

LOYALTY UNPACKED

by the NORTH AMERICAN LOYALTY ASSOCIATION





THE BRAND

McDonald's is the world's largest hamburger restaurant chain and an American icon recognized across the globe, with nearly 46,000 restaurants in about 100 countries, roughly 95% of them franchised. Home of the Big Mac, the Golden Arches were built on one promise held constant for seven decades: the same food, served fast, everywhere.



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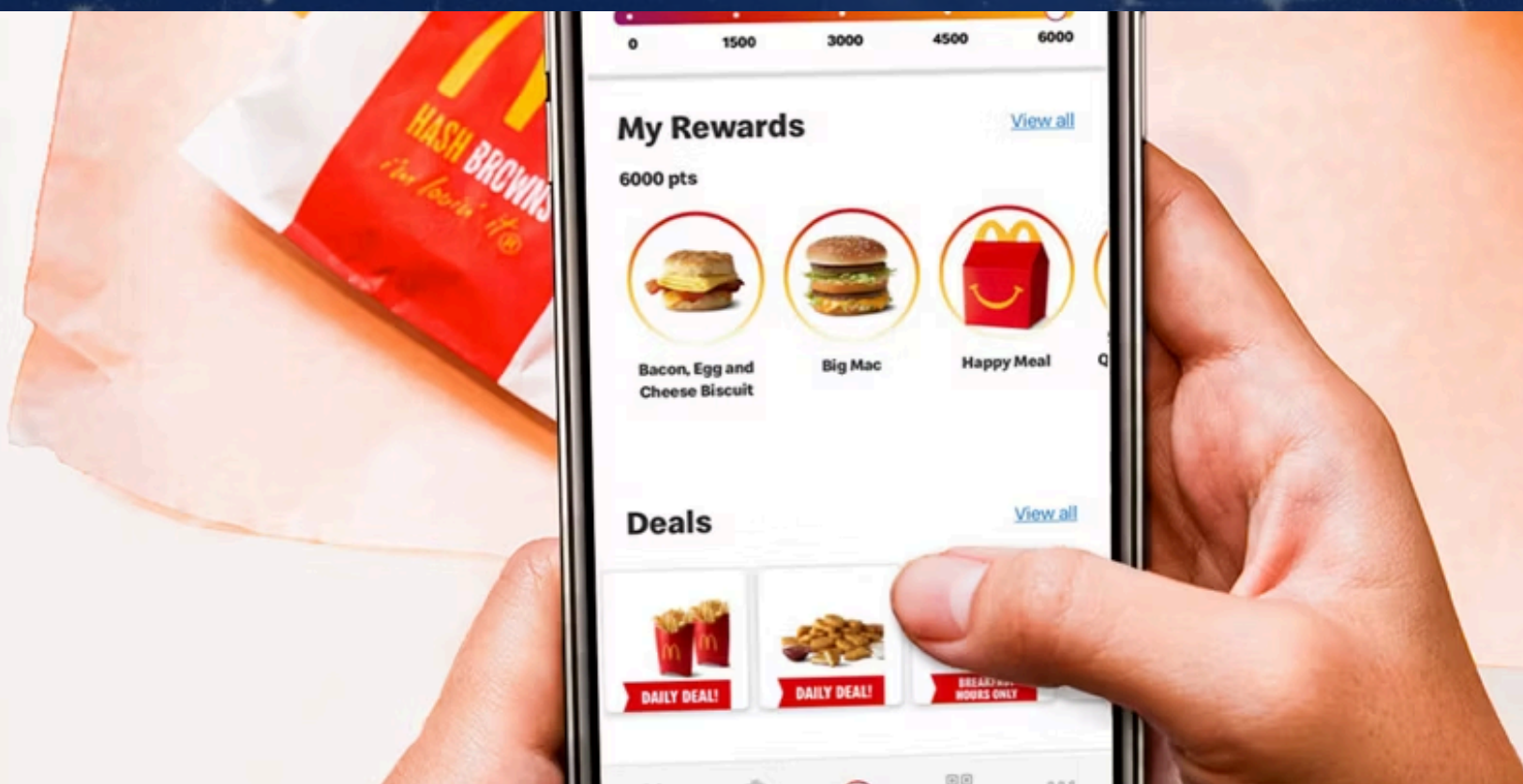
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THE PROGRAM

MyMcDonald's Rewards is a free, app-based program, launched in the US in July 2021:

- 100 points per \$1 on eligible purchases, earned in the app or by scanning a member code at the counter, kiosk, or drive-thru
- Flat structure: no tiers and no paid membership
- Free menu items across reward levels from 1,500 to 7,000 points, plus a 4,000-point option for \$3 off an order
- One reward per order
- Points expire six months after they are earned
- Personalized offers, weekly app deals, and campaigns like the Monopoly game layer bonus points on top



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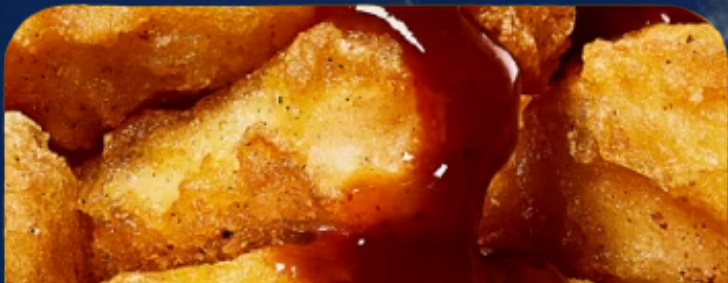
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THE NUMBER

210
million

90-day active users



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THE IMPACT



US members visit 26 times a year after joining, up from 10.5 before.

Loyalty members spent nearly \$37 billion across 70 markets in 2025, more than a quarter of everything the system sells.

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THE BIG IDEA



Everything serves the next visit.

Every mechanic points at the same clock. The first reward is reachable within a handful of visits, points expire six months after they are earned, weekly deals build a ritual, and personalized offers arrive timed to bring the member back before the habit cools. Scale is the byproduct. The shorter gap between visits is the point.

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THE NALA™ INSIGHT

The entire program is designed around **one metric**

McDonald's does not report how many people have ever signed up. It reports 90-day active users, attaches a dollar figure to them, and publishes targets for both. Its CFO calls active loyalty membership the company's single most important digital metric.

That choice of scoreboard explains the design. **When the number that matters resets every 90 days, generosity moves from the size of the reward to the rhythm of the visit:** quick first redemptions, tight expiry, weekly rituals. It also keeps the count honest, since a lapsed member drops out of the number instead of padding it. A practice that more brands should follow.



OUR CHALLENGE

The frequency lift is measured after members self-select in. How much of those **26 visits** did the program create, and how much did it simply enroll?

In May 2026 the US program raised most reward levels by roughly 500 points, its first **broad devaluation**. A habit built on generous math now gets tested on thinner math.

Roughly half of US guests still sit outside the app, the loyalty program, and the value platform. The easy half is converted; the anonymous half is the expensive one.

Loyalty growth rode on aggressive value offers largely funded by franchisees. If operators pull back, does the **visit rhythm hold?**



THE BIG QUESTION

“If you changed the single metric your loyalty program is judged on, how much of its design would survive?”

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JOIN US

NALA™ is a community for people doing the real work of loyalty, CRM and customer engagement inside brands and retailers.

We create space for real brand stories like this, open debate, practical exchange and celebrate success.



Meet us at **The BIG Handshake Loyalty™**
event in Chicago on November 10
[Get your tickets here](#)

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