

All Digital Rewards



Comparison Guide to Loyalty Management Solutions Guide

Copyright © All Digital Rewards

Platform vs Single Application

This informative guide helps organizations and incentive program managers learn the differences and compare various types of loyalty and incentive fulfillment solutions. Whether you use a fully enabled incentive reward platform or a single application solution to process and manage reward and incentive fulfillment you want to understand the core differences. You need to ensure you get what is bargained for and the technology purchase addresses your overall organization's incentives needs and solves the various engagement use case challenges identified to vendors when sourcing the incentive technology.

Making sense of incentive and reward processing and fulfillment software market

While looking for reward management operations software, you are likely to come across two solutions types.

Single application solutions have more targeted tools, and address single-use case reward issuance, and fulfillment processing challenges. In contrast, there are incentive platform systems whose sole purpose is their ability to solve many problems simultaneously.

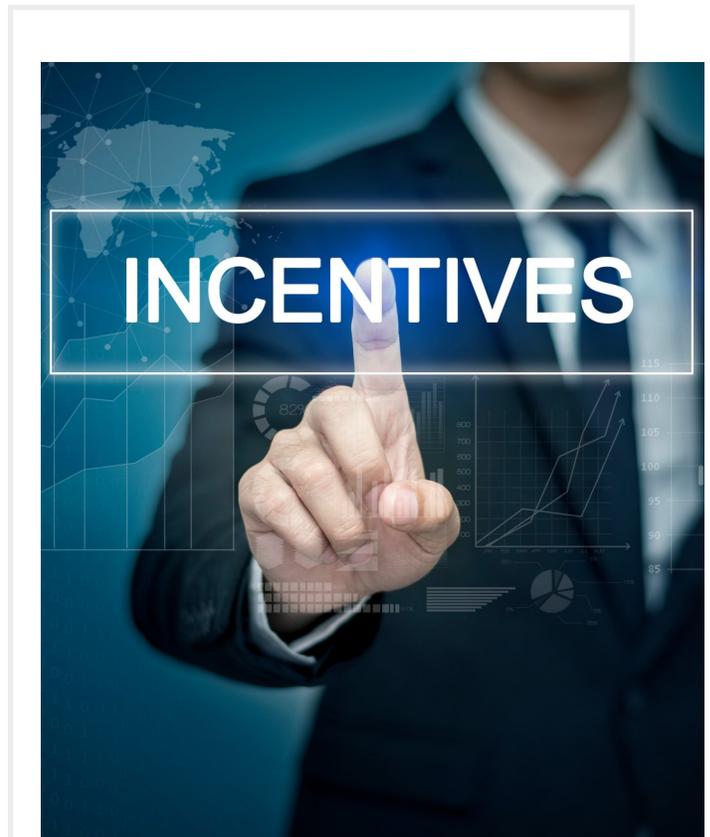
Both types of technologies are important and have their place, but it might not be evident right away which is the right option for your incentive program management needs.

What is an incentive Platform?

An incentive platform, simply put, is a platform technology that enables businesses to process and fulfill incentive payouts to a variety of client and or customer engagement use cases across their organization's marketing initiatives.

They're tools for improving operational efficiencies, lowering incentive costs, increasing program engagement, and providing a centralized nested hierarchical view of incentives for real-time insights and reporting.

Platforms are generative and actively evolve based on new ideas, technology, use cases, and behavioral attributes of the participants – producing novel solutions that will evolve to meet your unique incentive needs in one solution.

