewards are quickly becoming a major engagement tool, especially for younger generations. Agile practices make it easier to

test and refine these features before scaling them.

When it comes to measuring the success of loyalty programs, classic KPIs like engagement rate, redemption rate, retention, and NPS are still widely used. However, Agile methodologies introduce new ways of looking at performance, like sprint-level reviews, user feedback loops, and real-time dashboard monitoring. Amélie mentioned that her team at Flying Blue is starting to rely more on these dynamic metrics, influenced by how Epsilon manages Agile projects. These new tools help track campaign impact more closely and allow faster course corrections when needed.

The interviews also pointed toward a common view of where loyalty programs are heading in the future. Programs will include more AI-powered personalization, stronger emotional and ethical brand connections, cross-platform integration linking travel, wellness, and financial services, and more gamification and community features. There is also a clear move from simple points and rewards toward building real emotional connections with users.

It was mentioned that newer ways of working, like Design Thinking and OKRs (Objectives and Key Results), are becoming complementary to Agile. Loyalty programs will increasingly need to be managed like digital products, modular, flexible, consumer-centered, and always evolving. Agile and related flexible frameworks seem essential to navigate these changes.

The interviews clearly show that project management methods have a major impact on the success, adaptability, and relevance of loyalty programs. When fully embraced, Agile methodologies help brands better engage their consumers, especially the younger generations, and support more personalized, flexible, and value-driven loyalty strategies.

The contrast between Flying Blue and Ma Vie En Couleurs shows how traditional structures can hold back innovation, while more flexible organizations are better equipped to meet today's consumer expectations, and those of tomorrow.

## **Common Aspects and Conclusion**

Looking now more closely at the results of both the survey and the interviews, four main topics stand out and help us better understand the link between project management methods and consumer engagement in loyalty programs.

The survey, which collected 56 answers across four different generations, shows that Gen X and Millennials are the most active members of loyalty programs (with 100% and 88.2% enrolled), while Gen Z comes a bit behind at 81%. However, Gen Z stands out in a different way: 31.6% of them are members of more than 10 loyalty programs, compared to much lower numbers in other generations. This suggests that Gen Z is not necessarily less interested in loyalty programs, but they use them differently. This finding matches what we heard during the interviews, especially from Sébastien Ford and Amélie Couque. Both pointed out that Generation Z is a generation in which people tend to have a more fluid, transactional relationship with brands. They will seek value and good experiences, but will not easily develop long-term loyalty. Gen Z's loyalty is more flexible and value-driven. They move between brands depending on what suits them best at a given time. Loyalty programs today need to be more modular and adaptive to meet these new expectations, especially when targeting younger audiences.

Personalization clearly emerged as a key factor in the survey results, particularly for Generation Z. Some 94% of Gen Z respondents said they expected loyalty programs to become even more personalized in the future. While personalization is important for all age groups, it is even more so for the younger generations. Ethical practices and brand values are also playing a bigger role. The survey showed that 88.24% of Gen Z consider ethics important for their loyalty to a brand, compared to 46.67% of Millennials, 10% of Gen X, and 16.67% of Boomers. 53% of Gen Z expect loyalty programs to focus more on ethical practices, which is more than double compared to older generations. These ideas are closely related to what

Jérémy Lacour mentioned in his interview, about how Ma Vie En Couleurs integrates socially responsible and ethical rewards. Sébastien and Amélie also talked about the younger generations who expect brands to align with their personal values and not just offer discounts. Ethical commitment and personalization have become must-haves, not extras. Loyalty programs must now combine data-driven personalization with a strong ethical stance if they want to stay relevant for the next generations.

One of the main goals of this research was to understand how project management methods impact the ability to adapt loyalty programs to consumer needs. The interviews made it clear that there's a strong link between the type of methodology used and the capacity to react quickly to changing expectations. At Flying Blue (Air France-KLM), the traditional Waterfall method still dominates. Even if Epsilon tries to bring some Agile practices internally, structural constraints make adaptation slower. On the other hand, Ma Vie En Couleurs (Mondelez) benefits from a much more Agile and flexible approach, allowing rapid testing, iteration, and personalization based on real-time consumer data. These real-world observations support the survey data, showing that today's loyalty depends heavily on brands' ability to evolve fast, personalize offers, and show ethical responsibility, things that Agile methodologies are better at supporting. Agile and flexible project management make it easier to adjust loyalty programs to fast-changing consumer behaviors, especially when targeting younger, more demanding generations like Gen Z.

The survey also showed that expectations for loyalty programs are moving from simple transactions toward emotional and value-based relationships. Consumers, especially younger ones, will now expect loyalty programs to integrate with their daily lifestyles, experiences to be more personalized and AI-powered, brand practices to be more ethical and socially responsible, and innovation to be a constant evolution. The interviews reinforced this view. Marketing professionals have shown us that they believe loyalty programs should be managed

like digital products, which means they must evolve constantly, renew quickly and adapt to feedback almost in real time. Loyalty programs can no longer afford to be static. They must become dynamic, flexible, and aligned with deeper consumer values. Agile, design thinking, and OKRs seem much better suited for this than traditional methods like Waterfall.

