



# Amanda Cromhout

Champion of Loyalty, Advocate for Change



**B**y any measure, Amanda Cromhout's career trajectory is nothing short of remarkable. The CEO and Founder of Truth, an acclaimed loyalty consultancy, Cromhout has spent time shaping the loyalty landscape across multiple industries—from aviation and retail to finance and beyond. In 2024, she stands at the forefront of one of the most dynamic and rapidly evolving sectors in customer experience management. Yet her journey to becoming a global authority in loyalty management is grounded in a deep commitment to simplicity, authenticity, and the belief that customer loyalty can be a catalyst for greater social change.

But what truly sets Cromhout apart isn't just her business acumen—it's her passion for leveraging loyalty as a force for good. As the founder of The Blind Loyalty Trust, a charity dedicated to reversing preventable blindness, Cromhout's work is about far more than numbers and points; it's about transforming lives. In this profile, we explore how she's reshaping the future of loyalty, while using her platform to promote a cause close to her heart.

#### **A Career Built on Loyalty**

Cromhout's professional journey is marked by a series of pivotal roles that shaped her understanding of loyalty's power. Her career began as a marketing graduate trainee at British Airways, where she was thrust into the heart of loyalty management through the airline's Executive Club. "Loyalty was entrenched into my career from day one," Cromhout reflects, recalling the early days of her career.

At British Airways, Cromhout took on senior positions that shaped the company's loyalty initiatives, including leading the launch of the oneworld global alliance and managing the airline's marketing strategy across Africa, the Middle East, and India. These experiences were



instrumental in shaping her understanding of customer loyalty and deepening her belief in its strategic importance. And during her time at Woolworths, South Africa's premium retailer, she crystallized her vision for loyalty as both a business strategy and a consumer experience, this time in the retail sector.

**“IT MADE SENSE TO ME, AND IT WAS NATURAL TO CONTINUE DOWN THIS PATH, ESPECIALLY WHEN I TRANSITIONED TO RETAIL AT WOOLWORTHS.”**

After leaving Woolworths in 2010, Cromhout took the leap into entrepreneurship by founding Truth, a consultancy dedicated to helping businesses unlock the full potential of loyalty programs. Her decision was driven by a clear market need in South Africa, where, at the time, loyalty was still a nascent field. "I saw a gap and wanted to fill it," Cromhout says. "It felt like the most natural progression for me."

Since then, Truth has become a leader in loyalty consulting, working with clients across a diverse range of sectors and geographies. The company's influence extends beyond consultancy—Cromhout is also the Academic Director of the Truth Customer Academy and a frequent judge for major loyalty awards, including the International Loyalty Awards and the South African Loyalty Awards.

#### **A Defining Moment: Expanding the Diploma in Loyalty globally**

In 2024, Cromhout's biggest achievement is the expansion of Truth's global diploma in loyalty, which has already educated over 800 professionals across 35 countries. The goal is to develop a new generation of loyalty leaders, equipped with the knowledge and skills to drive





transformative programs. She has also founded the African Loyalty Association (AfLA). The AfLA represents a significant milestone in her efforts to elevate loyalty practices on the African continent.

However, it's the South African Loyalty Awards and the Leaders in Loyalty Summit—both launched by Truth—that Cromhout is particularly proud of. “These events have become cornerstone initiatives in our industry,” she says.

**“THEY BRING THE ENTIRE LOYALTY COMMUNITY TOGETHER, WHICH IS INCREDIBLY POWERFUL.”**

The Leaders in Loyalty Summit, in particular, has become a global event, attracting keynote speakers from around the world. Cromhout's commitment to bringing diverse perspectives to the table is evident: 100% of the 2024 summit attendees said they would recommend the event to others.

#### **The Iceberg Effect: Innovation in Loyalty Strategy**

For Cromhout, the key to successful loyalty lies in simplicity and personalization. Her book, *\*Blind Loyalty: 101 Loyalty Concepts Radically Simplified\**, distills loyalty program strategies into easily digestible concepts. One of the key ideas she promotes is “The Iceberg Effect,” which describes how loyalty programs can operate on two levels: an overt level, where customers are rewarded in public, and a covert level, where the best customers receive personalized, behind-the-scenes rewards based on data insight. This dual approach allows businesses to balance broad appeal with deep personalization, ensuring that loyalty is not just about points but about creating meaningful relationships with customers.

Cromhout's innovative approach is grounded in a deep understanding of customer behavior and a commitment to staying ahead of industry trends. “We spend a significant portion of our time researching and listening to global experts,” she explains. “Our job is to ensure our clients' loyalty programs remain fresh, relevant, and ahead of the curve.”

This forward-thinking approach is reflected in the trends she believes will shape the future of loyalty. The first of these is authenticity. As consumers demand more from brands in terms of values and transparency, Cromhout believes loyalty programs must reward not just spending, but also customers' broader relationship with the brand. “Loyalty can be a tool to drive authenticity,” she says. “It's about aligning your program with your brand's values and encouraging customers to join you on that journey.”

Another trend she highlights is consolidation—the ability for customers to earn and redeem loyalty points across a wide range of services and products. This approach, exemplified by the Avios loyalty program in the UK, is beginning to reshape how brands approach customer engagement.

**“CONSUMERS ARE CHANGING THEIR BEHAVIOR BECAUSE THESE CONSOLIDATED PROGRAMS OFFER REAL VALUE ACROSS MULTIPLE TOUCHPOINTS,”  
CROMHOUT NOTES.**

#### **Loyalty with a Purpose: The Blind Loyalty Trust**

Beyond her work in loyalty management, Cromhout's most personal and impactful project is The Blind Loyalty Trust. The charity was born from a deeply



personal experience when Cromhout temporarily lost her sight due to a health condition. “I was fortunate enough to have access to healthcare, and I can see again. But I realized that millions of people don’t have that opportunity, and most of them don’t need to remain blind.”

The Blind Loyalty Trust aims to reverse preventable blindness through fundraising efforts driven by the loyalty industry. One such initiative is \*Run For Vision\*, a global campaign encouraging people to run or walk 4,200 meters to fund eye surgeries for those in need because it only costs R4,200 (\$230) to reverse blindness. “80% of blindness is reversible,” Cromhout explains. “That statistic is staggering. Together, with the enormous support of the loyalty community, we’re working to change lives, one surgery at a time.”

#### The Road Ahead: A Legacy of Loyalty

As Cromhout looks to the future, she remains relentlessly committed to learning, innovating, and sharing her insights with the next generation of loyalty leaders.

Her advice to those entering the field? “Start by understanding the broader business context, not just the loyalty mechanics. Loyalty is about strategy, data, and, most importantly, understanding how it can make a business and its customers better.”

In Cromhout’s hands, loyalty is far more than a business strategy—it’s a powerful tool for social change, global collaboration, and lasting customer relationships. And as she continues to innovate, educate, and inspire, there’s little doubt that her impact will be felt for years to come.

**“I’VE HAD THE PRIVILEGE OF WORKING WITH SOME INCREDIBLE CLIENTS AND INDIVIDUALS OVER THE YEARS, BUT THE REAL REWARD IS KNOWING THAT THE WORK WE DO MAKES A DIFFERENCE,” SHE SAYS.**

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