



Bringing AIR MILES' Partners Closer to their Customers Through Personalized CRM, AI-powered Insights and Intuitive Analytics: **In Conversation with President and CEO Blair Cameron**

"AIR MILES data set is unparalleled. Leveraging our unique insights as part of the AIR MILES Coalition, our Partners are provided with an unmatched understanding of consumer behavior – generating valuable ROI on every marketing dollar spent."

The AIR MILES Reward Program is Canada's most recognized loyalty program, with nearly 11 million active Collectors, representing approximately two-thirds of all Canadian households. As part of the program, AIR MILES Collectors get Miles at more than 300 leading Canadian, global and online brands with thousands of retail and service locations across the country, and use them for Rewards ranging from instant discounts in-store to flights, travel, merchandise and unique experiences.

Blair Cameron, President and CEO, AIR MILES Reward Program, spoke exclusively to The Silicon Review. Below is an excerpt.

Tell us about the AIR MILES Reward Program.

The AIR MILES Reward Program brings brands closer to their customers by creating more personalized and profitable one-to-one relationships. With more than 28 years of experience, we have a proven track record of driving long-term loyalty. Today, over 1,000 AIR MILES Collector cards are swiped or scanned every minute of

every day, and the Program issues a reward every two seconds. No other Coalition loyalty program in Canada has the impact of AIR MILES, and we continue to develop new and convenient ways to deliver on our promise of rewarding our nearly 11 million Collectors every day.

But beyond our dedication to Collectors is our best-in-class, leading data management platform. It is built on more than 20,000 unique customer attributes and actioned through a suite of digital capabilities that allows for a seamless connection – from understanding customers' needs to influencing their behavior. This combination of data, insight and ability to action in real-time across all our channels, ensures we deliver on our Partners' business goals.

How do you distinguish your services/standout from the rest?

Our Coalition's extensive reach is second to none. While others in the industry are just now trying to move toward a coalition model, we already have scale, and it is this scale that creates powerful data.

Our world-class partnership network is comprised of over 300 global, national and e-commerce brands, giving us the ability to

provide valuable, comprehensive insights to our Partners. Using these insights, our team derives relevant, valuable offers for our Partners' customers, allowing for richer, more personalized one-to-one experiences. It is these offers to reward that act as motivators for our Partner's customers, driven by the common AIR MILES currency, with Rewards ranging from instant discounts, to attainable and aspirational flight, travel, and experiences, as well as broad, ever evolving merchandise offerings

Adding to the variety and flexibility of AIR MILES' offering is the Program's practicality. In fact, 80 percent of household discretionary spending is covered within our Coalition of over 300 brands. By connecting the Coalition and Collectors through one card, we enable a single view of our Partners' customers, linked to robust data collection and analysis, as well as cross-channel identification. This reach creates a world-class data and analytics platform that drives personalization through traditional and AI-powered marketing tools.

But most importantly, we are not a one-size-fits-all program. We have several different ways in which we Partner with brands. Working collaboratively with our Partners to identify the objective that is



The Leader at the Helm of the AIR MILES Reward Program

As **President and CEO, Blair Cameron** oversees the strategy and operations for the AIR MILES Reward Program, Canada's most recognized loyalty program. Drawing on his 25 years of retail experience, Blair and his team use AIR MILES' world-class data, analytics, and marketing capabilities to help bring over 300 global, national, and e-commerce brands closer to their customers.

Before joining the AIR MILES organization, Blair held senior-level marketing and merchandising roles at Canada's largest specialty apparel retailer and one of Canada's leading grocery chains.

Blair Cameron, President & CEO

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With more than 28 years of experience, we have a proven track record of driving long-term loyalty through world-class data and analytics platforms that fuel AI-powered personalization at scale.

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most important for them, we apply our flexible solutions to co-create loyalty strategies that address their business goals – from marketing campaigns to product assortment, merchandising and growth strategies.

How do you lead through data and AI innovation?

We are extremely proud of our Program's world-class data set. By leveraging unique insights through the AIR MILES Coalition, our Partners are provided with an unmatched understanding of consumer behavior generating valuable ROI on every marketing dollar spent. We lead with our specialized data science, digital analytics, location intelligence and market research to provide our Partners with a 360-degree view of Collectors' purchasing habits and patterns. This is further augmented by our predictive modelling, innovative analytics and deeper insights, which set us apart and bring our Partners closer to their customers.

SMOKEY™ and PRECISION™ are two of our advanced machine learning tools that we launched in 2020. SMOKEY™ is our one-to-one CRM personalization platform that uses machine learning to maximize ROI by deploying ongoing marketing messages customized to a Collector's current level of engagement and growth potential. PRECISION™ is our AI-powered recommendation engine that mines individual-level purchase data to deliver personalized offers on products that Collectors already love, as well as on new products that they might be interested in buying. The combination of these two cutting-edge programs

strengthens our promise to deliver data-driven insights and tools for more innovative, technological solutions for our Partners' everyday challenges.

Trust is a difficult attribute to measure and a delicate dynamic to maintain.

How do you maintain this with your Collectors and Partners?

AIR MILES has always been rooted in the idea that all Canadians – not just frequent fliers or affluent credit cardholders – should get rewarded for their loyalty, every day.

We have always been a permission-based, opt-in program and respect our Collectors' rights for privacy. We remain committed to providing Collectors and Partners with transparency and communication in how data is captured and used.

We understand that strong data security is critical to protecting that trust and reputation between us, Partners and their customers. With more than 20,000 customer attributes and a suite of digital capabilities, establishing secure security measures across our business is the utmost priority. To remain accountable, we regularly conduct internal reviews and have third-party organizations audit our security systems.

What is your approach to creating meaningful collector experiences?

We focus on three areas to ensure our Collectors get the most value out of the program: keep it simple, relevant and valuable. Beyond that, we believe in creating engaging experiences across the Collector

journey— including in-store with front line associates, across multiple digital channels – both AIR MILES and with our Partners, and throughout the redemption experience.

Most importantly, we have a broad range of Rewards and offers and use our world-class data and AI-powered marketing to deliver the best and most relevant offer to send to the right Collector, at the right time, through the right channel.

Do you have any new services/capabilities ready to be launched? What can we expect from the AIR MILES Reward Program in 2021?

Among all our upcoming developments, we're very excited to expand our AI-powered capabilities, enabling more robust personalization at scale and deployed across channels. We are focusing on our Partner-supporting capabilities: SMOKEY™, to improve engagement with our Partners' customers, resulting in optimal ROI; and PRECISION™ enables Partners to put the right products in front of their most valuable customers, leading to increased profitability and a stronger bottom line.

We are continuing to expand and innovate the rewards experience, focusing on the experiences of both our Collectors and Partners, moving from time-driven campaigns to always-on communications using data and digital gamification-type experiences to drive 'next best action'.

With several other exciting initiatives launching in the coming months, AIR MILES is one to watch in 2021.

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