Setting a merchant up to accept American Express

American Express currently has two pricing models. Opt Blue and ESA.

Amex Opt Blue:

Description: This program is standard for most merchants and is set up through VMS. 1) It allows the merchant to get next-day funding and 2) details rates/fees right on their VMS statement.

How to: The application team at VMS will automatically set your merchant up for American Express Opt Blue, unless you let us know otherwise. Some merchants don't want to accept American Express, as card acceptance carries slightly higher rates/fees than Visa, Mastercard or Discover.

One modification: On the Card Connect application, you'll need to increase the American Express rate 10 basis points higher than the others.

Amex ESA:

Description: This program is for merchants who accept more than $1million or more in American Express transactions per year.

How to: The merchant will contact American Express directly and set up an ESA account. They will then provide that account number to you so you can notate the application. Most existing merchants already have an ESA# if they fall into this high dollar processing category.