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COLLECTIVE CONSUMER INCENTIVE SYSTEM

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COLLECTIVE CONSUMER INCENTIVE SYSTEM

ABSTRACT

A system and process for creating a network of businesses to collectively grant and manage consumer incentives are disclosed. The system allows collaboration and management of joint promotion campaigns between business entities through the Web and mobile technology platforms. The system manages incentives for businesses, their networks and customers. It allows customers to search, find businesses and network with other customers. The customers can view and use incentives that are available to them. The system combines a social network concept for business with customer deals and incentives. It has the advantage of increased customer outreach through cross traffic and referrals between businesses in a network and increased efficiency with lowered cost in launching and managing a promotional campaign.

BACKGROUND

An incentive is a predefined distribution agreement shared between two business entities. Collaborative management of joint promotion campaigns between business entities through online platforms can be beneficial to both entities as well as to consumers. Such a collective consumer incentive system could also be cost-effective and efficient. The current disclosure describes a system for creating a network of businesses to grant and manage consumer incentives collectively.

DESCRIPTION

This disclosure presents a system and process for creating a network of businesses to collectively grant and manage consumer incentives. The system allows collaboration and management of joint promotion campaigns between business entities through the internet and

mobile technology platforms. FIG. 1 shows a schematic of a collective consumer incentive system.

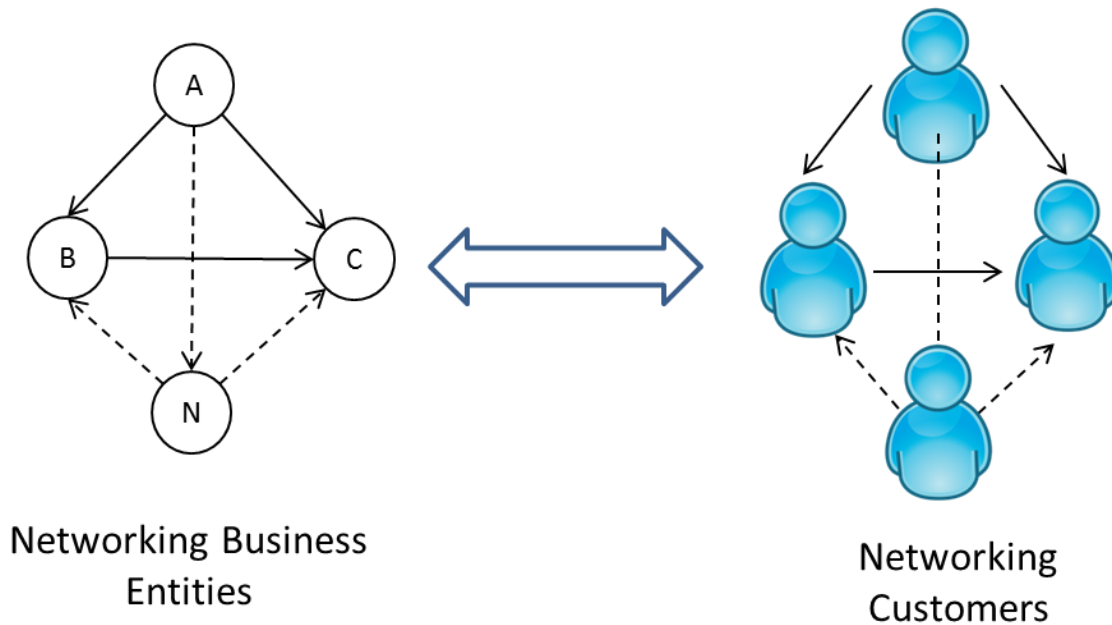


FIG. 1: Schematic of a collective consumer incentive system

The system enables a business entity to create a profile for the business and to create/join a network with other business entities in order to create and share customer discounts, coupons and other incentives amongst network members. The system manages incentives for businesses, their networks and customers. It also allows the customers to search, find businesses and networks. The customers can view and use incentives that are available to them.

For a business entity, the process, as illustrated in FIG. 2A, involves as a first step, creating a business profile specifying the business products, service line of business, location and other attributes of the business. Using these profiles, a network is then created by searching and finding other businesses and requesting them to join the network. A campaign for providing incentives to their customers is then started and requests are sent for other businesses to join the campaign.

The requests are sent to other business entities that choose to either accept or reject such requests. By joining or creating a campaign, the business entity agrees to the terms and conditions of providing a shared incentive with other network partners and to customers of their network.

For example, if a business entity A provides an incentive of \$25 and has a network partner business entity B who has agreed to add an incentive of \$5, then a customer who goes to A gets a credit worth of \$25 and also gets an additional \$5 if it is redeemed at B. However, the customer could choose not to redeem the credit with B and receive only \$25. The choice always remains with the customer.

