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**F**ood  
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# Success Story: eCreamery Personalized Ice Cream Gifts

## Company Profile

eCreamery.com blends aspects of American culture that this generation has grown to love: large, colorful, personalities and the ability to do everything by a click of a button. At eCreamery.com, customers can create, name, and ship personalized ice cream flavors (to themselves or as a gift!) from their computer or smartphone. Owners Becky App and Abby Jordan combined their knowledge of the retail gift trade with their passion for exceptional foods to create their successful Omaha, Nebraska-based company.

In addition to the online gift market, eCreamery.com operates a traditional ice cream and gelato parlor in Omaha. eCreamery.com also offers a wholesale line of ice cream and gelato flavors to the foodservice industry, specifically restaurants. One unique aspect is the ability of restaurants to design a signature flavor. Currently, online sales comprise 60 percent of their business.

## Situation

Becky App and Abby Jordan became acquainted in 2001 while working in the marketing and eCommerce division of the renowned Omaha jewelry store Borsheims. Over time a friendship developed as the two bonded over work and their shared love for food. Their mutual interests and vision morphed into a full-fledged business complete with a retail store and processing space.

Their experience in the high-end retail gift market gave them an understanding of the importance of a personalized gift. It takes the time of the gift-giver—which shows loyalty and love—and the consideration



of the receiver to a whole new level. Not only is the gift-giver seeking to purchase something the receiver will like, but something that connects their gift to the receiver in only a way the giver could communicate. Becky and Abby wanted to give consumers the opportunity to do just this and they wanted to combine the idea with food, because food speaks directly to the soul.

The model for eCreamery.com materialized in 2006 when their investor, Mark Hasebrook, purchased an existing, though somewhat dysfunctional, website that allowed users to create custom ice creams. Immediately, Abby and Becky had the idea to move away from customized self-purchase and create a space that invited personalized gifting.

## Solution

The two realized they could benefit from outside assistance in launching their business, especially as the food industry has myriad rules and regulations.

To learn more about the intricacies of starting a food business Abby and Becky attended The Food Processing Center's seminar "From Recipe to Reality". This nationally recognized workshop is specifically designed for food entrepreneurs and provides an overview of the marketing, business and technical aspects that need to be taken into consideration.

The education they received from this course included information on federal and state regulations, packaging requirements, distribution channels and valuable contacts with industry experts. The pair subsequently worked on recipe development, distribution (shipping) and revamping the website. The duo launched eCreamery.com in mid-2007.

In 2011 Abby and Becky were approached by The Food Processing Center to take part in a new initiative pioneered by Gallup, Inc. Over the past five years, Gallup has been adapting their globally validated behavioral economic sciences/systems specifically to help entrepreneurs increase sales, profits, and ultimately, to sustainably grow their businesses. The end product—the Entrepreneur Acceleration System (EAS)—uses one-on-one mentoring to facilitate an enterprise's growth strategy.

Abby and Becky's efforts to grow the business contributed to stretched demands on their time. They welcomed the opportunity to work with a mentor to systematically review their operations and identify problem areas. The customer service analysis and personality assessment sections of EAS were extremely valuable to eCreamery.com. The discussions and activities made the owners analyze the details of each interaction with a customer and implement improvements in areas that had previously been overlooked. The personality assessment gave

eCreamery.com a clear understanding of their team and each member's individual strengths. As a result, some specific job tasks were reassigned to better suit skill sets which in the end served everyone better. Employees were happier with the projects they were responsible for and they were performed more efficiently. From a human resources and financial perspective this was a great improvement for eCreamery.com!

## Results

Since Recipe to Reality and the knowledge that The Food Processing Center has been able to give to eCreamery.com, they have seen tremendous sales and growth. As people continue to learn ice cream gifts exist and the public's comfort level with shipping frozen foods increases, eCreamery.com is confident in the continued growth of their company. Currently, as they look towards expansion they have begun researching ways to lower shipping costs to their consumers. Production and distribution capabilities on either coast are their latest move in order to better serve the needs of their target audience. Economic impacts can be measured as follows:

- In 2011 sales were approximately \$560,000
- eCreamery.com now employs 3 full-time and 9 part-time staffers
- eCreamery.com is now shipping about 5,000 ice cream gifts annually, accounting for approximately 60 percent of the business

Next up is an appearance on ABC's 'Shark Tank', pitching their business to a panel of venture capitalists. Regardless of whether or not they receive funding, the television appearance will provide prime national exposure.

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## Testimonial

We have seen double digit sales growth year over year since inception. The education [received through Recipe to Reality] on packaging requirements, distribution channels and contacts for industry experts were very valuable.

*Becky App*  
Owner

