**Partner Training Guide: Maximizing the Program for Your Business**

**Introduction**

Welcome to the digital Trailhead Pass! We’re excited to introduce a fresh and innovative program designed to support and showcase the Ecusta trail and its valued partners. This digital Trailhead Pass offers a new way to engage visitors and enhance their experience on the Ecusta Trail.

This guide will help you and your team understand how to promote the Trailhead Pass effectively and connect customers with everything this exciting program has to offer.

**What is the Trailhead Pass and Why Was It Created?**

The Trailhead Pass works as a guide to all businesses along the Ecusta Trail. Passholders can visit local businesses on the trail, check in, and earn points toward prizes.

**How Easy It Is for Consumers to Use**

The Trailhead Pass was designed with simplicity in mind:

1. **Sign Up:** Customers register online and receive their pass instantly via text and email.
2. **Visit & Check-In:** At each participating location, they check in using their mobile pass using GPS.
3. **Earn Rewards:** As they visit more locations, they unlock rewards and incentives.
4. **Get Prizes:** Users can redeem their points for prizes at the Welcome Center.

**How to Use the Digital Trailhead Pass**

For Customers:

* Open the Trailhead Pass from their phone.
* Check in at participating locations with a simple tap.
* Earn points and redeem rewards as they complete the trail.

**How can my business further benefit from the digitized program?**

**Benefits for Your Business**

* Increased customer engagement and traffic.\*
* Access to analytics and reporting on customer interactions such as:
  + Passholder Geographics
    - See where your visitors are coming from
  + Passholder Check-Ins
    - See how many people are checking in
* Enhanced brand visibility through cross-promotion and marketing efforts.

**How can we help the program and my business be more successful?**

To promote the Trailhead Pass, train staff to mention it at key moments (entry, ordering, checkout) and explain the benefits with simple messaging like, *"Sign up for the Trailhead Pass and win prizes just by visiting businesses like ours!"* Provide QR codes for easy sign-ups and engage customers to encourage participation. Display TDA-provided signage, such as window clings and counter displays, and contact Ashley Downer for materials.

On social media, post about the program, tag @visithendersonvilleNC, and use provided graphics and sample captions. A sample caption could be: *" Sign up for the Trailhead Pass and earn rewards by visiting local businesses like ours!"* Mention the program in email newsletters and other marketing.

Reach out to Ashley Downer to receive the **FREE** partner Toolkit.

**In-Store Promotion**

* **Train staff** to mention, explain and encourage participation with the Trailhead Pass (upon entry, sitting down, ordering, at checkout.)
  + Staff should explain the program benefits in simple terms: *"Participate in the Trailhead Pass and win prizes just by visiting businesses like ours!"*
  + Provide QR codes for easy access to sign-ups.
  + Engage customers by asking if they have participated and encouraging them to join.
* **Display free, TDA-provided signage and promotional** materials in visible locations.
  + Promotional materials include but are not limited to: (window clings, counter displays).
  + You can receive free promotional materials from the TDA by reaching out to Ashley Downer.
  + Have an idea for signage? Please feel free to share those ideas with us and we can see if we can create it!

**Social Media Promotion**

* Post about the program.
  + Share behind-the-scenes content featuring staff explaining the program.
  + Tag @visithendersonvilleNC
* Use provided social media graphics and captions
  + Provided by TDA

**Want to take it a step further**

* Offer in-store incentives to customers (e.g., discounts or small gifts for sign-ups).
  + Optional
* Have a fun competition between staff to see who can get the most people to sign up:
  + Punch cards/sticker cards for employees
  + Optional

**What is the digitized Trailhead Pass**

* A free, web-based program that allows customers to save the tab to their home screen and earn points to redeem for prizes.
* No app to download!
* A customer engagement initiative that rewards participation and drives business growth.
* Partners gain access to analytics and reports on customer interaction.

**Why It Matters:**

* Encourages repeat business and increased traffic.
* Creates a fun, interactive experience for customers.
* Provides valuable visitor insights.

**Understanding the Program**

**Steps of the Pass:**

1. User scans QR code or visits <https://visithendersonvillenc.org/ecusta-trail>
2. User signs up for the pass
3. User saves tab to their home screen
4. User is within 0.1 mile of your location and clicks “Check-In”
5. User earns 100 points for visiting and checking in to your location
6. User earns enough points to claim prize
7. User goes to the Hendersonville Welcome Center to claim prize

**What Your Business Needs to Do**

**5. Next Steps**

* Ensure all staff members are trained and comfortable explaining the program.
  + Have a short in-person walk at your next staff meeting
  + Go over the “cheat sheet” and FAQ’s provided by the TDA
  + Encourage them to get the passport and experience it for themselves!
* Actively mention the program to customers in-store and online.
  + HERE’S WHAT YOU CAN DO ONLINE:
    - Comment or reply to visitors asking about your business
    - Include a blurb about the pass in captions, events, and newsletters
    - Encourage/repost User Generated Content
  + HERE’S WHAT YOU CAN DO IN-PERSON:
    - **Reference signage:** “That’s the digital Trailhead Pass, you can scan the QR code to start earning points!”
    - **For New Visitors:** “First time here? There’s a fun pass program that allows you to earn points toward prizes— we’ve got the details if you're interested!”
* Monitor customer participation and adjust engagement strategies as needed.
  + Let the TDA know what is working and what is not
  + Let TDA know if there are any questions that come up a lot
  + Let TDA know if they can help in any way

Thank you for being a valued partner in this program! View consumer FAQ’s below:

**Common Consumer Questions & How to Answer**

**How do I sign up?**  
*"Just scan the QR code here or visit VisitHendersonvilleNC.org/Ecusta-Trail to sign up. There is no app to download, just simply save it to your home screen.”*

**Do I have to pay to participate?**  
*"Nope! The program is completely free for all."*

**How do I earn rewards?**  
*"Every time you visit a participating business, you can check in through the program. The more places you visit, the more points you earn to win prizes!"*

**What kind of prizes can I win?**  
*"Prizes for the Trailhead Pass include:*

|  |
| --- |
| *T-Shirts* |
| *Sweat/Bike Towel* |
| *Bumper Stickers* |

**Where can I see the list of participating businesses?**  
*"You can find the full list at the Hendersonville Welcome Center and Trailhead, or on the pass itself.*

**How do I know if I’ve earned a reward?**  
*"You can view your points under the “Rewards” tab as well as all of the prizes.*

**What if I have trouble signing up or checking in?**  
*"Try scanning the QR code again or visiting the website directly. If you still have issues, visit or call the Welcome Center at (828)-693-9708.*

**Why should I join?**  
*"It’s a fun way to support local businesses while earning rewards! Plus, it’s free and easy to participate.*