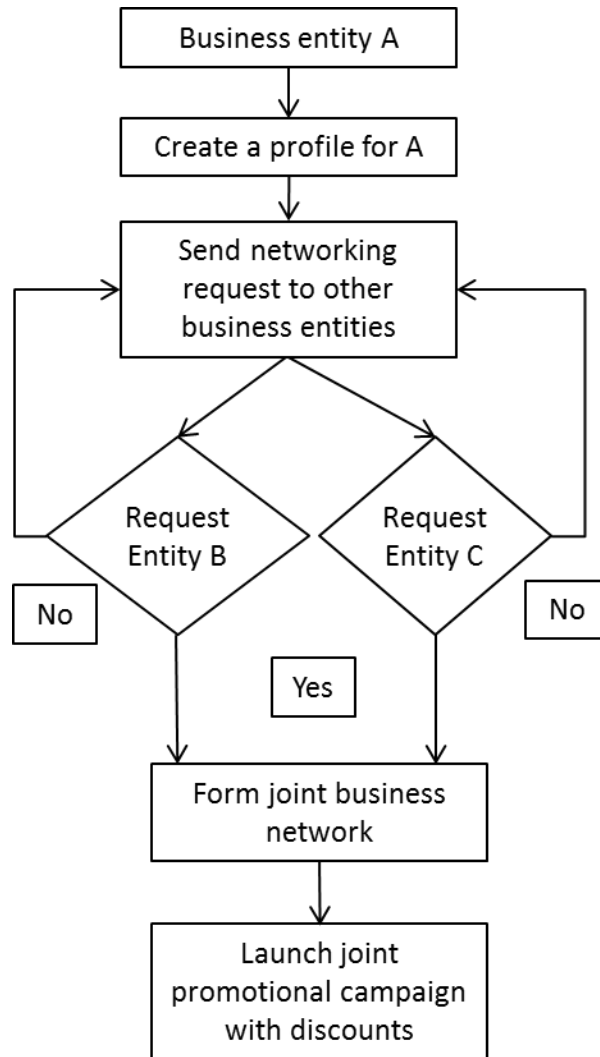


FIG. 2A: Networking of businesses in a collective customer incentive system

The system provides recommendations to business entities for potential network alliance with other business entities based on business profile, location, customer profile and behavior of businesses. The system also provides a dashboard that allows each business entity to monitor and manage customer activity and requests sent/received from other business entities in their network. It enables the redeeming business entity to update the incentive of a particular customer. For instance, if a customer cannot redeem at any of the network partners or if the sufficient time for redeeming an incentive has passed, then the system provides for

redeeming out of the network. The system also provides capability for a business entity to activate or deactivate its profile and to remove other businesses from the network.

For a customer entity, the system works by creating a customer profile through the web or a mobile application or using existing online profile on some other systems that provide a means for user authentication. As illustrated in FIG. 2B, after creating a profile, the customer visits business entities that are part of the system. The business entity in turn provides credits to the customers for their activity and transactions. This credit is added to the customer's profile and the system provides the customers the capability to view their activity and credit availability across all the available business entities.

The customer can redeem all or part of the credit at the selected choice of business entity by providing electronic or physical proof of available credit. The system also provides capability for customers to search business entities and view their credit availability and other data attributes of the business. The system allows customers to invite others to join the system and transfer their credit to their contacts. Additionally, the system also provides for customers to dispute a particular transaction.

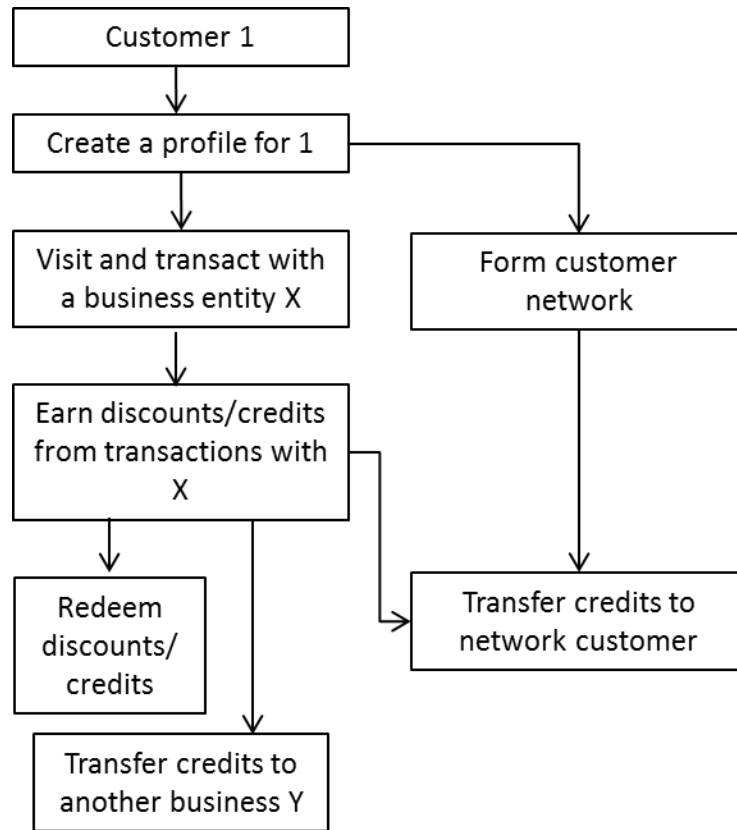


FIG. 2B: Customer activity in a collective customer incentive system

The system combines a social network concept for business with customer deals or discounting. The system has the advantage of increased customer outreach through cross traffic and referrals between businesses in a network and increased efficiency with lowered cost in launching and managing a promotional campaign.