By combining the survey data with insights from marketing professionals and client managers, this study draws a clear path forward for building loyalty programs that meet the needs of today's and tomorrow's consumers. Gen Z and Millennials are reshaping loyalty with new expectations based on personalization, flexibility, and ethics. Agile and iterative project management methods give loyalty programs the tools they need to stay relevant and responsive. Brands that stick to traditional frameworks risk becoming disconnected from the generations that will drive future growth. This double approach, using quantitative data to understand consumer behavior, and qualitative data to understand how programs are built and managed, gives a complete picture of how loyalty programs can (and must) evolve in a world that is changing faster than ever.

### **Limitations of the Research**

Even though this research provided interesting insights, there are still a few limitations to keep in mind. First, the number of interviews was quite limited. Speaking with more project managers and clients across different industries could have given a broader view of how project management impacts loyalty programs. Also, the interviews were mostly focused on the marketing side and not so much on the technical or operational sides, which might have brought even more layers of understanding.

On the survey side, although it was shared across different generations, the sample size remained relatively small with 56 participants. A bigger and more representative sample could have helped reinforce some of the generational trends observed, especially between Gen X

and Boomers, where the number of responses was a bit lower.

Finally, the context of the interviews and the survey mainly reflects the European market, especially France. Loyalty behaviors and project management practices might differ in other regions, and it would be interesting to explore these differences in future research.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the results of this thesis, a few recommendations can be made for brands managing loyalty programs today. First, companies should really think about adopting more flexible project management approaches like Agile or hybrid methods. The ability to quickly test, adjust, and personalize loyalty offers seems essential to meeting the expectations of younger consumers, particularly Gen Z. Second, personalization and ethics are no longer optional. Loyalty programs need to take into account individual preferences and offer more socially responsible options if they want to remain relevant. To achieve this, brands should invest in tools and strategies that enable them to better understand and segment their audiences. Finally, loyalty programs should be seen as living, evolving projects rather than fixed systems. That's why brands need regular updates, feedback loops and genuine co-creation by consumers to make the difference between a static program and one that establishes a real connection with consumers on an emotional level.

Regarding academic outcomes, academic research should continue to explore the application of Agile and hybrid project management methodologies specifically in the context of loyalty programs. Investigating their impact on program outcomes and consumer satisfaction can provide more nuanced insights into the benefits and challenges of these approaches in relation to other project management methodologies. Researchers should also delve deeper into the ethical implications of data collection and personalization in loyalty programs. Studies focusing on consumer privacy, consent, and ethical use of data can highlight the delicate

balance between personalized marketing and consumer trust. This would also help in developing ethical guidelines and frameworks applicable to loyalty programs. Also, it could be beneficial for academics to undertake longitudinal studies analyzing how different generational cohorts, like Gen Z, interact with loyalty programs and respond to innovations in program design and delivery. This can aid in creating more tailored strategies for future consumer engagement. Finally, further academic research into the role of consumer co-creation in loyalty programs could provide valuable insights into its impact on brand loyalty and emotional connection. Research could focus on measuring the tangible benefits of involving consumers in program design and feedback processes by comparing programs with and without such involvement.

## **Conclusion**

This thesis explored the connection between project management approaches and the success of loyalty programs in adapting to the new expectations of different generations. By combining a quantitative survey and qualitative interviews, it was possible to show that younger generations like Gen Z are pushing brands toward more personalization, more ethical practices, and faster adaptation.

The research also highlighted that flexible project management methods, like Agile, are better suited to deliver on these expectations. Brands that remain stuck in traditional ways of managing projects risk falling behind, while those who adopt more dynamic and consumer-centric approaches are better placed to engage future generations.

Even though there were some limits to this research, it clearly shows that loyalty programs today are no longer just about points and discounts. They are about building relationships, emotional connections, and trust. For brands willing to evolve, there are real opportunities to create loyalty programs that are not only effective but also meaningful in the eyes of their

customers. This is why today we also speak of “ethical loyalty programs” or “sustainable loyalty programs”. These initiatives give priority to ethical practices and sustainability, and will reward customers not only for their purchases, but also for their socially or environmentally responsible behavior. This approach aligns brand values with those of consumers who wish to support companies that have a positive impact on society and the environment.

