



Ryder and The Ice Cream Club

Rewarding Membership for More than Three Decades

When it comes to growing your business, it not only helps to think big, but to partner with companies that know how to help you get big. "Ryder manages 300 to 500 trucks for some of its clients," says Heather Draper, director of The Ice Cream Club. "We have eight. But when we have any kind of need, they make us feel like we're their number one customer at that moment."

Purveyors of more than 175 unique flavors of ice cream and other cold treats, The Ice Cream Club began as a single storefront in 1982. The Florida-based company now produces one million gallons of their award-winning product for more than 550 ice cream shops, restaurants, and other clients across the southeast U.S. and Caribbean Islands. Their meticulous attention to making ice cream accounts for this growing demand—but reaching their expanding customer base would be impossible without their close relationship with Ryder.

MOVING PRODUCT— AND KEEPING IT COLD

As you might expect, the logistics of moving ice cream products across the country are complicated. "Many of our routes are overnight or longer," says Rich Draper, CEO of The Ice Cream Club. "So we require mechanical refrigeration, not just cold packs. You can't just show up with a refrigerator truck or a box truck. It has to be a dedicated, low-temp ice cream truck."

Ryder's access to specialized vehicles was a huge selling point for The Ice Cream Club—as was Ryder's highly responsive maintenance infrastructure. "We have a lot of inventory on our trucks—\$20,000 to \$30,000 worth of invoiced ice cream going on these two- or three-day routes," says Draper. "We needed assurance that we'd have breakdown assistance. Having the Ryder network out there makes a big difference—not only for saving the immediate product, but saving the route."

Mike Steetle of Ryder has worked with dairies and creameries before, but

says The Ice Cream Club is unique, requiring his team to make special accommodations. "We've enhanced our service capabilities for them because there's such a sense of urgency and sensitivity to the product—to the integrity of it," says Steetle. "They send their drivers out for days with the same truck. We don't want a situation where everything turns into milkshakes."

THE ROAD AHEAD

From operating its own single storefront to supplying hundreds of storefronts, businesses, and consumers, The Ice Cream Club is a success story built around the on-time and on-temperature delivery of its high-quality product. "We've been at this for 33 years now, and we're still growing," says Draper. "It's nice to know that as we continue to grow, we'll be able to grow with Ryder and utilize even more of their services."

"After all," he says, "we can have the best product in the world, but if we can't get it to people in a timely manner, what's the point?" ■