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Virgin's new Myer offer: what your points can buy

Virgin Australia has inked a new deal with Myer, and is coming after Qantas's frequent flyers with a cheeky new campaign.

David Mills Unfollow
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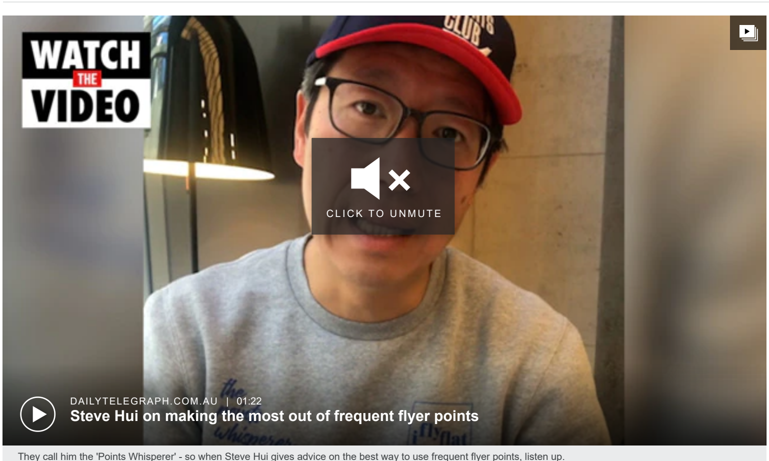

They call him the 'Points Whisperer' - so when Steve Hui gives advice on the best way to use frequent flyer points, listen up.

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Virgin Australia is coming for Qantas, launching an aggressive new campaign to convince loyal customers of the flying kangaroo to "hop on over", and announcing a new points partnership with Myer.

On Tuesday, Virgin Australia will launch its cheekily-named Switch-A-Roo campaign, enabling gold and platinum-status members of competing frequent flyer programs to join its own Velocity program for a trial period.

Virgin will also announce a new partnership with Myer, enabling Velocity members to spend their points on 200,000 products available through the retailer's online store.

The moves come as market leader Qantas suffers through a sustained period of PR turbulence, with once-loyal customers taking to social media to share horror stories of cancelled flights and lost luggage. In a tweet last week, Qantas said its performance in August "improved strongly" and they were "working hard to improve our service to customers".

Myer ambassador Kris Smith and Virgin staff celebrate a new deal by which Velocity members will be able to use their points to purchase products through myer.com.au. Picture: Carly Ravenhall

Velocity Frequent Flyer CEO Nick Rohrlach said performance issues had been affecting the entire sector, but Virgin was confident in its customer offering and were keen for flyers to try them out.

"In August we've had about 98 per cent of our flights completed, and an on-time performance of about 70 per cent, so that's an significant step up from July, and we've certainly led the field the last few months," Mr Rohrlach said.

He laughed off suggestions Virgin was going to war against Qantas, but said the airline had been rebuilding since it emerged from administration in November 2020.

Geoff Ikin, Myer Chief Customer Officer. Picture: supplied

Velocity CEO Nick Rohrlach. Picture: Britta Campion

While the airline has previously offered incentives for flyers to switch over from other loyalty schemes, the Switch-A-Roo campaign is the first to entice gold and platinum status flyers with the prospect of being fast-tracked into permanent membership with Velocity.

Gold members who book 80 status credits worth of flights within the trial period (about two Sydney-Melbourne return trips) will be fast-tracked into permanent gold Velocity status, and platinum members will have their permanent status matched if they book the equivalent of 200 status credits worth of flying.

"It gives people instant fulfilment but also gives people the opportunity to be fast tracked into permanent membership," Mr Rohrlach said.

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The deal with Myer will also offer instant fulfilment, with some 200,000 products available for redemption for Velocity members from Tuesday.

VIRGIN/MYER DEAL: WHAT YOUR POINTS WILL BUY

15,000 Velocity Points or less:
Estee Lauder Double Wear Stay in Place Makeup SPF10 Foundation – 12,621 Velocity Points
Berlei Barely There T-Shirt Bra in Beige – 13,583 Velocity Points

30,000 Velocity Points or less:
Converse Chuck Taylor All Star Black Canvas High Top Sneaker – 23,300 Velocity Points
Lego Ideas Seinfeld – 25,241 Velocity Points

40,000 Velocity Points or less:
Clarins Double Serum 50ml – 31,068 Velocity Points
Tommy Hilfiger Essential Leather Trainers – 32,819 Velocity Point
DIOR Sauvage Eud De Parfum 100ml – 37,670 Velocity Points

70,000 Velocity Points or less:
Bose QuietComfort Earbuds Triple Black – 63,689 Velocity Points
Lego Boutique Hotel – 67,767 Velocity Points

100,000 Velocity Points or less:
Philips Premium XXL Airfryer Black – 96,893 Velocity Points

200,000 Velocity Points or less:
GreenPan Padova 7 (10) pc Cookware Set with Bonus Protective Sheets in Charcoal Grey – 135,913 Velocity Points
Breville The Barista Express Coffee Machine Stainless Steel – 193,981 Velocity Points

Myer Chief Customer Officer Geoff Ikin said the "marquee partnership" with Virgin was an extension of the successful Commbank "Pay with Points" program and its own loyalty program, Myer One.

"(The Velocity deal) is an innovative way for Myer to engage with new and existing

customers to drive further growth, revenue and acquisition," he said.

While the Myer Velocity program will initially only be available through the retailer's online store, Mr Ikin said he anticipated it would be extended to bricks and mortar stores in future.

As usual, the points value for products is less than for flights. A one way economy ticket between Sydney and Melbourne currently costs 7800 points, while a Berlei Barely There T-Shirt Bra through myer.com.au will cost 13,583 points.

Mr Rohrlach said customers "can do their own research", but it was all about choice.

"What we've noticed is that different customers care about different types of rewards," he said. "Those who really want those flight options go that way, whereas this gives people, especially with a smaller balance … something at a lower number of points as an option."

Frequent flyer expert Steve Hui. Picture: Tim Hunter

Frequent flyer program expert Steve Hui from the website iflyflat.com.au said the best value for points remained a Business Class seat, but "points are the new currency" and the Myer deal could help some people with cost of living pressures.

Regarding the "Switch-A-Roo" campaign, Mr Hui said for any airline, retaining customers was all about performance.

"If Virgin wants to hang onto these Qantas flyers, they will need to excel in all the 'pain points' such as on-time flights, less cancellations and reliable baggage," he said.

"All travellers really value just one thing – that their travel plans are not stuffed up."

Originally published as Virgin's new Myer offer: what your points can buy

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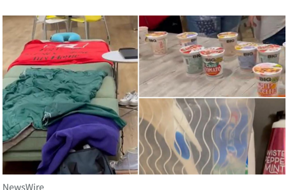
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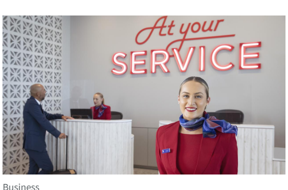

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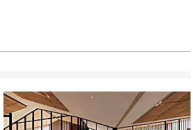

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