

Continental will not renew its partnership with American Express



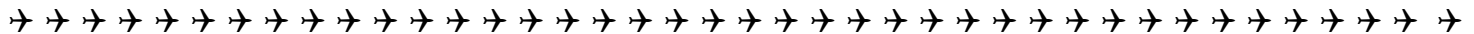
Continental Airlines' decision not to renew its partnership with American Express is not related to the carrier's merger with United Airlines, Continental spokeswoman Julie King said Thursday. Effective Sept. 30, 2011, American Express' most elite customers — those who carry the Platinum and Centurion cards - will no longer have the blue carpet rolled out for them at Continental's airport clubs. The President's Clubs, with their free beverages, snacks and Internet access, are some of the travel benefits offered to holders of the Platinum card, which has a \$450 annual fee. The Centurion card is the black card sent to American Express' wealthiest clients and gives customers access to the Continental airport clubs.

American Express Membership Rewards customers, also effective Sept. 30 next year, will no longer be able to redeem their points for frequent-flier miles in the Continental OnePass program. The Membership Rewards program is offered to all American Express customers, regardless of their status.

Travelers who want free entrance to Continental's 24 clubs in airports around the world can choose the Continental Airlines Presidential Plus card from Chase, for example, King said. The card gives fliers access to the lounges and other airline perks for \$395 a year. Other Continental credit and debit cards provide OnePass miles for each dollar spent and travel benefits such as waived checked-bag fees, King said.

"Despite our best efforts, we were unable to reach an agreement with Continental to continue these benefits beyond September 30, 2011," said Lynne Biggar, senior vice president for American Express' Membership Rewards program.

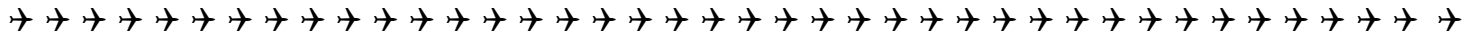
Even before the merger was officially announced, frequent fliers wondered if the Houston carrier would end its partnership with American Express, said Randy Petersen, president of Frequent Flyer Services and a frequent-flier expert. Both airlines already partner with Chase, he said.



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