

The Small-Team Incentive Program Benchmark



How much should a lean incentive team realistically be able to manage?

A practical benchmark for teams managing campaigns, data, rewards, communications and participant engagement with limited internal resources.

SMALL TEAM DOES NOT MEAN SIMPLE PROGRAM

A small program team does not necessarily mean a small program.

Today, teams of one to three people may be responsible for multiple incentive campaigns, several suppliers or business units, participant communications, sales and eligibility data, reward administration, reporting, participant support, recognition, gamification and cross-border requirements.

The challenge is determining which work genuinely requires people—and which work should already be handled by the program infrastructure.

A well-supported team should not have to manually touch every transaction, calculation, campaign, report or reward redemption.

The more routine work the platform absorbs, the more sophisticated the program can become without requiring proportional increases in headcount.

A SMALL TEAM CAN MANAGE A LOT OF MOVING PARTS

 Multiple Campaigns	 Suppliers & Business Units
 Sales & Eligibility Data	 Reward Administration
 Participant Communications	 Reporting
 Recognition & Gamification	 Cross-Border Requirements



**With the right infrastructure,
a small team can run a big, complex and
high-performing program.**

PROGRAM COMPLEXITY

Participant count alone is a poor measure of administrative workload.

Five factors usually matter more. Program complexity is rarely driven by participant count alone.

The combination of these five factors determines the operational load and the level of infrastructure required to run the program effectively.

01



Campaign Volume

Frequency, overlap, unique rules, supplier-specific promotions and tactical campaigns all add operational load.

02



Data Complexity

Sales feeds, rosters, hierarchies, product data, territory data and tier information must remain synchronized.

03



Program Stakeholders

Suppliers, sales, marketing, finance, HR and program sponsors can each introduce approvals, objectives and reporting needs.

04



Participant Experience

Targeted offers, games, recognition, leaderboards, learning, tier progression and rewards create additional operating requirements.

05



Market Complexity

Countries or regions may require different suppliers, currencies, rewards, tax treatment, communications, languages and funding arrangements.



**These factors do not simply add complexity.
They interact with one another.**

A PRACTICAL

SMALL-TEAM BENCHMARK

There is no universal ratio of administrators to participants. A better benchmark is how much complexity the team can manage without routine activity becoming manual work.

LOWER COMPLEXITY



A small team should generally manage this environment comfortably.

Limited campaign volume • One primary participant group • One or two data sources • Single market • Straightforward reward structure • Basic reporting

SCALING COMPLEXITY



Automation becomes increasingly important as activity expands.

Regular campaign activity • Multiple participant segments • Several data sources • More sophisticated earning rules • Frequent communications • More reporting requirements

HIGH COMPLEXITY



A small team can still operate effectively—but only if infrastructure absorbs repetitive work.

Dozens or hundreds of campaigns • Multiple suppliers or funders • Several active sales and user feeds • Complex segmentation • Multiple rewards or markets • Recognition or gamification



The right infrastructure helps small teams manage more complexity without more headcount.

REAL-WORLD PROOF

WHAT A THREE-PERSON TEAM CAN MANAGE

One VIBE-supported program provides a useful example. Over a recent 12-month period, a three-person internal client team supported:

300+

supplier-funded campaigns

7

participating suppliers

8

active daily sales feed

5

user feeds

57

game campaigns

65,535

games played

42,316

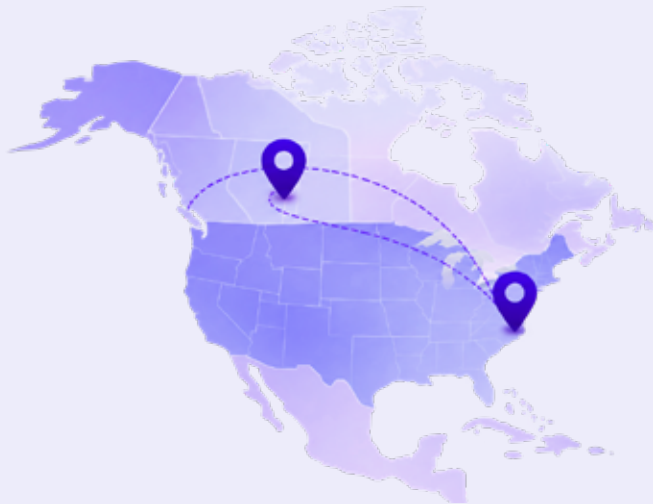
peer recognitions

29,192

reward redemptions

ACROSS CANADA & THE UNITED STATES

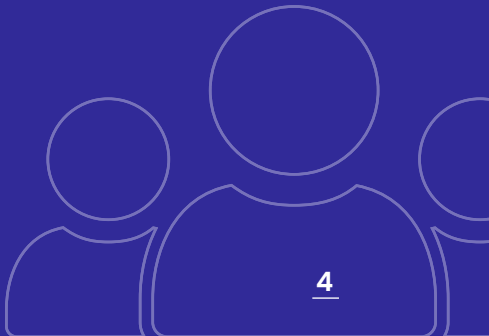
The same platform supports operations across Canada and the United States, with market-specific suppliers, campaigns, currencies, reward catalogues, tax treatment and communications. Canadian participant communications are delivered in English and French.



CLIENT ADMIN TEAM

3 PEOPLE

The benchmark is not that every three-person team should run 300 campaigns. It is that campaign volume, data complexity and program activity do not need to translate directly into additional administrative headcount.



