

# CASE STUDY - YANKEE CANDLE

WORLD'S BEST LOVED EMPLOYEES



## ABOUT YCC

If you've ever strolled through your local mall chances are you've encountered Yankee Candles before, thanks to over 500 company-owned retail stores and over 19,000 authorized retailers in the US and 24 countries around the world. Yankee Candle Company has been the most recognizable and best-selling candle brand in the country for the last 45 years. What began as an entrepreneurial operation in Holyoke, MA has since grown into a 90,000 square-foot facility in South Deerfield, MA with a welcome pavilion and a wide-range of impressive visitor attractions for all ages. Yankee Candle refers to this destination location as its Flagship Store, and it is truly a destination, with over 2.5 million unique visitors per year! Yankee Candle has always been deeply committed to its employees, even adapting the "World's Best Loved Candles" motto to "World's Best Loved Employees" as its corporate mantra.

## CHALLENGE

Originally, Yankee Candle's Service Award program struggled to keep up with the exponential growth of the Company even though the overall objectives aligned with best practices. While most everyone appreciated the unique, "Yankee" milestone gifts tied to the Company history, the remaining merchandise gifts in the catalog held little value or failed to generate excitement among the participants. In addition, there were iconic award pieces celebrating employee milestones that were dealt with in an ad-hoc fashion or unceremoniously through the mail, given the Company's expansive retail footprint. Simply put, the program was in need of "re-engineering", and the Yankee Candle benefits team was determined to elevate the program back to best-in-class status in a consistent and reliable manner that would allow for centralized management while serving their locations across the globe.



**INCREASE  
COMPANY  
GROWTH**



**RECOGNITION  
PROGRAM  
RE-ENGINEERED**



**PERSONALIZED  
TOOL-KIT AND  
CATALOG**

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## ENGAGEMENT

HALO Recognition adjusted the program design to encourage on-site award presentations on the day of the employee's anniversary, making the act of recognition an "event" to look forward to in the workplace. Web-based tools and training were added as service options, providing Yankee managers a one-stop "tool kit" to make meaningful award presentations. The iconic pieces within the Yankee awards program were refreshed and expanded to be more aligned with the present-day Company image and incorporate Yankee Candle's "World's Best Loved Employees" branding, which became the unifying theme for the program.

In addition, the Yankee Candle core gift catalog was revamped, offering a much wider selection than ever before. Employees can now choose from dozens of gift options, with a unique custom gift that was tied to the Yankee Candle history and culture at EVERY milestone year. These unique gifts recreated the touchstone items employees had come to love in the old program while also adding new options, giving a much-needed consistency and flavor. At the same time, the number and variety of gifts available in the new catalog accommodated the varied tastes of Yankee's entire workforce, making it more relevant for everyone.

## THE RESULT

Today, employees at Yankee are excited by the expanded gift selection, and the injection of more branded and iconic items into the catalog. These changes have made it easier to celebrate Company values from within the program and as a result, today there is more avid manager participation and more frequent, purposeful, and meaningful workplace celebrations with more ceremony attached to individual anniversaries, making them personal events for employees. All involved (employees, managers and the benefits team) would agree that the new program is truly "scentsational," with a participation rate over 90% across the Corporate location and over 82% across the retail footprint.

Moreover, the powerful web-based recognition software that the program is built on also allows Yankee Candle to track all program activity through a central location, and provides reliable footing for easy global expansion in the future, which was a key goal for the project. The Yankee Candle team is most excited by the fact that the new program is automated to the point of "95% hands-free," realizing time savings and peace-of-mind for the benefits team. By streamlining the recognition culture that was already in place, the program is now aligned with best practices and delivering on the promise of "The World's Best Loved Employees."



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