

Amy's Ice Creams

Location: Austin, TX

2017 Revenues: \$10.5 million

Employees: 241

The Critical Number™: Net Income

Playing the Game

Results

Since they began playing the Great Game in 2006 Amy's income has skyrocketed by 250% and net income, their Critical Number, has increased by 150% over the past ten years. But it's not just the core business that's growing; catering has increased 5% year-over-year, Ice Cream Cakes 15%, and online sales 57%. The additional product lines allow Amy's to diversify their income sources while also allowing for more nuanced cost reductions.

Playing the Game has also had a major impact on Amy's culture as well.

Through the fun and games, Amy's programs teach their young adult employees how to use their resources wisely and gain financial knowledge to create a quality of life they believe in. From business start-ups to financial planning, Amy's initial time investment has resulted in employees leaving with skills that are not only useful for the business but are life skills they can use long afterward.

"We are insanely focused on educating our people," says Mark Banks, Amy's COO and head of its educational training company, MBAmy's. "They want transparency, to see what's going on, and to be part of something bigger. We give them that by asking them to be part of the conversation about how we run our business."



Company Background

Amy Simmons started Amy's Ice Creams in 1984; it's since grown to include 15 stores in three cities: Austin, San Antonio, and Houston. From the beginning, the company has embraced the mission statement of "making people's day." When you buy a frozen treat from Amy's, you're also buying an experience.

Challenge

Find a way to grow leaders inside the business while tearing down the walls that existed between employees and employer. Also find a way to grow the next generation of business leaders capable of sustaining the company for 100 years and beyond.

Solution

Develop a business framework and common language to get everyone inside the business on the same page and working together to reach common goals.

MiniGame™ Spotlight

As you might expect, the team at Amy's regularly applies their creativity to MiniGames. For example, every Valentine's Day Amy's shuts down ice cream production and for 72 hours straight they hand-dip chocolate covered strawberries. The tradition was started to help the team better predict their production schedule and increase their cash flow. This year, the team reached their goal of \$95,000—and topped it to the tune of \$104,571. This was a 16% increase over plan and 37% increase in sales year-over-year.

What's also interesting is that while the team shares in the rewards from winning MiniGames, some stores choose to donate all their tier prizes to their favorite nonprofit and volunteer, as a store, as their prize. "That's the power of Amy's community," says Banks. "Wealth building isn't just about the deposits you make in your bank account but the deposits made in the community."

"The Great Game to me represents a way to run business in a way that is more inclusive from the top down. It means that the company is willing to work with their employees in order to accomplish a goal not just to order around their employees. We more often see each other as equal parts to a moving piece. Everyone is important in order to be successful."

Becky Schmader, Production Coordinator

What's Next?

One of the focuses for the Amy's team in the upcoming year is to improve its forecasting ability—while also increasing their ability to react and adapt to changes in the marketplace—something they're calling "agile forecasting." "We were noticing that people were just throwing out numbers when it came to their forecasts," says Banks. "It was clear that they were missing the strategic plan behind how we could meet those numbers. Our focus now is to help people look at their assumptions about what they think will happen and then compare those assumptions to the actual results. Forecasting is not about predicting the future; it's making the future you want to happen."

"For me, the Great Game means a community all invested in the success and future success of our company. Each player in the game can use their strengths to grow our company and questions are always welcomed. I am able to grow my financial literacy without being in a classroom. We have a strong core group of individuals who motivate and teach others to make those on the fly decisions while still (in some part) weighing the financial impact."

– Jennifer Scott, Operations Manager