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## Appendix

### Survey questions

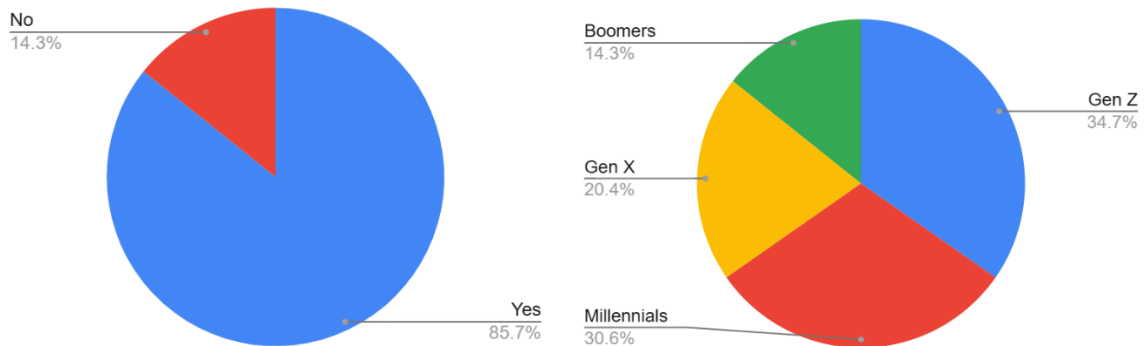
#### [Google Forms](#)

1. What is your age group?
  - Gen Z (born 1997-2012)
  - Millennials (born 1981-1996)
  - Gen X (born 1965-1980)
  - Boomers (born 1946-1964)
2. What is your gender?
  - Female
  - Male
  - Prefer not to say
3. Are you a member of any loyalty programs?
  - Yes
  - No
4. How many loyalty programs are you a member of?
  - None
  - Less than 5
  - Between 5 and 10
  - More than 10
5. Which of the following factors influence your decision to join a loyalty program?  
(Select all that apply)
  - Discounts and savings
  - Exclusive access to products/services
  - Personalized offers
  - Brand ethics and values
  - Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_
6. How important is it for a loyalty program to adapt to changing consumer preferences? (Scale of 1 to 5)
  1. Not important

2. Slightly important
  3. Moderately important
  4. Very important
  5. Extremely important
7. To what extent do you agree with the following statement: "Loyalty programs that are ethical and personalized are more appealing to me." (Scale of 1 to 5)
1. Strongly disagree
  2. Disagree
  3. Neutral
  4. Agree
  5. Strongly agree
8. Rate the impact of a brand's ethical practices on your loyalty and engagement (Scale of 1 to 5):
1. No impact
  2. Slight impact
  3. Moderate impact
  4. Significant impact
  5. Critical impact
9. Rate the impact of personalized offers on your loyalty and engagement (Scale of 1 to 5):
1. No impact
  2. Slight impact
  3. Moderate impact
  4. Significant impact
  5. Critical impact
10. How do you expect loyalty programs to evolve in the next 5 years? (Select all that apply)
- More focus on personalization
  - More focus on ethical practices
  - Increased integration with technology
  - Broader rewards options
  - Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

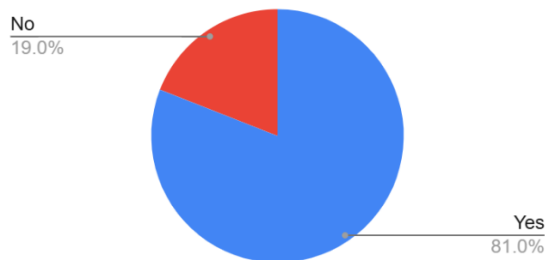
## Survey Results

Survey Results, share of loyalty program members by generations.

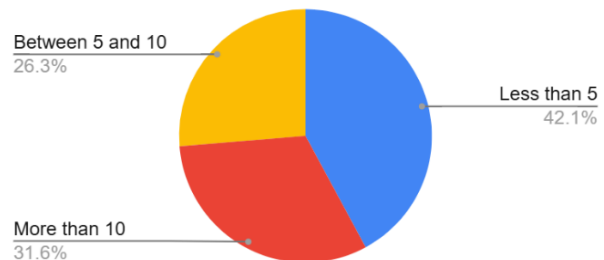


## Gen Z Results

Share of loyalty program members



Number of loyalty programs



Q5: Which of the following factors influence your decision to join a loyalty program? (Select all that apply)

Discounts and savings	17	100%
Exclusive access to products/ services	11	64.71%
Personalized offers	10	58.82%
Brand ethics and values	6	35.29%

Q6: How important is it for a loyalty program to adapt to changing consumer preferences?

1	0	0.00%
2	0	0.00%
3	0	0.00%
4	7	41.18%
5	10	58.82%
Total	17	100%

**Q7: To what extent do you agree with the following statement: "Loyalty programs that are ethical and personalized are more appealing to me."**

