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# Modern Trends in the Retail Ice Cream Store

R. J. COOLEY AND W. H. E. REID

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FIGURE 1.

80 QUESTIONNAIRES WERE RECEIVED FROM 18 STATES, REACHING OVER HALF THE POPULATION OF THE UNITED STATES.

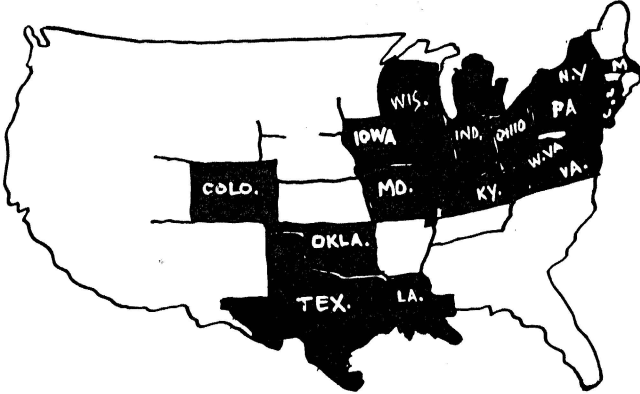


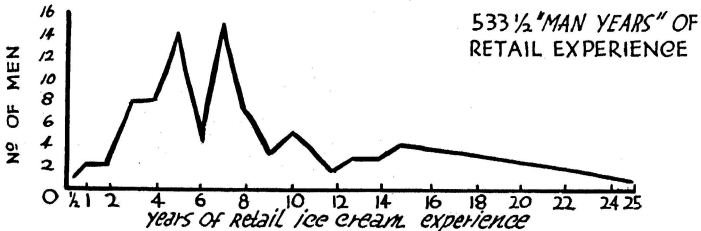
FIGURE 2.

POSITION AND EXPERIENCE OF THE 80 MEN ANSWERING THE QUESTIONNAIRE.

*(55% WERE ANSWERED BY CHIEF EXECUTIVES)*

<b>GEN. MGR. [25]</b>	☞ ☞ ☞ ☞ ☞ ☞
<b>STORE SUPERVISOR [10]</b>	☞ ☞
<b>PROD. MGR. [10]</b>	☞ ☞
<b>OFFICE [9]</b>	☞ ☞
<b>SALES &amp; ADV. [6]</b>	☞
<b>UNANSWERED [10]</b>	? ?

FIGURE 3.



# Modern Trends in the Retail Ice Cream Store

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As a means of acquiring information in regard to methods of operation, costs, and other factors relating to the retail ice cream stores, a questionnaire was distributed to the representatives of the National Association of Retail Ice Cream Manufacturers during its annual meeting at Chicago in October, 1939. The data compiled from the questionnaires represent an interesting study of the present day retail ice cream stores and their relation to the entire ice cream industry.

An investigation of exclusive and specialized retail ice cream stores (1)† located in 19 states was made in 1933 by the Dairy Products Institute. The facts presented were ascertained by investigation in the field and included observations on packaged ice cream sales, store location, store arrangement, selling and operating methods, and actual reports on stores visited.

The International Association of Ice Cream Manufacturers (2) in 1935 made a survey of the number of manufacturer-owned retail stores and the increase in the number of retail manufacturers in the same territory by a questionnaire answered by 304 replies. It was found that the increase in company-owned stores parallels, but slightly trails, the percentage increase in retail manufacturers in the same territory.

"How to Operate Retail Ice Cream Stores" (3) is an attempt to provide better accounting, control, and management in the retail ice cream store.

## SURVEY RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Figure 1 shows the states represented in this survey of 747 retail ice cream stores. The stores are located from the Atlantic Ocean west to the Rocky Mountains and from the Great Lakes south to the Gulf of Mexico. Over half of the population of the United States lives in the area of the eighteen states colored black.

Figure 2 presents a classification of 80 men who operate these 747 stores.

Figure 3 indicates the newness of the retail ice cream field. Seventy-three per cent of the retail operators were not engaged in retailing ice cream eight years previous to this survey.

\*The authors wish to express their appreciation to the members of the National Association of Retail Ice Cream Manufacturers whose splendid cooperation made possible this publication.

†Numerals refer to "Bibliography" page 23.

The greatest increase in numbers of men entering the retail ice cream business occurred during the most serious phase of the recent depression. Business failures due to the depression made numerous vacant store sites available at low rentals. The result was the establishment of numerous ice cream stores where, on the basis of greater volume, larger servings and more flavors could be offered the public. The ice cream manufacturer also learned that he had control of the quality of his product direct to the consumer. Ice cream dispensers could be more closely supervised and trained because the management was there to sell ice cream.

FIGURE 4.

