

Reinventing Sales Incentives

How personalized experiences increase motivation for your most valuable reps



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SECTION 1

01 **The modern sales team:
It's time to rethink our
“tried and true” methods**

An abstract graphic on the right side of the page, consisting of multiple overlapping, nested triangles pointing upwards. The triangles are rendered in two shades of orange: a lighter, cream-colored shade and a darker, more saturated orange shade. The overall effect is a sense of depth and geometric complexity, resembling a stylized mountain range or a series of stacked layers.

The modern sales team: It's time to rethink our "tried and true" methods for motivation

A robust and high-performing sales team is the heartbeat of your growing company, bringing in enthusiasm, energy, and—if things are going well—revenue. So **how do you motivate these critical members of your team?** Typically through the status quo: commissions and bonus incentives in the form of cash or gift cards.

You're not alone, **40% of American companies¹ rely on these types of payouts.** Whether it's a cash bonus for team members who hit their quota, a reward for those who go above and beyond their target numbers, or part of a compensation package that's intended to attract top performers, the financial incentive is as prevalent as the branded backpack or ping pong table (yawn).

In 2010, American companies devoted **\$200 billion¹ to large, short-term incentives (LSTIs)**, a lot of money invested which **returned marginal impact.**

American companies devoted \$200B¹ to large, short-term incentives.



This “tried and true” approach is unfortunately falling flat. We see that the **average turnover rate for salespeople is about 3X higher²** than for employees in other industries. Why, exactly? It all comes back to confusing or ineffective incentive compensation structures and a lack of authentic, personalized recognition for their work.

We know the status quo is unsatisfactory.

But what’s the alternative?

To increase the intrinsic motivation and retention of our sales reps, we’ll need to:

- Rethink sales incentives and SPIFFs to make them more **exciting, personalized, and shareable.**
- Make incentives more inclusive, creating the opportunity to motivate 100% of your team, **not just the top 5-10%**
- Turn the traditional **President’s Club model upside down**, finding a more relevant way to motivate our top performers

02 **The problem with cash -only SPIFFs**



Cash is no longer the only option.

Many sales leaders mistakenly think reps just want the money, but then struggle to retain top talent. Cash is the necessary foundation, but you're building an entire house. You'll want to supplement your high-priority initiatives with unique rewards that offer additional value beyond cash, in order to generate the activity you need to hit your goals.

Let's chat through a few reasons why money alone doesn't motivate as much as you might think.

1

Lack of personalization

Catharine Parsons, International Operations Director at Uwin Incentives consulting group nailed it when she said: "The overwhelming quantitative and qualitative research we have gives us empirical evidence that **freedom of choice of reward always, always lends itself to higher ROI** for sales teams."

So how do we provide personalization? A recent IRF Report recommends "effective rewards that appeal to people on as close to an individual basis as possible."

2

Diminishing returns

Your top reps are already swimming in OTE, so we often reach a point of diminishing returns where **more money won't really motivate them to hit stretch goals** (typically once reps crest six figures annually). Even those \$1,000 carrots start to feel like a drop in the bucket.

The same IRF report shares, "The more people earn, the greater their preference for tangible non-cash rewards, especially experiences, including travel and merchandise they wouldn't normally buy for themselves."

Cash is no longer the only option (continued).

3

Preference reversal bias

There's new data around the idea of **"preference reversal"**: the thought that sales reps tell themselves they prefer cash as a bonus but in reality gain more value from a non-cash or experiential reward¹.

Sales people are competitive and their OTE reflects their personal brand and value. But at the end of the day, does cash actually generate more happiness, or more motivation to perform?

4

Short-term impact

A **cash incentive feels transactional**, and oftentimes isn't actually spent on the things we value the most. It goes to pay bills, shrink down our loans, or to buy more stuff from Amazon.

While these actions can create some short-term feelings of happiness, they're fleeting, and don't create lasting memories nor inspire long-term behavior change.

5

Changing salesforce demographics

By 2020, **46% of the workforce will be millennials**. Do you know what motivates them? These sales folks are way different than your old-school, hard closer types and an effective sales incentives program requires a fine balance between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation strategies to keep them interested and engaged.

Rewards that used to bode well for Boomer employees (mahogany desk clocks, a Rolex or time on the golf course) are no longer rewards worth coveting in a millennial-driven, digital age.

The solution?