1	0	0.00%
2	0	0.00%
3	4	23.53%
4	6	35.29%
5	7	41.18%
Total	17	100%

**Q8: Rate the impact of a brand's ethical practices on your loyalty and engagement:**

1	0	0.00%
2	1	5.88%
3	1	5.88%
4	8	47.06%
5	7	41.18%
Total	17	100%

**Q9: Rate the impact of personalized offers on your loyalty and engagement:**

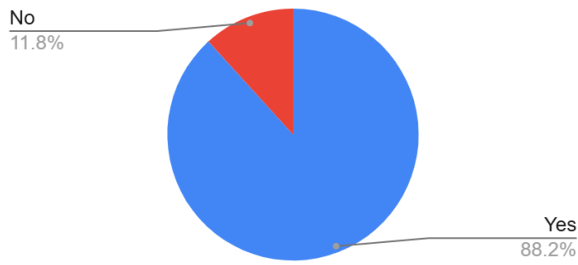
1	0	0.00%
2	0	0.00%
3	1	5.88%
4	7	41.18%
5	9	52.94%
Total	17	100%

**Q10: How do you expect loyalty programs to evolve in the next 5 years? (Select all that apply)**

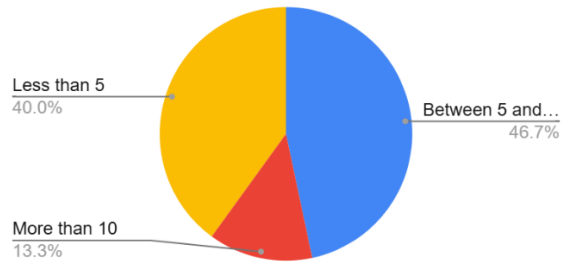
More Focus on Personalization	16	94%
More focus on ethical practices	9	53%
Increased integration with technology	11	65%
Broader rewards options	4	24%

## **Millennials Results**

Share of loyalty program members



Number of loyalty programs



**Q5: Which of the following factors influence your decision to join a loyalty program? (Select all that apply)**

Discounts and savings	14	93%
Exclusive access to products/ services	7	46.67%
Personalized offers	4	26.67%
Brand ethics and values	1	6.67%

**Q6: How important is it for a loyalty program to adapt to changing consumer preferences?**

1	0	0.00%
2	1	6.67%
3	0	0.00%
4	8	53.33%
5	6	40.00%
Total	15	100.00%

**Q7: To what extent do you agree with the following statement: "Loyalty programs that are ethical and personalized are more appealing to me."**

1	1	6.67%
2	1	6.67%
3	6	40.00%
4	5	33.33%
5	2	13.33%
Total	15	100.00%

**Q8: Rate the impact of a brand's ethical practices on your loyalty and engagement:**

1	1	6.67%
2	4	26.67%
3	3	20.00%
4	6	40.00%

5	1	6.67%
Total	15	100.00%

**Q9: Rate the impact of personalized offers on your loyalty and engagement:**

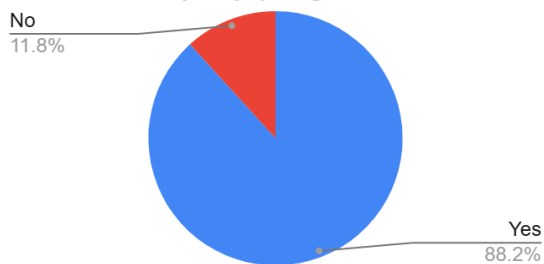
1	0	0.00%
2	2	40.00%
3	3	60.00%
4	7	140.00%
5	3	60.00%
Total	15	100%

**Q10: How do you expect loyalty programs to evolve in the next 5 years? (Select all that apply)**

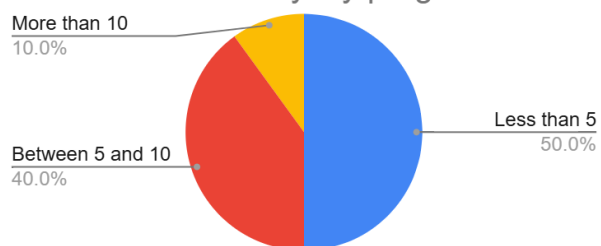
More Focus on Personalization	13	76%
More focus on ethical practices	3	18%
Increased integration with technology	10	59%
Broader rewards options	5	29%

### Gen X Results

Share of loyalty program members



Number of loyalty programs



**Q5: Which of the following factors influence your decision to join a loyalty program? (Select all that apply)**

Discounts and savings	9	90%
Exclusive access to products/ services	5	50.00%
Personalized offers	2	20.00%

Brand ethics and values	1	10.00%
None above	1	10%

**Q6: How important is it for a loyalty program to adapt to changing consumer preferences?**

1	0	0.00%
2	0	0.00%
3	3	30.00%
4	5	50.00%
5	2	20.00%
Total	10	100.00%

**Q7: To what extent do you agree with the following statement: "Loyalty programs that are ethical and personalized are more appealing to me."**

