



Dealer Marketing Magazine

Business Development



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With the new year in full effect, it's time to take a look at the way you use your company credit cards and determine how you can receive the most benefit from your reward plans this year. After speaking with a variety of CFOs and owners, we've learned credit cards are often used for purchasing a last minute part over the phone or maybe even making an ad buy. While these are great ways to use your credit card and earn some reward points, think of the opportunities you may be missing out on by not using your card for more purchases. For instance, have you thought about putting your uniforms, utilities and most of your auto parts on a credit card? While it may seem a bit risky, the truth of the matter is that it's just as safe as issuing checks (if not more so), and will really pack a wallop when it comes time to reap the reward points. Many of the dealers we work with who have moved their auto parts onto credit cards have found they are earning literally hundreds of thousands of points per year. Ready to dive into some ways you can save money (and have some fun) in 2007 using nothing but your credit card reward program? The following are a few ways you can use those points to your advantage:

Last minute travel

At one time or another, almost all of us have had to schedule a last minute flight to keep our business running smoothly. But last minute flights can spell disaster for a dealership's monthly budget. With airfare as high as triple the cost of the original ticket, why not use reward points to purchase a seat on these costly trips? At Sheppard Motors in

How Will You "Reward" Yourself In 2007?

Eugene, Oregon, their points are primarily used to offset last minute airfare expenses to attend meetings in Seattle and Los Angeles. With a hefty price tag of \$700 to \$800 a ticket, Sheppard finds the decision to use reward points for last minute travel has had a positive effect on their bottom line.

Conference accommodations

Are you one to plan ahead? If so, maybe instead of last minute airfare you use

couragement throughout the year to stay motivated. Why not redeem reward points to pay for gift certificates to restaurants as holiday and thank-you gifts for employees? In fact, one innovative dealership we work with used their reward points for employee Christmas gifts.

Splurge on yourself

And finally, what better way to celebrate another successful year than splurging on you?

There are a multitude of reward programs out there that give users everything from safaris to golf weekends to spa packages. You've worked hard all year. Enjoy the rewards!

Looking for a way to help bump your credit card points in 2007? There are services available that integrate with ADP or Reynolds & Reynolds to provide an efficient tool for paying, posting, and reconciling invoices paid by card. You get the same control of paying by check with the added benefits of paying with a reward earning credit card. Seek out this service and employ the above tips to make 2007 a very rewarding year.

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your reward points to send yourself or your staff to industry conferences in 2007? Defray the cost of your hotel stay and airfare by cashing in on your credit card reward points. Longhorn Dodge in Dallas, is sending two employees to Las Vegas for the SEMA and NACE conventions using their reward points to pay for airfare and the hotel. Longhorn estimates they can send both employees to the conventions for under \$100.00!

Employee incentives

While a grand gesture like an all-expense paid trip to a convention is a great way to say thank you to hard working employees, dealership staff also need small bits of en-

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