

Club 1909 Loyalty Program – Business Impact Analysis

Overview: In October 2014 the Montreal Canadiens launched **Club 1909**, a global digital fan-loyalty program (named for the team’s 1909 founding) ¹ ² ³. The free program (with an optional C\$29.99 “premium” upgrade) lets fans worldwide earn points for virtually any team interaction – attending/streaming games, watching on TV/radio, spending at Bell Centre, playing app/web games, following the Habs on social media, answering quizzes, etc. ² ³. Points are redeemable for Canadiens merchandise, collectibles and “money-can’t-buy” experiences (behind-the-scenes tours, bench passes, engraved seats, etc.) ⁴ ⁵. Over 116,000 fans signed up in Year 1 (to April 2015) ⁶, growing ~15% per month. Season-ticket holders get free premium membership (RFID card) ⁷, while casual fans can upgrade for revenue.

Ticket Sales, Season-Ticket Retention & Attendance

- **Sellouts & Base Case:** The Bell Centre was sold out for a decade ⁸, so Club 1909 was *not* aimed at adding seats but at engaging existing fans. “We’re not looking to grow our fan base ... we’re looking to engage our fan base,” said COO Kevin Gilmore ⁹. Season-ticket holders automatically get premium membership ⁷, which helps lock in renewals by making them part of the loyalty ecosystem (though Habs retention is already very high). Attendance has remained at capacity; Club 1909’s design instead “broadens the potential user and goes very, very wide” beyond Montreal ⁸ ¹⁰. As Gilmore noted, the program is a “long-tail” initiative not expected to generate huge revenue in years 1–2, but to build a global fan base ¹⁰.
- **In-Arena Incentives:** While seats sell out, in-game promotions tie into Club 1909 to boost per-fan spending and excitement. For example, during Fan Appreciation Week the Canadiens distributed scratch cards to every attendee with prizes ranging from team swag to bonus **Club 1909 points** (e.g. 500 fans won 1,000 bonus points) ¹¹. Other in-arena contests have offered discounted merchandise (e.g. 15–25% off at Tricolore Sports) or sponsor prizes to Club 1909 members ¹¹ ¹². These activities reward attendance with points and sponsor goods, but did not measurably change total attendance (already maximized).

Merchandise & Retail Revenue

- **Targeted Promotions:** Club 1909 provides a direct channel to market Canadiens merchandise. The Canadiens used program data to create targeted offers: for instance, fans who follow star P.K. Subban on Twitter were offered a limited-edition Subban hat, and members were given early access to playoff jerseys and other gear ¹². These personalized promotions likely increased ancillary retail revenue by tapping fans’ player loyalties.
- **Points for Purchases:** Fans earn points by spending at the Bell Centre or team shops (including concessions and Tricolore Sports) ². This gamification of spending encourages in-arena purchases. Although exact sales uplift isn’t public, the program’s marketing vehicle (“additional vehicle to market merchandise” ⁸) suggests it helps sell more product to engaged fans. Sponsors and partners have also tied into retail: for example, during promotions fans could redeem sponsor coupons (e.g. 15% off Under Armour, free fries from Cavendish Farms) in exchange for points or as prizes ¹¹.

Fan Engagement (Digital Participation & Incentives)

- **Membership & Reach:** By Year 1 (2014–15) Club 1909 had **116,000+ members** ⁶. Roughly 93% were in Canada (mostly Quebec), with U.S. (~4%) and Europe/Australia among other members ⁶. The team estimated ~10 million Habs fans worldwide and set a goal of 500,000 members by Year 3 ¹³. The program unifies local and remote fans; as Kevin Gilmore explained, “if you’re a fan that lives in South Dakota ... you can go to our website ... and earn points,” effectively “breaking down the walls of the Bell Centre” ¹⁴ ¹⁵.
- **Digital & Social Interaction:** Club 1909 actively drives online engagement. The program awards points for virtually all fan behaviors: watching games on TV/radio, logging into the official app, completing quizzes, playing prediction games, tweeting or retweeting team posts, following players on social media, etc. ¹⁶ ¹⁷. For example, members earn up to 15 points per game by playing an online “Predictor” or post-game quiz ¹⁸, and 5–50 points daily in a mobile trivia game ¹⁹. A summary of key point-earning activities (2024–25) is shown below:

Engagement Activity	Points Earned
Post-Game Quiz (web or app)	up to 15 pts per game ¹⁸
Game Predictor (web or app)	up to 15 pts per game ¹⁸
Daily Mobile Quiz	5–50 pts per day ¹⁹
Weekly Bonus Code (in-app)	10 pts per week ²⁰
“Surprise” App Question	up to 5 pts per day ²¹
Team “Upgrades” (season achievements)	e.g. 100 pts for a shutout ²² or hat trick ²³

These mechanics keep fans engaged year-round. The Canadiens also pushed creative incentives: a fan video contest let members record a “Go Habs Go” chant (sponsored by Ford) and have it played in-arena ¹², and members were promised literal immortality with their names engraved into the rink ice ²⁴.