1	0	0.00%
2	3	30.00%
3	4	40.00%
4	2	20.00%
5	1	10.00%
Total	10	100.00%

**Q8: Rate the impact of a brand's ethical practices on your loyalty and engagement:**

1	0	0.00%
2	3	30.00%
3	6	60.00%
4	1	10.00%
5	0	0.00%
Total	10	100%

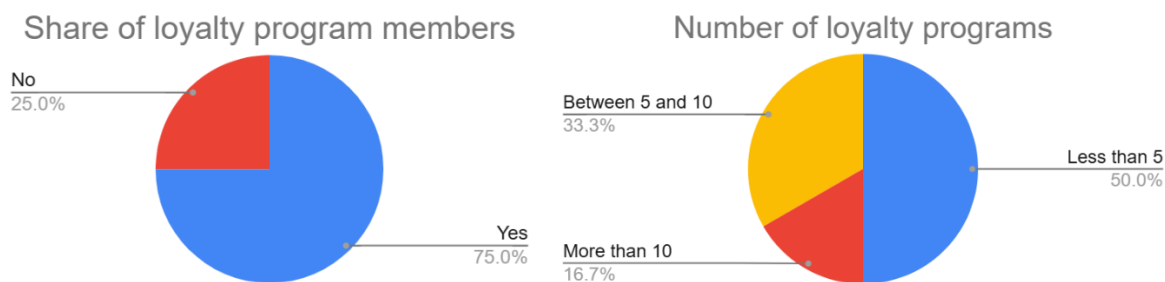
**Q9: Rate the impact of personalized offers on your loyalty and engagement:**

1	0	0.00%
2	3	30.00%
3	2	20.00%
4	3	30.00%
5	2	20.00%
Total	10	100%

**Q10: How do you expect loyalty programs to evolve in the next 5 years? (Select all that**

apply)		
More Focus on Personalization	8	80%
More focus on ethical practices	2	20%
Increased integration with technology	5	50%
Broader rewards options	7	70%

## Result for Boomers



Q5: Which of the following factors influence your decision to join a loyalty program? (Select all that apply)

Discounts and savings	5	83%
Exclusive access to products/services	1	17%
Personalized offers	1	17%
Brand ethics and values	2	33%

Q6: How important is it for a loyalty program to adapt to changing consumer preferences?

1	0	0.00%
2	1	16.67%
3	4	66.67%
4	1	16.67%
5	0	0.00%
Total	6	100.00%

Q7: To what extent do you agree with the following statement: "Loyalty programs that are ethical and personalized are more appealing to me."

1	2	33.33%
2	3	50.00%
3	0	0.00%

4	1	16.67%
5	0	0.00%
Total	6	100.00%

Q8: Rate the impact of a brand's ethical practices on your loyalty and engagement:		
1	3	50.00%
2	2	33.33%
3	0	0.00%
4	1	16.67%
5	0	0.00%
Total	6	100%

Q9: Rate the impact of personalized offers on your loyalty and engagement:		
1	1	16.67%
2	2	33.33%
3	3	50.00%
4	0	0.00%
5	0	0.00%
Total	6	100%

Q10 : How do you expect loyalty programs to evolve in the next 5 years? (Select all that apply)		
More Focus on Personalization	1	17%
More focus on ethical practices	1	17%
Increased integration with technology	3	50%
Broader rewards options	3	50%

## Interviews

### Interview 1: Sebastien Ford, Marketing Project Manager at Epsilon France (Publicis Group) for Flying Blue – Air France-KLM

**INTERVIEWER:** Thank you for taking the time to participate in this interview. To begin, could you introduce yourself and explain your role in marketing and how it relates to loyalty

programs?

**INTERVIEWEE:** Of course, happy to be here. I'm a Marketing Project Manager at Epsilon France, which is part of the Publicis Group. Currently, I'm working on the Flying Blue loyalty program for Air France-KLM. My role is to manage the different parts between strategic marketing, data insight and project execution. I oversee campaigns and program developments to increase customer engagement and generate the best possible return on investment for Flying Blue through loyalty. Given our work with a long-standing client like Flying Blue, I focus a lot on aligning innovative marketing strategies with their more traditional corporate structure.

**INTERVIEWER:** Do you use specific project management methodologies in your role? If yes, which ones?

**INTERVIEWEE:** Yes, we do. Internally at Epsilon, we tend to favor Agile-inspired methodologies. We use a hybrid model — not full Scrum, but elements like iterative planning, short feedback loops, and adaptability to evolving requirements. However, our client, Air France-KLM, traditionally works with the Waterfall methodology. So, part of my job is actually navigating between these two worlds and making sure the hybrid approach can still deliver effectively within their framework.

**INTERVIEWER:** How do you implement these methodologies in designing and managing loyalty programs?

**INTERVIEWEE:** For Flying Blue, we break projects into manageable phases. Even if the client operates in Waterfall, we insert Agile principles into the process: for example, by doing sprints internally to quickly prototype campaign elements or features, and by using frequent check-ins with the client to validate progress. We also use data at every step to inform decisions — whether that's for personalizing offers or testing UX/UI changes in the program's app or website. This layered approach helps us be both strategic and flexible.

