

Central Smith Creamery

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Headquarters	739 Lindsay Road, Selwyn, Ontario K9J 0C5
Year Established	1896
NAICS	311520 - Ice cream and frozen dessert manufacturing
Employees	37
Major Expansions	N/A
Exports	N/A
Parent Company	N/A
Other Locations	N/A

Nothing says “summer” quite like enjoying a heaping cone of ice cream. With the motto, “We dream in ice cream,” Central Smith Creamery (Central Smith) perfectly encapsulates the sense of delight that both adults and children feel as they have their first taste of summer.

Located on the Lindsay highway, just outside of Peterborough, Ontario, Central Smith manufactures a variety of mouth-watering frozen desserts, such as ice cream, sorbet, frozen yogurt, and sundaes. The company began as a farmer’s co-op geared towards serving the Smith Township; however, in the early 1950s, Central Smith was sold to an individual buyer and subsequently, to the Scates family.

Today, husband and wife Ian and Jennifer Scates continue to own and operate Central Smith while working tirelessly to uphold the company’s mission: “To provide customers with an exceptional experience by ensuring quality service and innovation in [Central Smith’s] products.” Their hard work and dedication has not gone unrewarded. Over the past three to five years, Central Smith achieved 80 per cent growth, generating between \$10 million and \$15 million annually in revenue. Recognizing that this growth rate is likely unsustainable, both Ian and Jennifer have agreed to aim for 5 per cent year-over-year growth going forward.

Birthday cake, chai vanilla, and chocolate fudge brownie are just a few of the 56 ice cream flavours produced by Central Smith. With a customer base spanning all across Canada, Central Smith serves a number of different markets, such as restaurant chains, hospitals, schools, and scooping parlours. When asked about exporting to the United States, Ian explains that the NAFTA agreements in place the tariffs are too large and trade with dairy products are discouraged.

Without international expansion, Central Smith will continue to innovate and develop its product offerings to satisfy untapped markets. An influx in new Canadians created an opportunity for Central Smith that management was more than willing to capitalize on. By producing new exotic flavours, such as black sesame, red bean, purple ube, and cheddar cheese corn, Central Smith broadened its customer base, thereby increasing revenues.

Having established itself as a major business-to-business supplier of ice cream and frozen desserts, Central Smith has developed a good reputation in the food service sector. “Compared to the early days, when we were fighting for every dollar, things have gotten a little easier,” says Ian. Nowadays, the company’s focus is on customer retention and ensuring an exceptional customer experience—from the moment the order is placed to its delivery.

Currently, Central Smith employs 37 individuals from a variety of educational backgrounds, including high school and university graduates. Historically, the average level of education for employees has been lower than other manufacturing firms; however, Ian and Jennifer are beginning to require a higher level of education for their hires.

With jobs in administration, sales, production, etc., Central Smith employs individuals with a wide range of skills. Given the unique nature of ice cream manufacturing, Central Smith has yet to partner with any post-secondary institutions; nonetheless, the company is open to developing such partnerships in the near future, once it has developed the appropriate infrastructure.

Few companies in Eastern Ontario are as devoted to their local communities as Central Smith. By providing a number of charitable initiatives, fundraisers, and church groups with delicious desserts, the company helps organizations raise money while keeping costs to a minimum. Beyond making financial and product donations, both Ian and Jennifer contribute a significant amount of time to volunteering in their community. From sitting on the local hospital foundation’s board to participating in the annual Dragon Boat Festival, Ian and Jennifer undertake many activities that distinguish them as role models for all business owners looking to establish strong relationships with their respective communities.

Going forward, Central Smith will seek to create further efficiencies through lean manufacturing, and to maintain sustainable organic growth. With a wide range of flavours, loyal customers, and products offered at a competitive price point, there is no doubt that Central Smith will continue to thrive in the competitive ice cream and frozen dessert market.