WHAT SHOULD A SMALL PROGRAM TEAM **STILL OWN?**

Automation should protect the team's time for work that requires judgment.
A lean team should continue to own:

01



Strategy

- Objectives and priorities
- Campaign planning
- Audience strategy
- Supplier alignment

02



Analysis

- Identifying trends
- Understanding participation
- Finding underperforming segments

03



Optimization

- Refining campaign design
- Testing engagement approaches
- Improving participant experience

04



Stakeholders

- Supplier relationships
- Internal alignment
- Approvals and governance

05



Exceptions

- Handling unusual situations rather than manually processing routine ones

WHAT SHOULD THE PLATFORM BE ABSORBING?

If your team is spending significant time on the activities below, there may be an opportunity to improve the operating model.

01



Data Processing

Regular sales and participant data should flow into the program with minimal manual intervention.

02



Validation

Rules should identify missing, invalid or unusual transactions rather than forcing review of everything.

03



Incentive Calculations

Eligibility, earnings and payout rules should be applied consistently by the system.

04



Campaign Administration

Authorized administrators should be able to configure and launch routine tactical campaigns without development support.

05



Communications

Participant communications should be scheduled or triggered through the program where appropriate.

06



Reporting

Routine program information should be available without repeated spreadsheet work.

07



Reward Administration

Balances, redemptions and funding activity should be tracked through structured processes.

THE SMALL-TEAM EFFICIENCY TEST

Answer YES or No to each question. Then count your **YES** answers.



10-QUESTION CHECKLIST

- | | | | |
|-----------|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 | Can your team launch most campaigns without involving IT or development? | ☐ Yes | ☐ No |
| 2 | Are routine incentive calculations handled automatically? | ☐ Yes | ☐ No |
| 3 | Can sales and participant data be processed without regular spreadsheet manipulation? | ☐ Yes | ☐ No |
| 4 | Can program performance be reviewed without manually rebuilding reports? | ☐ Yes | ☐ No |
| 5 | Are participant segments and eligibility rules managed centrally? | ☐ Yes | ☐ No |
| 6 | Are reward transactions tracked without frequent manual reconciliation? | ☐ Yes | ☐ No |
| 7 | Can communications be targeted based on participant data or program activity? | ☐ Yes | ☐ No |
| 8 | Can the team manage exceptions without reviewing every transaction? | ☐ Yes | ☐ No |
| 9 | Can additional campaigns be added without creating disproportionate workload? | ☐ Yes | ☐ No |
| 10 | Does the team spend more time improving the program than administering it? | ☐ Yes | ☐ No |

COUNT YOUR YES ANSWERS

8-10 YES

5-7 YES

0-4 YES



Turn the page to see what your score says about your operating model.

WHAT YOUR SCORE TELLS YOU

Your score reflects how effectively your operating model supports your team. Use it to identify where there may be opportunities to do more with less.

8–10
YES

LOWER ADMIN CEILING

Operating leverage is strong.

Your operating model is likely supporting the team effectively. You should be able to add meaningful activity without proportional increases in administration.

5–7
YES

MODERATE ADMIN CEILING

Some capacity is being lost.

The program is functioning, but manual processes are probably consuming avoidable team capacity. Start with the work that repeats most often.

0–4
YES

HIGH ADMIN CEILING

The infrastructure is carrying too little.

Your team may be doing work the program infrastructure should absorb. More campaigns, suppliers or participants will likely increase pressure unless the operating model changes.

Before You Add Headcount

When incentive workload increases, adding another administrator can seem like the simplest answer. Before doing that, ask:

1

What work is increasing—strategy or repetitive administration?

2

What work repeats and is therefore a candidate for automation?

3

What work genuinely requires judgment?

4

What should the platform already be doing?



Adding a person to compensate for inefficient infrastructure may solve the immediate workload problem. It does not solve the underlying scalability problem.

A BETTER BENCHMARK FOR PROGRAM EFFICIENCY

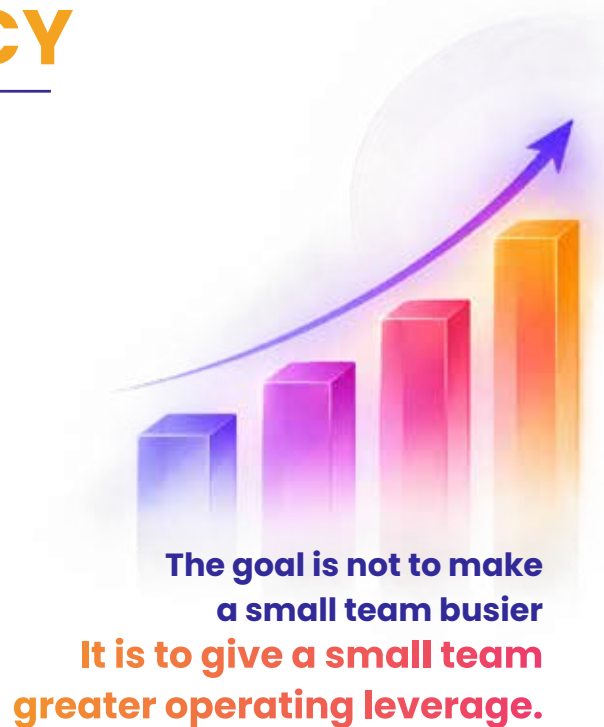
INSTEAD OF ASKING

"How many participants can one administrator manage?"



ASK

"How much meaningful program activity can our current team manage without increasing routine administration?"



A high-performing small team should be able to increase campaign frequency, participant segmentation, supplier activity, communications, reward activity and engagement without every increase generating an equivalent increase in manual workload.

How Efficient Is Your Current Program Model?

If your incentive team is carrying more administrative work than it should, VIBE can help identify where that workload is coming from.

VIBE supports sophisticated incentive programs by automating program rules, data processing, campaign administration, reporting, rewards and participant engagement.

Request a Program Operations Review

We'll look at your current program structure, identify where administrative workload is accumulating and highlight the areas where automation could create the greatest leverage.



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