**INTERVIEWER:** Can you discuss any challenges and benefits of using your methodology(ies) in loyalty program projects?

**INTERVIEWEE:** The main challenge is cultural. The client is risk-averse, with a preference for long planning cycles and linear execution, which can delay time-to-market. From our side, we believe in testing, learning, and iterating. The benefit of our approach is that we're more in tune with fast-changing consumer expectations, especially with Gen Z. By being flexible, we can respond faster to shifts in engagement or behavior patterns. Convincing the client to adopt this mindset gradually is an ongoing effort.

**INTERVIEWER:** In your experience, how quickly can loyalty programs be adapted to changing consumer preferences when using your methodology(ies)?

**INTERVIEWEE:** When we're allowed to apply Agile principles fully, we can adapt within a matter of weeks, whether that's launching a new rewards feature or A/B testing communication strategies. But in practice, especially with traditional clients, the adaptation cycle is slower, often several months. That said, our methodology still gives us the edge because we start collecting feedback early and can make micro-adjustments within existing campaigns while waiting for larger approvals.

**INTERVIEWER:** Have you noticed any differences in the way you adapt loyalty programs for different generations (Gen Z, Millennials, Gen X, Boomers)?

**INTERVIEWEE:** Absolutely. Each generation engages differently. Boomers tend to value straightforward rewards — upgrades, miles, priority boarding. Millennials want experiences and seamless digital interfaces. Gen Z, on the other hand, is highly values-driven and expects personalization, transparency, and social responsibility. So we segment not only based on behavior but also on generational values and digital fluency.

**INTERVIEWER:** Have your methodology(ies) shown any advantages in engaging Gen Z consumers specifically, compared to older generations?

**INTERVIEWEE:** Yes, especially through rapid testing and personalized content. Gen Z reacts well to authenticity and dynamic experiences — and they're quick to disengage if something feels generic. Our iterative, data-informed approach allows us to test formats, language, and reward types tailored to Gen Z. For example, we experimented with limited-time, socially conscious reward options — like donating miles to environmental causes — and it drove significantly more engagement from younger members.

**INTERVIEWER:** In your opinion, how do Gen Z's loyalty and engagement levels differ from other generations in response to loyalty program strategies?

**INTERVIEWEE:** Gen Z is less loyal by default. They don't stick with brands out of habit or legacy. You need to earn their attention constantly, through relevance, personalization, and alignment with their values. Unlike Gen X or Boomers who often value reliability, Gen Z expects dynamic, two-way relationships with brands. They're also far more likely to share their experiences publicly, both positive and negative.

**INTERVIEWER:** Have you observed a trend towards consumers prioritizing ethical and personalized aspects of loyalty programs?

**INTERVIEWEE:** Definitely. Across generations, but especially with Gen Z and Millennials. Consumers want brands to take a stand, and loyalty programs are now expected to reflect that. Ethical rewards, carbon offsets, inclusive language, even the design of the user journey, all of this matters. Personalization has become the baseline, not a differentiator. What sets a program apart today is how well it aligns with consumer identity and values.

**INTERVIEWER:** How have you integrated personalized and ethical practices into your loyalty programs, and what has been the response from different generational cohorts?

**INTERVIEWEE:** We've implemented personalized dashboards, dynamic rewards based on past travel behavior, and ethical reward options. For instance, offering the chance to donate

miles to partner NGOs. Gen Z has responded very positively to these options. Boomers and Gen X still prefer traditional perks but appreciate the choice. The key is not to force ethical rewards — it's about giving options that reflect different user priorities.

**INTERVIEWER:** How do you measure the success of a loyalty program, and does this measurement change with different project management methodologies?

**INTERVIEWEE:** Success is multi-dimensional: we look at engagement rates, reward redemption, NPS (Net Promoter Score), and long-term metrics like customer lifetime value and churn reduction. With Agile or hybrid methods, we also track sprint-based metrics like velocity and customer feedback loops. These help us course-correct faster and measure micro-wins before the overall KPI picture becomes clear.

**INTERVIEWER:** Can you share an example of a successful loyalty program that adapted well to consumer needs and preferences, particularly focusing on Gen Z?

**INTERVIEWEE:** Yes, one case was a campaign we ran within Flying Blue targeted at younger travelers discovering Europe. We bundled bonus miles for eco-conscious travel options, paired with social media storytelling. It included gamified challenges and carbon offset features. It led to a significant spike in engagement among under-30 members, who also showed increased app usage and opened more marketing emails than average.

**INTERVIEWER:** What future trends do you foresee in loyalty program management and consumer engagement?

**INTERVIEWEE:** Hyper-personalization will keep evolving, with AI playing a bigger role. Gamification and real-time engagement will become standard, especially in travel. Also, expect more partnerships — loyalty programs won't be isolated systems but integrated ecosystems. Sustainability and social responsibility will move from “nice-to-have” to core expectations. We're also seeing early signs of web3 and blockchain-based loyalty models emerging.

**INTERVIEWER:** Are there any emerging project management practices you expect to influence how loyalty programs are designed or executed?

