

## Module 9: Protecting Value and Avoiding Devaluation

### Purpose of This Module

This module teaches how to protect the value of your airline miles and hotel points. Loyalty programs frequently change, and these changes can reduce the value of your rewards. With proper planning, you can safeguard what you have earned and make sure every point counts toward Africa 2028.

### Understanding Devaluation

A devaluation occurs when an airline or hotel program increases the number of points required for a flight or hotel stay. For example, if a business-class flight once cost seventy thousand miles but now costs one hundred thousand, the value of each mile has decreased.

Programs also devalue indirectly by adding higher fees, reducing award availability, or changing transfer ratios from banks to partners. Knowing how to anticipate and respond to these changes keeps your travel goals secure.

### Why Programs Devalue

Devaluations happen for several reasons:

- Airlines and hotels adjust for inflation and demand.
- Companies reduce liabilities from unredeemed points.
- Competitive or merger-related changes affect partner relationships.

While these changes are outside your control, you can still protect yourself by diversifying points and redeeming strategically.

### Keep Points Flexible

The best defense is to earn **transferable points** instead of locking everything into one airline or hotel. Programs such as Amex Membership Rewards, Chase Ultimate Rewards, and Citi ThankYou Points let you transfer to many different partners when needed.

By keeping your points in a flexible bank program until you are ready to book, you can wait out devaluations and move them to the best partner at the right time.

### Redeem Sooner, Not Later

Points lose value over time because of devaluations and missed opportunities. Once you have enough for a meaningful redemption, book your trip. Do not hoard points unnecessarily.

Booking early also increases the chance of finding business-class seats and award availability on the exact dates you want for Africa 2028.

### Diversify Your Programs

Never rely on a single loyalty program. Spread your earning across at least one airline group and one hotel group. For example:

- Airline: American Airlines AAdvantage or Qatar Avios for Oneworld flights.

- Hotel: Marriott Bonvoy as your main program, with Hilton Honors as a backup.

This way, if one program raises its redemption rates, you have alternatives ready.

### **Track Partner Changes**

Keep an eye on news from major travel websites and newsletters. Key signs that a devaluation may be coming include:

- New transfer bonuses between programs.
- Sudden removal or addition of partners.
- Rumors about mergers or loyalty program integrations.

When a devaluation is announced, act quickly to book travel under the old rates if possible.

### **Monitor Currency Expiration**

Expiration is a silent form of devaluation. Miles or points that expire are worth nothing. Review your tracker each month to ensure all accounts show recent activity. Earn or redeem a small number of points before expiration to keep balances active.

### **Take Advantage of Transfer Bonuses**

Sometimes banks offer 10 to 40 percent bonuses when transferring points to partners. These limited-time offers increase your redemption value and offset potential devaluations.

Example: If Amex offers a 30 percent bonus to British Airways Avios, transferring 100,000 Amex points would yield 130,000 Avios. This effectively protects you from future redemption rate increases.

### **Use Dynamic Pricing to Your Advantage**

Many airlines now use dynamic pricing, where redemption costs depend on demand. This can seem negative, but it also creates opportunities to find low-value dates and off-peak deals. Check multiple date combinations and routes before transferring points.

### **Protecting Hotel Value**

Hotel programs can devalue by introducing higher award categories or removing standard awards. To minimize this impact:

- Book hotels early when rates are low.
- Use the fifth-night-free benefit when available.
- Consider free-night certificates before they expire.
- Combine points with cash to stretch your balance for high-demand nights.

### **Document and Verify Transfers**

Always keep records of your transfers and redemptions. Save screenshots of balances before and after each transfer. If points fail to appear in your account, having documentation will help customer service resolve the issue quickly.

## Join Loyalty Program Newsletters

Airline and hotel programs often email members before major changes. Sign up for newsletters and enable alerts for partner updates. This helps you act faster than the general public when devaluations occur.

## Summary

Protecting your points requires awareness, timing, and flexibility. Avoid hoarding, stay organized, and diversify across programs. Use bank points for flexibility, redeem regularly, and keep documentation for every transfer.

The next module will cover advanced earning techniques and bonus opportunities to accelerate your journey toward Africa 2028.