- **Content Interaction:** Club 1909 is integrated into team content. The official Canadiens app and website feature weekly “points power-up” codes, polls, and challenges tied to upcoming games, driving repeat visits. Social contests regularly require a Club 1909 login. For example, during midseason events fans could earn extra points by participating in social-media campaigns or in-app games (a “Predictor” contest for each game ¹⁸, etc.). By rewarding almost every fan touchpoint, the program has measurably boosted digital engagement: it leverages the existing **high TV and web viewership** (noted as “sky-high TV ratings” ²⁵) by converting passive watching into interactive reward-earning.

Data-Driven Marketing & CRM

- **Rich Fan Data:** Club 1909 collects detailed demographic and behavioral data on its 116K+ members ⁶. Season-ticket holders are automatically enrolled (free premium), ensuring contact info for core buyers. Every scanned RFID or QR entry ties a fan’s identity to their attendance, solving the old problem of anonymous seats ²⁶. As Gilmore noted, scanning Club 1909 cards at the Bell Centre gives the team “a face to match the fan entering the building” ²⁶, enabling personalized service (e.g. special offers on game days). The Canadiens also capture data on at-home fans: IP logins, app usage, social profiles followed, quiz responses, etc. This permissioned data feed fuels CRM segmentation and targeted marketing.

- **Personalization & Segmentation:** The team explicitly uses Club 1909 insights for targeted campaigns. For instance, fans who “follow” a star player online can be identified as a distinct segment. The Canadiens have sent exclusive offers (and even early access to new merch) to fans of certain players or to premium members. One case: social followers of defenseman P.K. Subban were targeted with a limited-run Subban hat ¹². Such segmentation is only possible via the loyalty database. Similarly, premium members receive email and push updates about special sales or auctions (e.g. a premium-only auction for a team-signed Stanley Cup “Cuisinart” mixer). The program also informs sponsorship sales and in-stadium marketing: by knowing fan preferences, the Canadiens can tailor sponsor messages (e.g. Air Canada ads to frequent travellers).
- **Retention & Cross-Selling:** While the Canadiens do not report exact retention lifts, loyalty theory suggests these tactics help keep fans engaged between seasons. The program “crosses the chasm of the off-season” by encouraging off-season logins ²⁷. It also creates upsell opportunities: for example, upgrading to premium status for the RFID card provides ancillary revenue (10% of members paid for premium at launch ⁷). Each premium fee (C\$30) yields direct income and a physical card that can be linked to credit-card cashless payments in-arena (making future cross-selling easier).

Sponsorship Value & Partner Integration

- **New Sponsorship Inventory:** Club 1909 opened up innovative sponsor touchpoints. Existing partners like **Ford, Molson, Air Canada, Under Armour**, etc. have sponsored Club 1909 campaigns, allowing them to engage the program’s digital community. For example, Ford sponsored the fan chant contest (the “Go Habs Go” recording) ¹², while Air Canada and Cavendish Farms provided prizes in fan promotions ²⁸. Even sponsor logos and messages have appeared in the app and on Club 1909 microsites. By partnering on contests and rewards (e.g. Fly from Air Canada or Under Armour swag for top point-earners ²⁸ ¹¹), sponsors reach highly engaged fans who opt into the program.
- **Integrated Fan Rewards:** Many sponsor discounts are embedded as Club 1909 rewards. The Fan Appreciation scratch-card prizes (see above) included coupons for Bell, Molson, Under Armour, etc., tied to point-winning tickets ¹¹. This creates a seamless brand experience: fans associate these partner perks with their loyalty membership. For example, a Molson-sponsored prize might give Club 1909 points when fans buy a beer during a game. Although precise ROI figures are proprietary, executives say Club 1909 has “given Montreal a means for upsells with existing sponsors” ²⁹. In essence, the program enhances sponsorship value by delivering data and activation avenues (e.g. e-blasts to members about new Ford trucks or Molson beer releases).