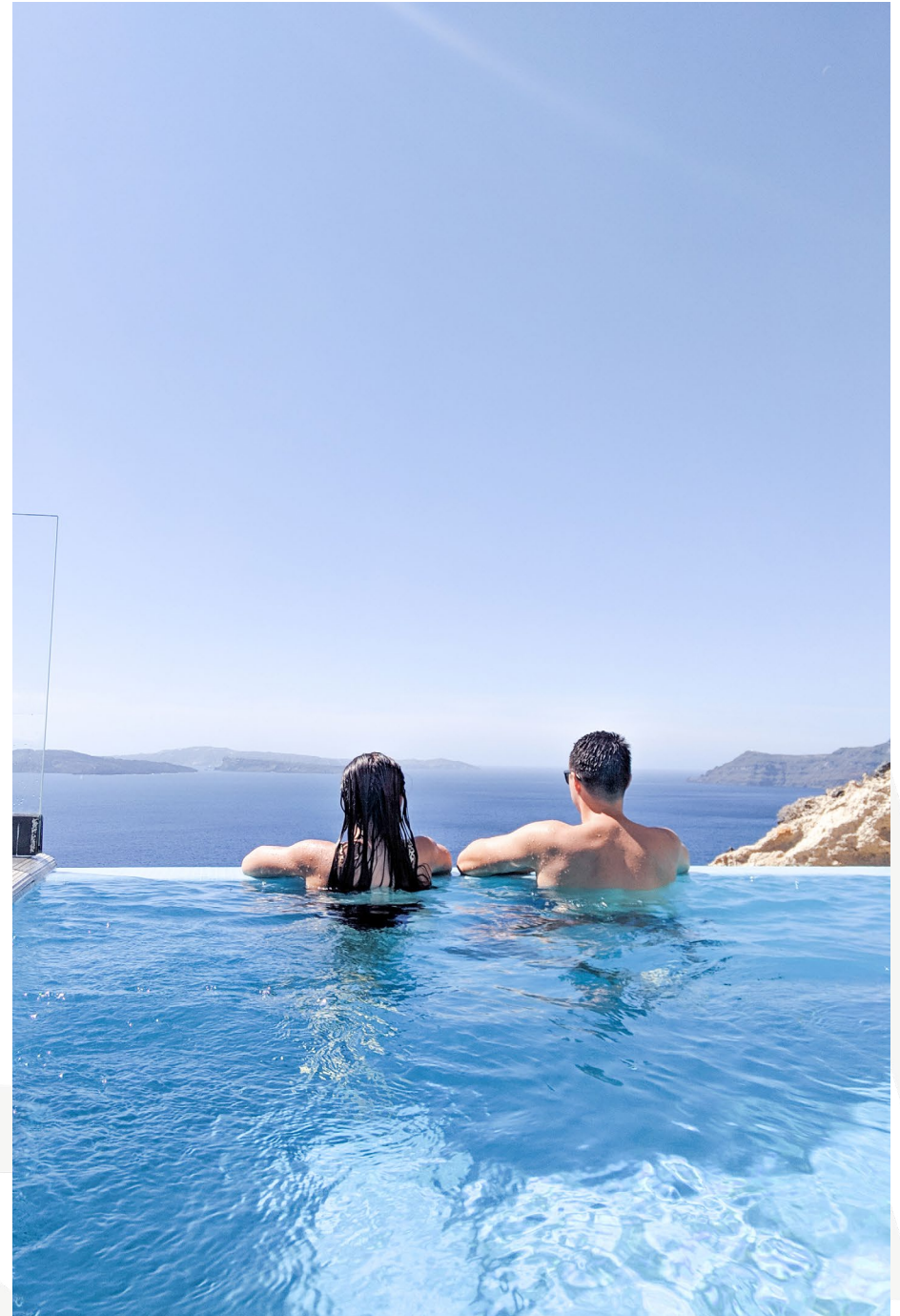
You need to introduce **non-cash rewards** that are detached from hard cash values (i.e. a less clear or obvious perceived value). Alternatives include bucket list-worthy trips or activities, exposure to senior leadership, coaching or L&D opportunities that can be highly motivating and boost feelings of appreciation and goodwill towards your company.

Additionally, experiential, non-cash rewards emphasize work/life balance and can be shared with the people they love (often those same people they neglect because they're busy working so hard).



Meet Blueboard's SPIFFx

Tap into the power of a hand-curated menu of personalized experiential rewards delivered at scale in your monthly, quarterly and annual SPIFF programs.