**INTERVIEWEE:** Yes, more than Agile, we're seeing Design Thinking and Lean Startup principles making their way into loyalty program development. These focus more on empathy, iteration, and quick validation — perfect for today's fast-moving, customer-centric environments. I think in the future, the most successful programs will be those managed like digital products: constantly evolving, always in beta.

**INTERVIEWER:** Thank you so much for your insights. This has been incredibly helpful for my research.

**INTERVIEWEE:** My pleasure. Best of luck with your thesis — and don't hesitate to reach out if you need anything else!

## **Interview 2: Amélie Couque, CRM Project Manager and Communication Manager at Flying Blue (Air France-KLM)**

**INTERVIEWER:** Thank you for joining this interview. Could you please introduce yourself and your role within Flying Blue?

**INTERVIEWEE:** Of course. My name is Amélie Couque, and I'm a CRM Project Manager and Communication Manager for the Flying Blue loyalty program at Air France-KLM. My role involves overseeing all customer relationship strategies, campaign planning, and loyalty-related communications across multiple customer touchpoints.

**INTERVIEWER:** Can you describe your collaboration with Epsilon and how project management methodologies influence your work together?

**INTERVIEWEE:** We've worked with Epsilon for almost one year now. They bring in a fresh, data-driven marketing approach. Traditionally, we've relied on Waterfall methodologies because of our internal processes, which are aligned with aviation industry

standards. But we've noticed that Epsilon often encourages a more Agile or hybrid methodology, which brings flexibility. Sometimes it challenges our structure, but it also improves responsiveness.

**INTERVIEWER:** From your perspective, what are the benefits and challenges of the more flexible approach promoted by Epsilon?

**INTERVIEWEE:** The benefits are clear, faster testing, quicker decision-making, and a stronger link between data and execution. For example, when Epsilon suggests iterations after campaign data analysis, we can act more swiftly. The challenge is mostly internal: aligning Agile with our governance processes. It requires internal adaptation and trust.

**INTERVIEWER:** Do you see differences in how loyalty programs need to be designed for different generations?

**INTERVIEWEE:** Yes, there are big differences. Older members of our program tend to value traditional perks like upgrades, discounts, priority access. But younger travelers, especially Gen Z, they want more sustainability, experiences, and flexibility. They want to feel emotionally connected to the brand and we have to balance those expectations.

**INTERVIEWER:** How do you see Gen Z's loyalty and engagement with Flying Blue compared to other age groups?

**INTERVIEWEE:** Gen Z is a generation of more fluid persons in their brand relationships. They're not automatically loyal, and they demand relevance and ethical values. We've started exploring gamified and mission-based features to increase engagement. They want personalization and are quick to disengage if the program feels static.

**INTERVIEWER:** Have you observed a rising importance of personalization and ethical practices in loyalty strategy?

**INTERVIEWEE:** Absolutely. We've seen more interest in rewards that give back, whether it's donating miles or supporting carbon offset projects. Epsilon's ability to tailor campaigns

and content through segmentation helps us respond to this. It's not just about earning points anymore, it's about connecting with values.

**INTERVIEWER:** How do you measure the success of the loyalty program from your side?

**INTERVIEWEE:** We look at classic CRM metrics, engagement rate, open rate, conversion, and retention, but we also assess brand perception and satisfaction. What's evolving is how we look at those numbers in near real-time, thanks to the insights Epsilon provides through agile reporting dashboards.

**INTERVIEWER:** What trends do you foresee in the future of loyalty programs?

**INTERVIEWEE:** Programs will become more modular, experience-oriented, and deeply integrated into lifestyle. Emotional loyalty, AI-driven personalization, and ethical rewards will be the key differentiators. I also believe more flexible and iterative project management will become the norm, even for more traditional industries like ours.

**INTERVIEWER:** Thank you very much, Amélie. Your insights are incredibly valuable for this research.

**INTERVIEWEE:** Thank you! I'm happy to contribute. It's an exciting time for loyalty programs, and I look forward to seeing your findings.

### **Interview 3: Jérémy Lacour, Marketing Project Manager at Epsilon France (Publicis Group) for Ma Vie En Couleurs – Mondelez**

**INTERVIEWER:** Thank you for taking the time to participate in this interview. To begin, could you introduce yourself and explain your role in marketing and how it relates to loyalty programs?

**INTERVIEWEE:** My pleasure. I'm Jeremy Lacour, a Marketing Project Manager at Epsilon France. I'm currently working with Mondelez on their loyalty platform "Ma Vie En Couleurs". My role is to coordinate the marketing, creative, and data teams to ensure that the

strategies are aligned with the consumer behavior and expectations. We focus mainly on personalization, consumer engagement, and adapting quickly to trends.

**INTERVIEWER:** Do you use specific project management methodologies in your role? If yes, which ones?

**INTERVIEWEE:** Yes, we primarily use Agile methodology in our projects. With a client like Mondelez, who is more open to innovation and collaborative work, Agile fits perfectly. It allows us to be iterative, test regularly, and remain consumer-centric at all times.