Program Mechanics (Points, Rewards & Examples)

- **Point System:** Club 1909 uses a broad, democratic point scheme. As Gilmore emphasized, fans earn points *without* having to spend money – by *simply being fans* ¹⁷. Typical point-earning activities include: attending a game (scanning one’s card), purchasing merchandise/concessions, watching/streaming games (app tracking), playing web/mobile games, and engaging on social media ¹⁶ ². Points values vary: in practice, many non-purchase acts give more points than buying a ticket. (Exact point tables have evolved; modern examples include 10–15 pts per quiz or Predictor entry ¹⁸, 5–50 pts for daily app quizzes ¹⁹, etc.)

- **Rewards & Experiences:** Points can be redeemed for fixed-price rewards (team apparel, signed pucks, etc.) or entered into auctions. Unique “money-can’t-buy” experiences are a hallmark: e.g. members have won tickets to sit in premium sections with team executives, bench-pass experiences with owner Geoff Molson, or rink tours ⁴ ³⁰. The loyalty catalog also includes novelty items – even old Zamboni parts or benches – to appeal to super-fans. By mid-program, over 100 different rewards (from game-used gear to VIP passes) were listed in the Club 1909 store.
- **Club Tiers & Upgrades:** There are two tiers: Free and Premium. Premium members (initially ~10% of signups ⁷) receive a collectible RFID membership card (embedded with a piece of game-worn jersey) and extra perks (priority in prize draws, exclusive offers). Season-ticket holders get Premium for free ⁷. The club also introduced “gamification challenges” to reward on-ice performance: e.g. each shutout or hat trick yields bonus points to all members ³¹ ²³, increasing excitement during games. These mechanics keep fans watching and celebrating team success.

Conclusions

From launch to present, Club 1909 has established itself as a robust loyalty engine for the Canadiens. Within its first year it amassed a large global membership ⁶, and it continues to engage fans with diverse digital and live incentives. While it has not (and was never intended to) drive additional game attendance in an already sold-out market ⁸ ¹⁰, the program has created new revenue streams (premium fees, sponsor activations) and bolstered merchandise sales through personalized marketing ⁸ ¹². Crucially, it delivers rich fan data: every interaction in Club 1909 informs the Canadiens’ CRM, enabling highly targeted marketing. In the words of the team’s leadership, Club 1909 “ushers the team into the digital world”, transforming passive fandom into active engagement. Independent observers note that the program follows best practices in sports loyalty marketing, leveraging points and exclusive rewards to cement fan loyalty ³² ³³. As a case study, the Canadiens’ Club 1909 demonstrates how a heritage franchise can monetize and mobilize a global fan base through a modern loyalty platform.

Sources: Official Canadiens communications and media reports ⁶ ⁸ ¹⁷ ⁴ (SportsBusinessJournal, Global News, ESPN, The Hockey Writers, etc.) describe membership results, program features and executive commentary, which form the basis of this analysis. (Full citations in text.)

1 Canadiens' Marketing Effort Includes New Club For Fans

<https://www.sportsbusinessjournal.com/Daily/Morning-Buzz/2014/10/15/Habs/>

2 4 24 Montreal Canadiens launch 'Club 1909' global fan program - Montreal | Globalnews.ca

<https://globalnews.ca/news/1617919/montreal-canadiens-launch-club-1909-global-fan-program/>

3 14 17 25 26 Canadiens rewarding fans, building brand - ESPN - Cross Checks Blog- ESPN

https://www.espn.com/blog/nhl/post/_id/32859/canadiens-rewarding-fans-building-brand

5 6 7 8 10 12 13 16 29 30 Canadiens' Club 1909 rewards fans around the globe

<https://www.sportsbusinessjournal.com/Journal/Issues/2015/04/20/Franchises/Canadiens/>

9 15 27 32 NHL Loyalty Programs Reward Fans & Drive Data Collection - The Hockey Writers - The Business of Hockey - NHL News, Analysis & More

<https://thehockeywriters.com/nhl-loyalty-programs-rewards-data-collection/>

11 28 Fan Appreciation Week is back | Montréal Canadiens

<https://www.nhl.com/canadiens/news/fan-appreciation-week-is-back-apr-9>

18 19 20 21 22 23 31 Points & Rewards - Club 1909

<https://www.club1909.com/points-rewards>

33 Top 10 loyalty programs for sports clubs

<https://www.openloyalty.io/insider/top-10-loyalty-programs-for-sports-clubs>