Imagine this...

You're a new Director of Sales Ops who has been tasked with motivating a mostly millennial sales team. After some research, you find Blueboard, an experiential reward platform. You sign up for SPIFFx, a program that lets your sales managers offer experiential SPIFFs to their sales people and the reps are pumped they get to choose **exactly what they want**.

Soon, John, one of your rising AEs, is jumping out of a plane at 13,000 feet. Jen, your rockstar Account Manager is getting a couples massage with her partner, and Tara, your GSD sales engineer takes her friends on a foodie tour in Austin. You've empowered your people to choose what's most meaningful to them - without having to guess what they want, or having to do any of the work to execute.

[Schedule time to learn more](#) about Blueboard's SPIFFx

"Our team's really young, but our methods and reward systems were old-fashioned. Doing the same old thing (cash bonuses) wasn't going to make an impact."

- Lauren H.

Head of Commercial for the Tissue Diagnostics Franchise



03 **The problem with sales incentive trips**



More loathed than loved?

The traditional sales incentive trip for top performers (President's Club, Winner's Circle, etc.) represents an important part of your motivation strategy, but is sorely due for a refresh in order to better engage today's modern salesforce.

A few reasons why we need to flip the traditional program on its head:

1

Limited to a small number of reps

The standard President's Club is limiting, unfortunately **only motivating tenured, top-tier reps**. This results in a lost opportunity for every sales rep and function to be included and motivated to earn their share of the same coveted opportunity.

2

The same destination on repeat

Generally trips are **planned for the same destination**, or a similar type of destination each year (i.e. beach vacation on beach vacation). This may not appeal to employees who are hungry for new experiences, or who want to cross different destinations off of their own bucket list (or their significant other's).



3

Craving some alone time

We already spend the majority of our waking time at work, so reps (especially your hardest working ones) **would rather spend their free time with family or friends.** Even when spouses are invited, they too might have to take PTO, arrange child care, and often dread spending their coveted vacation time with people they barely know.

Instead, give top performers the opportunity to travel with those they love and really embrace the benefits of an earned experience v.s. another work trip where they have to constantly be “on”.

4

Challenging (and stressful) to execute

Let’s be honest, sales incentive trips are a beast to plan. Expectations from you team are high, which translates into **a lot of stress, time and energy.** Large companies often employ full teams or contractors to run the show, and for small to medium-sized businesses, planning a President’s Club trip becomes an extracurricular activity “voluntold” to teammates that eats away time otherwise spent of their core job function (driving revenue).

The solution?

You might be strapped for time and resources, or might just feel like the typical sales incentive trip no longer aligns with your changing sales culture. We're exciting to introduce **President's Club as a Service**, a completely customizable experience for your top performers.



President's Club as a Service

Tap into the power of a hand-curated menu of personalized, bucket list-worthy luxury trips and experiences serviced at scale through Blueboard's celebrated Concierge team.



President's Club as a Service, served two ways



Choose a shared team destination, they choose the activities

Choose a single, shared destination and dates for the team from our travel menu, but let our Concierge team work 1:1 with employees to fill up their calendars with **their favorite activities** (from a day of paddle boarding in the sea to a pampering at the spa). We'll also take care of their hotel, airfare, and other travel logistics.



Cross off a bucket list trip

Let reps travel solo and choose from our **menu of curated, bucket list trips** and travel on their own time and schedule with the friends and family they love. They choose their favorite from over 30 choices, and work 1:1 with our Concierge team to plan all the logistics, itinerary and on-site activities. This takes the burden off you and helps ensure that everyone gets an experience they're excited about.



Imagine this...

Your top reps are really excited they made President's Club this year. Why? Instead of going to the same resort in Hawaii with their coworkers, they get to choose a bucket list trip from Blueboard. **Finding exactly what they want**, Jeff takes his spouse on a romantic getaway to Bali, Jen takes her family to Disney Aulani to introduce her son to Mickey (earning Mom of the year), and Tara goes with friends to chase the Northern Lights in Iceland. You empowered your top sales performers to choose what's most meaningful to them and didn't have to coordinate any of the work yourself.

[Schedule time to learn more](#) about Blueboard's President's Club as a Service

"What an amazing trip! My wife and I just got back from Turks and Caicos, and we are so grateful to have had the opportunity to experience this bucket list adventure! It was a trip of firsts: first time snorkeling for my wife, first time away from the kids on vacation, first time seeing sea turtles...the list goes on and on, it was wonderful! We had so much fun, and came back relaxed and full of gratitude. Thank you again for this generous gift!"

