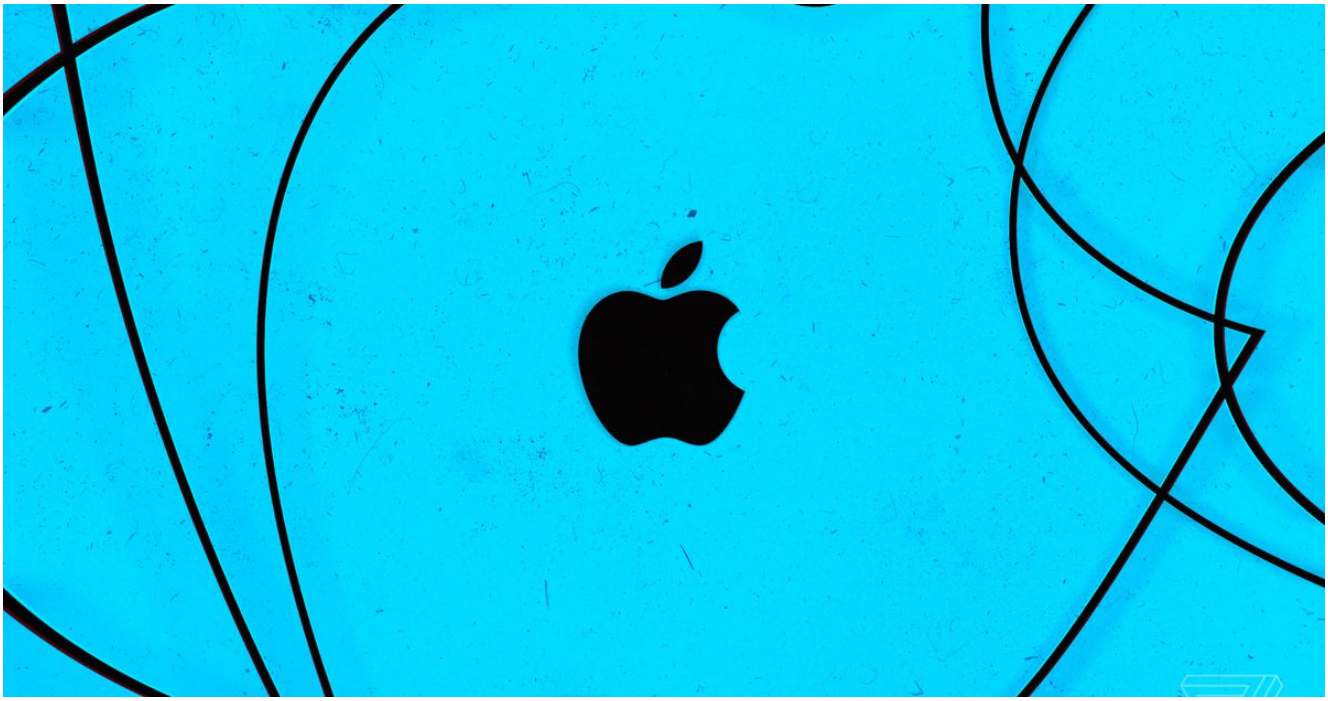
Apple promises ‘white glove experiences’ for its most helpful community members



Apple is rewarding the most active and helpful members of its support forums with its new Community Plus program (via *iClarified*). The invite-only program gives these “high-level” Support Community members access to exclusive perks and experiences.

Apple’s Support Community members can already earn points based on their activity, granting them access to rewards as they level up. This includes the ability to upload a custom avatar as well as participate in conference calls with the Apple Support Community team and even in-person meetups with other members. But the Community Plus program appears to take things a bit further. It applies to the “shining stars” of Apple support forums who provide the most detailed and helpful answers. Apple says it will only add a “small group” of people to the program on a yearly basis.

If this type of program sounds familiar, you may remember that

Microsoft has had its MVP (most valuable professional) award for over 20 years and has recognized over 4,000 MVPs so far — at times rewarding them with trips, subscriptions that included free access to expensive software, and free training materials.

So yes, Apple's program is a little new to the game when it comes to honoring the most active support technicians (who are also *unpaid*, mind you). But it seems like Apple's looking to establish and encourage more experts who operate outside its stores and in the forums where customers frequently end up, even if those people aren't official Apple employees. Google has long leaned on forums to augment or replace tech support — it launched the Nexus One without a number to call for tech support but added one later — and its rewards for product experts appear to focus on connecting with the company and beta testing new updates.

Members can expect "white-glove experiences, and more"
Apple is pretty light on the details as to how members could benefit from the Community Plus program. Apple says it will give members "white-glove experiences, and more," but it's unclear what that entails. *The Verge* reached out to Apple to find out some specifics but didn't immediately hear back.

Earlier this year, Apple introduced updates to its professional training programs for IT professionals, giving people the ability to obtain certificates for knowing Apple's systems and devices in an online, self-paced format; at the same time, it's lining up technicians for on-site service calls in its Business Essentials program. Apple's also building out its presence in the DIY space. In April, Apple's self-repair service for the iPhone 12 and 13, which lets users purchase the parts they need to fix their devices and provides them with instructions on how to do so, went live in the US. This might mean getting shipped a 79-pound package just to make a small repair, but it's a start, I suppose.

https://www.theverge.com/2022/6/29/23188003/apple-community-plus-program-tech-support-members