## IMPORTANCE OF RETAILER

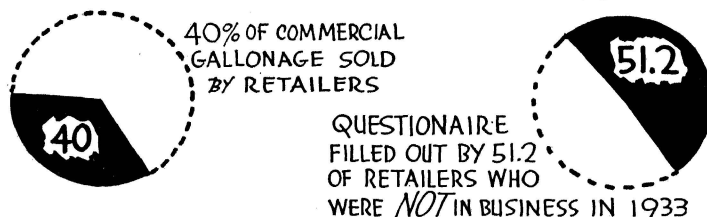


Figure 4 shows the importance of the retailer. The circle on the left shows a 1933 estimate of the commercial ice cream gallonage sold by retailers. An analysis of the U. S. Census Bureau report for 1935 shows 76.7 per cent of the ice cream sales as wholesale, and 23.3 per cent as retail sales, with 11.8 per cent directly to households, and 11.5 per cent through company-owned stores.

The trend toward retailing ice cream through specialized stores is in accord with similar developments in other businesses. In 1929, there were 23,000 confectionery stores in the United States; in 1939, 55,000. Restaurants in 1929 numbered approximately 124,000; by 1939, 251,000. This increase in numbers of retail outlets seems to be the new approach to volume sales and especially for purchases of ice cream.

### PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE IN TYPE OF RETAIL STORE

Figure 5 shows that 612 of a total of 747 retail ice cream stores operate on a twelve months' basis. This fact suggests that the summer cone shop which was equipped to handle only cone and packaged sales is being replaced by more stable year-around retail outlets for ice cream.

Figure 6 shows that 60 per cent of the retailers surveyed are opposed to summer cone shops. The second stage in the retail merchan-

FIGURE 5.

HOW MANY RETAIL STORES IN SURVEY?  
 747 RETAIL STORES  
 9.6 " " PER QUESTIONNAIRE

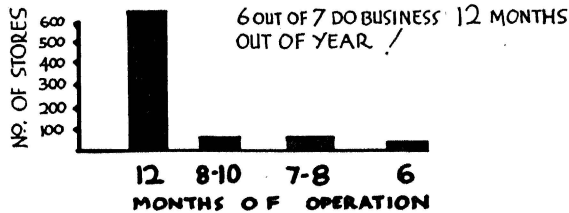


FIGURE 6.

HOW ABOUT OPENING  
*Summer* CONE SHOPS?

40%      (K)      (K)  
 60%      (N)      (N)      (N)

60% OF THE 80 RETAILERS  
 HAVING A TOTAL OF 533½ "MAN-YEARS"  
 OF RETAIL EXPERIENCE DO NOT  
 FAVOR ~~the~~ TEMPORARY  
 SUMMER CONE SHOP

dising is the operation of the complete dairy products store. Ice cream has a prominent place in these stores but is not so dominant as it is in the cone shops or in the third type of store. The fountain service store emerged from the second retail type of store. It is equipped with cone dispensing cabinets, display and package cabinets and complete fountain equipment with ample seating arrangements. This type of store concentrates its merchandising efforts on ice cream and ice cream products and may be successfully operated on a year around basis.

FIGURE 7.

## PREFERENCE OF RETAIL COTTAGES ~~to~~ BUSINESS SITES



Figure 7 suggests future trends in the type of retail ice cream store. The data show that 35 per cent of the retailers participating in the survey prefer the cozy, home-like, nicely landscaped, company-owned retail ice cream cottage with parking space.

FIGURE 8.

## IS THE RETAIL ICE CREAM STORE SUITED TO BUSINESS DISTRICTS AS WELL AS RESIDENTIAL AND SEMI-RESIDENTIAL SECTIONS ?



Figure 8 indicates that favored locations in business districts are also well suited to retail stores. However, the selection of a site depends on conditions in the community. The metropolitan down-town shopping district is considered undesirable for a specialized ice cream store. In large cities the business subcenters and residential areas are preferable for the retail store. The 1933 National Drug Store Survey in St. Louis found that resident patronage offers by far the greatest possibility for ice cream sales and that packaged ice cream sales are ten times as important at neighborhood fountains as at fountains in congested areas. On the other hand, the majority of retail ice cream stores covered in this survey are located in cities of less than 50,000 population. Here, the business district is preferred.

**The Transition Period**

Figure 9 shows that approximately half of the retailers reporting were also engaged in the wholesale phase (supplying dealer accounts) of the ice cream business. In the case of a diversified dairy plant, retailing dairy products of the nature sold on delivery routes should widen the company's contacts for new business. The occasional shoppers may become steady customers on one of the company's routes if they are sold on the products.

FIGURE 9.