— Nicholas B.
Solution Engineer


salesforce.org

O4 **Planning the right experiential incentives budget of all shapes and sizes**





For your monthly SPIFF incentives: Ivory, White Gold, and Indigo rewards

Monthly rewards like playing 18 holes at their favorite course or outdoor rock climbing are just two great examples of the hand-curated, local activities and adventures in our entry reward levels. Most experiences include the employee and a guest(s), and start at just \$150 per experience.



For your quarterly SPIFF incentives: Tiburon and Emerald rewards

Recognize your top reps for hitting above and beyond quarterly goals with once in a lifetime adventures like learning to skydive, Michelin star dining, learning a foreign language, or sitting VIP to cheer on their favorite sports team. Our mid-level adventures offer surprise and delight opportunities to challenge their comfort zones, indulge in a passion or try something new, and start at \$1,000 per reward.



Planning the right experiential incentives budget

So you're bought into the idea of experiential sales incentives and SPIFFs, but not sure how to *buy in* to Blueboard rewards?

Let's walk through our recommendations for which Blueboard reward levels to assign for which achievements, given standard incentive campaign types. This will help set you up for success for planning and broader budgeting conversations.



For your annual incentives or “President’s Club”: Emerald, Ruby, Aviator, and Iconic rewards

Celebrate your top performers’ achievements and inspire the whole team by sending them on bucket list-worthy travel experiences. Choose from domestic trips like getting PADI-certified in Key West or exploring beautiful, wild Banff at the Emerald level, or at the Ruby level and beyond, a menu of international destinations like tomato-throwing festivals in Valencia, Spain or getting up close and personal with a lion pride on an African safari.

Reps are also welcome to “build their own experience”, working 1:1 with Concierge to execute the trip of their dreams against the allocated budget (Blueboard travel experiences starting at \$2,500 per reward).



05 **What success looks like with Blueboard experiential SPIFFs**



Cell Marque

Heading into Q4, sales leadership at Cell Marque (a life sciences subsidiary of Merck) needed a boost to motivate their team to hit their annual sales goal. Cell Marque partnered with Blueboard and Ambition to host a fantasy football-themed sales contest where reps faced off against each other weekly in an bracket-style competition. By the end of the contest, **sales activity was through the roof**, champions were crowned, and most importantly, Cell Marque exceeded their annual revenue goals.

By motivating reps with Blueboard's experiential incentives, Cell Marque saw:

- A surge in sales activity, with reps averaging **110 emails and 50 calls per day** during contest period.
- Achievement of their annual revenue goal of +\$30M

[Read the Cell Marque case study](#)



"One of the things I love about Blueboard and the way the rewards are set up is that it's not really about \$X dollar value, it's about getting the reward that's most valuable to you."

— Lauren H.

Head of Commercial for the Tissue Diagnostics Franchise



Our program timeline:

At minimum, we hope this has been a valuable guide for rethinking your current sales incentives and SPIFFs. Should you want explore Blueboard further, here's a quick overview of how we'll set you up for success:

1

Create your program

Determine reward level rules: What does each rep need to do to earn a reward at our various levels, or to become eligible for President's Club? We're here to consult with you on which above-and-beyond activities deserve the right reward.

Plan your budget: Which Blueboard reward levels make sense for your annual budget? We'll offer planning calculators to help you back out the volume of rewards that make sense for delivering a revenue ROI from your reps.

2

Launch your program

Program branding customization: We'll help you create custom content, landing pages, icons and naming conventions to match your company culture.

Sales Kick-Off (SKO): Let's get your reps stoked about this program and kick it off in style! We can help you create epic team-building SKOs that introduce Blueboard and build excitement.

3

Fulfill your program

Send rewards: As reps start meeting program KPIs, use our platform to send experiential rewards in real-time

Reward selection: They'll receive an email invitation to browse Blueboard's experience menu and choose their favorite experience.

Fulfillment and follow-up: Our celebrated Concierge team takes care of the rest; logistics, scheduling, payment and post experience engagement surveys to capture both quantitative and qualitative feedback.



Ready to connect with our team? We're happy to talk shop, share budgeting tips and planning tools, or dig into the best practices we've outlined in more detail.

[Simply schedule time with our team online here](#) for a live demo and discussion around your goals. We'll look forward to hearing from you.



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*Blue
Board*

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