**INTERVIEWER:** How do you implement these methodologies in designing and managing loyalty programs?

**INTERVIEWEE:** We work in two-week sprints, with a backlog of ideas and optimizations constantly prioritized based on data feedback and client input. For Ma Vie En Couleurs, we often prototype new features, like reward types or gamified challenges, test them with selected user segments, and scale them up based on engagement levels. Agile helps us avoid long validation cycles and be more reactive.

**INTERVIEWER:** Can you discuss any challenges and benefits of using your methodology(ies) in loyalty program projects?

**INTERVIEWEE:** The main challenge is coordination—it requires tight communication and buy-in from everyone involved, including the client. But the benefits far outweigh that: we deliver faster, learn more from real-time data, and engage consumers better. It also fosters a more experimental mindset, which is key for innovation.

**INTERVIEWER:** In your experience, how quickly can loyalty programs be adapted to changing consumer preferences when using your methodology(ies)?

**INTERVIEWEE:** With Agile, we've implemented changes within a week based on trend shifts or campaign performance. For example, during a recent campaign, we noticed increased interest in wellness-related products. Within a sprint, we adapted our rewards and

content to feature healthier options—engagement spiked as a result.

**INTERVIEWER:** Have you noticed any differences in the way you adapt loyalty programs for different generations (Gen Z, Millennials, Gen X, Boomers)?

**INTERVIEWEE:** Absolutely. Gen Z and Millennials want more than points—they want experiences, games, and ethical value. Gen X and Boomers still appreciate utility and savings. So we customize content, UX, and rewards based on demographic behavior patterns. Agile makes it easier to manage these parallel tracks.

**INTERVIEWER:** Have your methodology(ies) shown any advantages in engaging Gen Z consumers specifically, compared to older generations?

**INTERVIEWEE:** Yes. Gen Z is extremely reactive—they respond immediately to changes. Agile lets us test formats quickly, whether it's gamified quizzes, social media integration, or ethical reward choices. We've seen that rapid iteration allows us to meet Gen Z where they are, on their terms.

**INTERVIEWER:** In your opinion, how do Gen Z's loyalty and engagement levels differ from other generations in response to loyalty program strategies?

**INTERVIEWEE:** Gen Z demands relevance. They're more skeptical and less brand-loyal unless they see consistent value and purpose. They also engage more frequently but expect novelty. So we design with the idea that nothing should feel static. It's a different rhythm than with older generations.

**INTERVIEWER:** Have you observed a trend towards consumers prioritizing ethical and personalized aspects of loyalty programs?

**INTERVIEWEE:** Yes, especially post-COVID. Consumers want brands that reflect their values. For example, offering eco-conscious products, charitable donations, or transparency in rewards earns trust. Personalization, meanwhile, has become the baseline—people expect tailored experiences.

**INTERVIEWER:** How have you integrated personalized and ethical practices into your loyalty programs, and what has been the response from different generational cohorts?

**INTERVIEWEE:** We personalize every part of the journey: suggested rewards, content, notifications. We also introduced ethical reward options—donations to food banks or sustainable product bundles. Gen Z and Millennials responded strongly to these. Boomers were more engaged with traditional rewards but appreciated having the choice.

**INTERVIEWER:** How do you measure the success of a loyalty program, and does this measurement change with different project management methodologies?

**INTERVIEWEE:** We look at engagement, redemption rates, repeat visits, and segmentation growth. With Agile, we also evaluate sprint performance—like how many optimizations led to measurable impact. Having frequent review cycles means we don't wait until the end of a campaign to define success.

**INTERVIEWER:** Can you share an example of a successful loyalty program that adapted well to consumer needs and preferences, particularly focusing on Gen Z?

**INTERVIEWEE:** Sure. We ran a summer campaign with Ma Vie En Couleurs that included daily challenges, social sharing rewards, and eco-friendly prize options. It was heavily inspired by Gen Z habits. The result was a 40% higher engagement rate among 18–25-year-olds and a 30% increase in opt-ins to our newsletter.

**INTERVIEWER:** What future trends do you foresee in loyalty program management and consumer engagement?

**INTERVIEWEE:** Integration with lifestyle apps—fitness, cooking, travel—is becoming key. Also, AI-driven personalization and real-time gamification will grow. And let's not forget the shift to emotional loyalty—connecting with users beyond transactions.

**INTERVIEWER:** Are there any emerging project management practices you expect to influence how loyalty programs are designed or executed?

**INTERVIEWEE:** Design Thinking is making waves—especially in the ideation phase. Combined with Agile execution, it creates a strong feedback loop. We’re also seeing more use of OKRs (Objectives and Key Results) to align cross-functional teams more clearly with business goals.

**INTERVIEWER:** Thank you so much for your insights. This has been incredibly helpful for my research.

**INTERVIEWEE:** You're very welcome. Wishing you the best for your thesis, and feel free to reach out again!