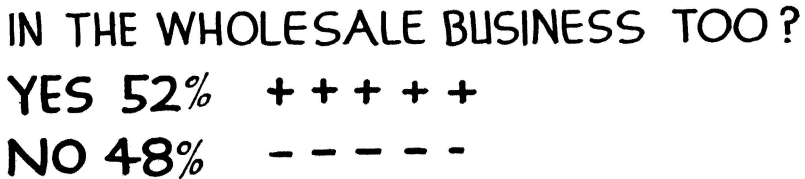


Figure 10 shows that approximately half of the retail ice cream stores sell ice cream made from ice cream mix that was purchased by the company.

FIGURE 10.

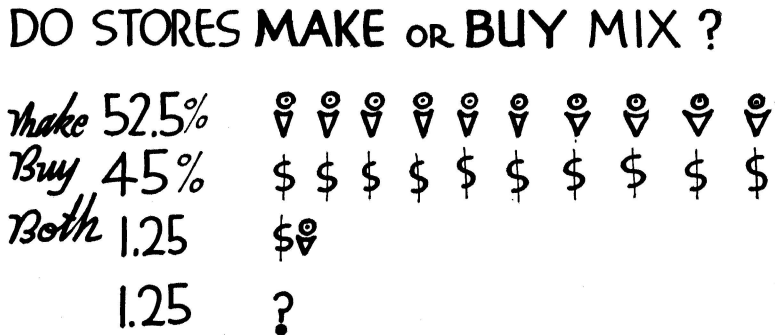
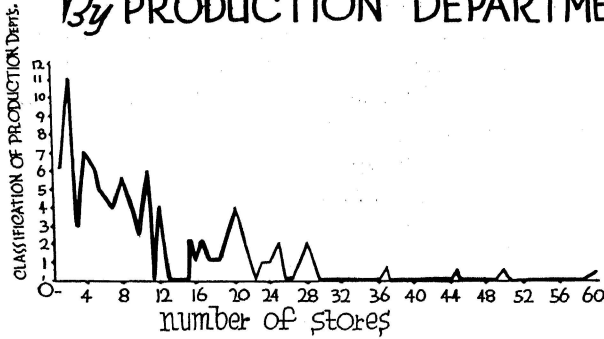


Figure 11 shows that fifty per cent of the ice cream production departments supply less than eight stores apiece with ice cream. In the majority of cases, retail operators found that eight to twelve retail outlets were necessary before it was economical for them to make up the ice cream mix and freeze it. It was found that retail organizations included from one to 60 stores.

FIGURE 11.

## NUMBER OF STORES SUPPLIED By PRODUCTION DEPARTMENTS



**50% OF THE PRODUCTION DEPARTMENTS SUPPLY LESS THAN 8 STORES A PIECE**

### Supplementary Merchandise Helps to Meet the Overhead

Figure 12 shows that four out of five retail ice cream stores carry merchandise other than ice cream alone. These added lines of merchandise like dairy products, boxed candy, luncheonette, sundries and

FIGURE 12.

## WHAT Merchandise IS CARRIED ?

SOLELY ICE CREAM ..



ICE CREAM + other MERCHANDISE ..



### ★ BREAKDOWN OF OTHER MERCHANDISE

- 70% Dairy Products
- 50% Luncheonette
- 47% Candy Dept.
- 23% candy Bars, Cigs. - Sundries
- 10% Delicatessen

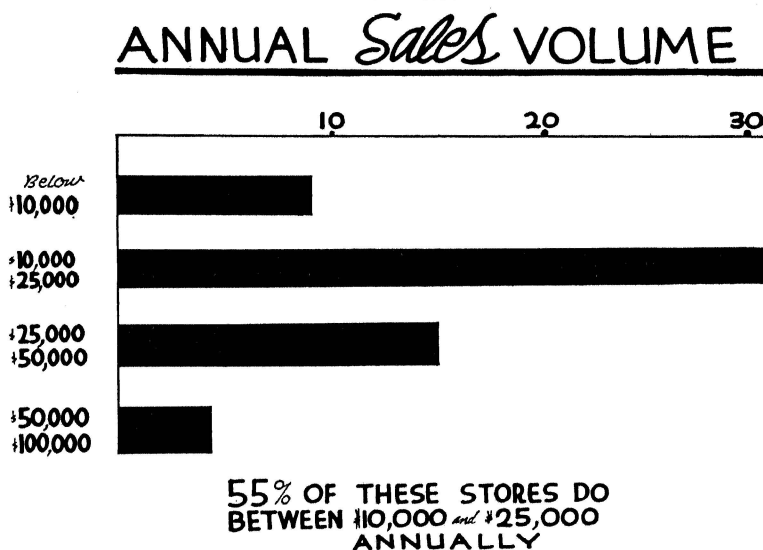
**4 OUT OF 5 STORES CARRY MERCHANDISE OTHER THAN *Ice Cream***



delicatessen have been added to the stock gradually in an effort to operate the store profitably the year around. Seventy per cent of the stores handling merchandise other than ice cream sell dairy products and half provide luncheonette service.