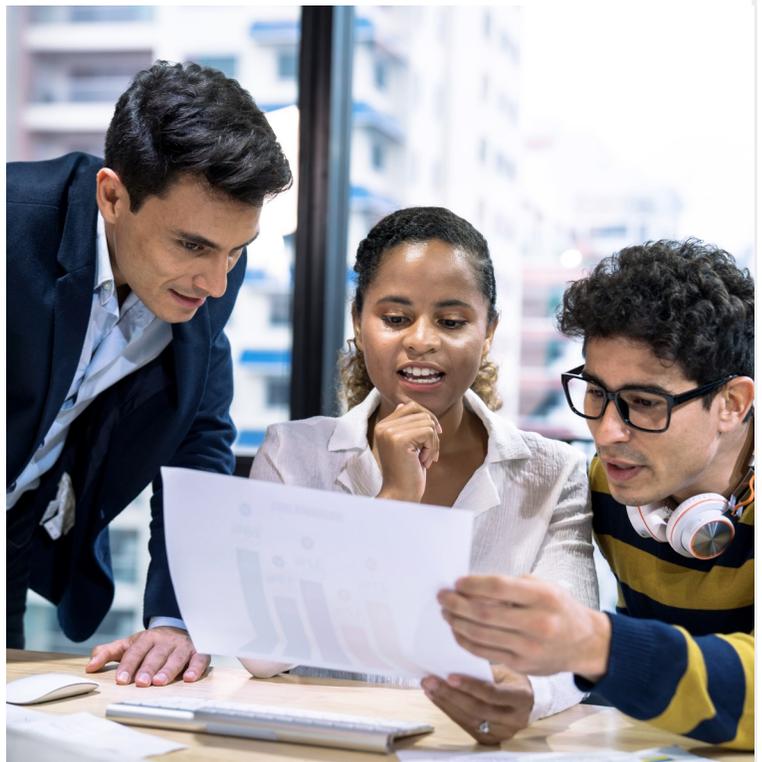


Platform Advantages

Every organization is different. Two organizations looking to solve the same incentive challenge may have completely different requirements (rewards issued, integrations, regulations, etc.).

Platforms can offer the ability to tailor a solution to your needs without the huge outlays commonly associated with most “custom” solutions.

Platforms developed in an Agile, object-based environment can easily add or modify a pre-built template layer on the Platform core functionality to add use-cases and scale as the situation calls for it.



What is a single application solution?

Platforms are developed to do many things; incentive applications aim to accomplish narrower goals. A single application is any tool or software seeking to solve an organization’s single incentive use case challenge.

Whether it’s channel partner, employee recognition, health and wellness, online marketing, game, or rebate promotions, sales incentive – single application solutions throw the weight of the functionality behind a single problem or solution one at a time.

Advantages of single application solutions

Traditionally, incentive program managers benefited from deploying simple single application solutions to focus on the specific program needs missing from a more all-encompassing one-size-fits-all solution.

Program managers typically settle on fewer bells and whistles and more complicated core functionality to deliver their solution well.

Assessing both sides of the argument

Above, describes both sides and the advantages of each system. Now let’s look at how they function can influence our decisions.

Below, is outlined the pros and cons of each, and we can look at some common concerns incentive program managers face early in the buying process.

“We are in need now and want a system that can get implemented quickly.”

You are not alone! It’s impossible to ignore the consequences of neglecting time-to-value with any new technology. This request comes up naturally in the search process.

Incentive program managers should keep in mind: a quick time to value isn’t an inherent property of the single application solution or platform. It’s whether the vendor can implement either solution in time to meet the needs of the incentive program.

For example, some of All Digital Rewards customers have seen times-to-value as short as two weeks. Other platforms may take months to implement and go to market.

Even the best single application solutions will offer similarly quick ROIs. Others will keep you stranded in a pilot status indefinitely.

There’s a catch, however. If you decide on a single application solution, it is likely you’ll have to start the whole process over the next time you need a piece of incentive software for a different use case.

A vital thing to look for in a solution is to maximize time-to-value in the long run. And in your search for technology vendors, look to those who can give you concrete implementation timelines and examples about the critical setup times and return based on real customer stories.

