

ADVOCATE MARKETING PROGRAM OF THE YEAR



The winner of this category is determined by popular vote. Staples rallied its advocates to submit an impressive 2,572 votes and take home the title.

THE GOAL:

The Staples advocate community, The InsidersNetwork, has been going strong for more than three years with rapid growth and high engagement. In 2018, Staples faced a unique challenge: providing a community that feels warm, personal, and close-knit while growing a sizeable customer base. In particular, Staples wanted to deepen the sense of connection amongst advocates while engaging more customers within their target segments.

METHOD:

Staples started by building on the basics that they had established over the last several years: Posting educational and fun content daily, engaging advocates in discussion forums, creating exciting quarterly experiences, running special events, and offering meaningful rewards.

In 2018, Staples used big data and customer personas to engage advocates. Here are just a few of the ways they scaled their community, while still giving advocates a personal experience:

- Launching a Welcoming Committee where the most-tenured advocates welcomed new Insiders and answered their questions.
- Offering more charitable donations as advocate rewards.

- Connecting with customers on a deeper level by giving them a place where they can share their joys and sorrows. The Staples team identified key moments in advocates' professional and personal lives, so they could reach out with a gift, a personalized note, or recognition in the community.
- Mobilizing Insiders to create content and then using it to acquire new advocates.

IMPACT:

- **220,807** completed challenges in 2018 YTD, an increase of **80%** from the same period last year
- **393** referrals, an increase of **163%** over the same period last year
- **4,112** social shares that generated **19,210** clicks
- **932** discussion topics posted, an increase of **80%** from the same period last year
- **43,894** comments and replies in 2018 YTD, an increase of **109%** from the same period last year
- **34** blogs, articles, and infographics featuring advocates
- **\$7,500** in charitable donations as rewards
- **200+** customer participated in product trials



“When customers engage with a brand, even as B2B buyers, they put their personal trust in your business. In return, you must show that you have the same trust in them. Customer advocacy can build trust in both directions by putting a personal face on a potentially impersonal business.”

- **Amanda Salem**, Advocacy Manager, Staples