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# FINANCE AND SOCIAL GAMING: AMEX BOLSTERS SOCIAL PRESENCE BY FRIENDING ZYNGA

Effort melds prepaid card presence in real world and virtual reality

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American Express recently teamed up with social game developer Zynga and introduced the Zynga Serve Rewards Program. By combining Serve Digital Wallet (the American Express digital payment platform) with Zynga accounts, the Zynga Serve Rewards program allows gamers to receive in-game rewards when they use the new Zynga Serve co-branded pre-paid card.

This is not the first time American Express has partnered with Zynga. AmEx cardholders have been able to redeem their points for e-game cards or virtual goods within the American Express Membership Rewards site for some time.

## Zynga Serve Rewards Program

The Zynga Serve Rewards Program is currently only being offered for the FarmVille game. Players can sign up for the rewards program and earn virtual currency that can be used to make purchases within the game when they use their Zynga Serve card.

Though enrollment contains several steps, players are given Farm Cash each step of the way as added incentive to complete the process. Serve is also promoting the new Rewards Program by offering FarmVille players a free Serve Money Tree. The Money Tree outlines the steps in the enrollment process and changes colors as players complete each step.

The Serve Money Tree provides a focal point for the Zynga Serve enrollment process.

## Enrollment process

Users must first sign-up for the Zynga Serve Rewards program in order to receive a Zynga Serve card in the mail. Those

who already have an existing Serve account may convert their account to the Zynga Rewards program. Signing up or converting a Serve account automatically earns players 63 units of Farm Cash. Players must then plant the interactive tree, earning them up to an additional seven units of Farm Cash.

Money is added to the activated Serve account via a bank account, credit card, debit card, or cash. The card then has to be activated either online or over the phone once it is received. Users will earn Farm Cash rewards for adding money to the account for the first time and activating the pre-paid card, respectively. The pre-paid card must be used anywhere American Express is accepted in order to earn additional rewards.

FarmVille players will earn 50 units of Farm Cash rewards for each of the first five purchases of \$25 or more on the pre-paid card by July 31, 2012. Both Serve and Zynga state that all purchases will be rewarded in the future (not just the first 5) and that the rewards program will expand to other Zynga games, though no specific dates were provided.

Limited promotion thus far

Surprisingly, neither American Express nor Zynga are doing much to promote this new rewards program. Aside from a recent press release on the American Express website, which provided a link to the Zynga Serve Rewards Program sitelet, there is no other mention within the site. Additionally, only the FarmVille and Serve Facebook pages mention the new program, with no promotion on the main American Express and Zynga Facebook pages.

Through their latest partnership with Zynga, American Express continues to innovate and diversify its rewards offerings. The Zynga Serve Rewards Program serves as a nice complement to AmEx's extensive social reward partnerships with industry leaders including Facebook, Twitter, Foursquare and LinkedIn.