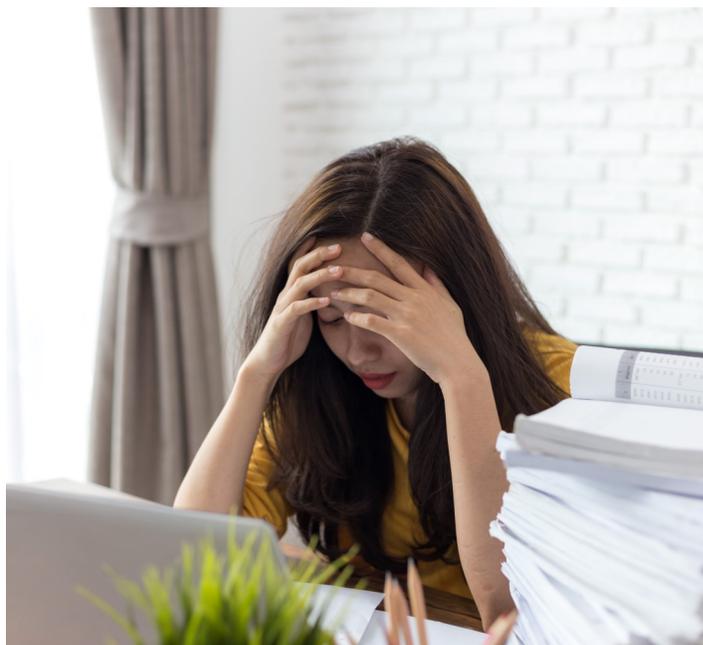
“We’re looking for a system with a great user experience and something that will minimize complexity.”

Before engineers began developing and deploying object-based technology, technology providers developed what is known as monolithic solutions. As they added functionality to the system, it led to proportional increases in complexity.

With object-based system development, adding new features won’t necessarily dictate a system will be more complicated. Now, complexity takes on many other forms. And if you’re not careful, whether you implement a platform or a single application solution, you can face new challenges.

Complexity can result from:

- Impartial or limited integrations
- Software/third party incompatibilities
- Configurations that are hard-coded
- Limited API capabilities
- Inexperienced Vendor
- System scaling capabilities





With platforms, it's vital to ask how each solution will manage permissions, integrations, configurations, and the addition of new features and use cases over time.

It would help if you asked the same of single application solutions, too. But there's one additional concern: How much of a hassle will it be to manage/monitor multiple application solutions and or the vendors simultaneously who provide services to you? Will the organization have a complete view of its incentive spend company-wide? Or will the total incentive spend be obscured by layers of departments and territories?

The key here is to ensure that your system decisions are not setting you up for a management nightmare later.

Platforms can take the difficulty out of managing multiple incentive use case programs across an organization when integrated via an API. Having real-time insights and reporting at your fingertips can lower program costs and increase operational efficiencies.

"We're looking for a system that can scale as our program grows."

If there's one thing that careful planning and thoughtful strategies have proven, it's that scaling isn't an accident. You must account for it at the very beginning of a new technology initiative.

When you're looking at platforms, make sure they can scale. Can you add new features? Tiers? More participants? Industries? Does it provide data segmentation in a nested hierarchical view for reporting? Can you configure new participant statuses to new conditions without having to start from scratch? Will it work with your client and client customer downline?

The incentive program managers who can answer "yes" to these questions are those that will see the most significant gains and measurable successes in the long run.

“If we may need to add more functionality in the upcoming year, is that possible?”

This question is perhaps one of the most critical. And it’s the one question that separates platforms from single application solutions.

It is our experience; organizations tend to start small with their incentive and reward initiatives. The strategy is deceptively easy:

- Roll out small
- Prove value
- Scale
- Voila.

What comes next? That’s when it gets interesting. Once you prove value, do you start the process over for a new incentive use case? Do you initiate a further needs analysis, secure stakeholder interest, shop for vendors and solutions, etc.?

With single application solutions, this becomes a fact of life. It can mean having a different vendor for employee recognition, product rebates, sales incentives, client and customer surveys, health and wellness, etc.

On the other hand, adding new use cases to a Platform can be as simple as adding a configuration, designing a new application, or creating a new template.

No extra spend. No new vendors. No additional complexity.

Time to Decide

Single application or Platform? Which makes more sense for you and your organization?

Thus far, we’ve reviewed some important differences between incentive reward management platforms and single application reward fulfillment solutions with the hopes that you are better prepared for what lies ahead spending your time and money. To explore what All Digital Rewards’ SaaS STACK™ platform and our portfolio of single applications can provide in supporting your incentive program initiatives, call 866-415-7703 or go to alldigitalrewards.com and schedule a demo.