Figure 13 groups the 747 retail stores by sales volumes. Only 56 of the 80 questionnaires furnished data on the question of classification. Fifty-five per cent of these stores do a volume of business varying between \$10,000 and \$25,000 annually. This volume is in accord with the average intake of about \$18,000 for some 110,000 soda fountains in the United States during 1939 (4).

FIGURE 13.



#### Investments, Leases, Rents

Figure 14 gives the retailers' opinion of the minimum investment per retail ice cream store. Twenty-two retailers recommended the sum of \$4,000 and 22 others out of the total of 66 suggested \$6,000. In all, 67 per cent of these operators of 747 stores recommended from \$4,000 to \$6,000 as the minimum investment per retail ice cream store.

Figure 15 shows that practically one half of the retail ice cream stores are trying out air conditioning in from 5 to 100 per cent of their stores. It was found that 60 per cent of the retailers ventured no opinion on what increase in sales volume might be expected as the direct result of store modernization by a new front. The 40 per cent who had experience with sales increases associated with this improvement cited that an average figure would be about 20 per cent.

FIGURE 14.

WHAT IS THE *Minimum* Investment PER STORE?

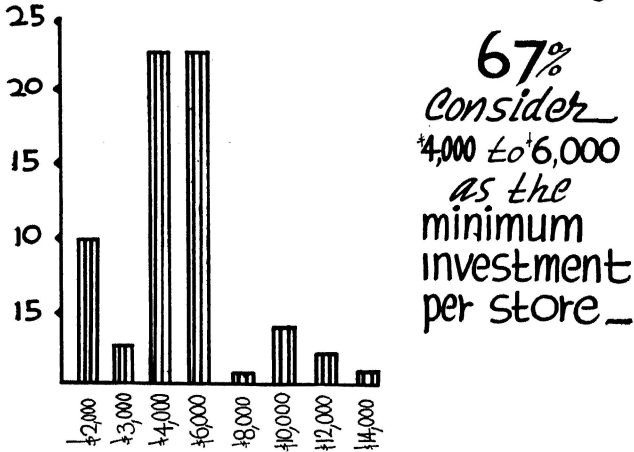


FIGURE 15.

## AIR CONDITIONING

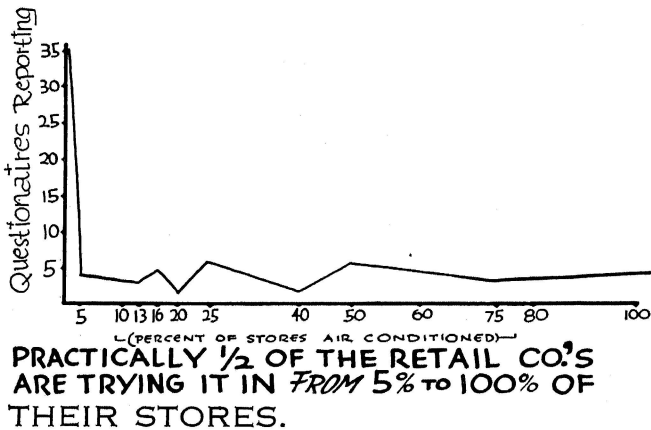
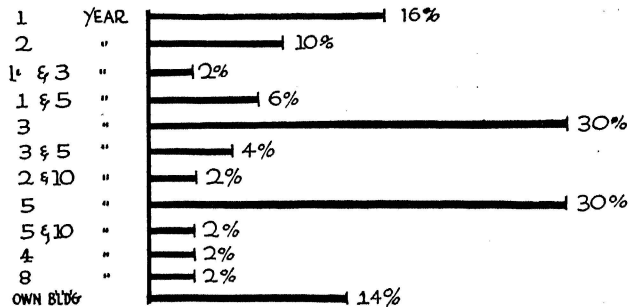


Figure 16 presents a classification of retail stores by lengths of leases. Three and five year periods appear most desirable and account for 60 per cent of the leases. In 14 per cent of the cases, the

FIGURE 16.

## HOW ABOUT LENGTHS OF LEASES?



**3 And 5 YEAR LEASES  
APPEAR MOST POPULAR**

store sites were owned by the company so that leases were unnecessary. A comparatively new attack on the question of leases has undergone preliminary tests in other retail enterprises. It is the so-called percentage lease which merely means that the landlord shall be paid an agreed-upon percentage of the tenant's gross sales.

### Rents, Inventories, Parking Facilities, Store Reputation

Figure 17 presents a classification of retail stores by the per cent of gross sales allowed for rental. Fifty per cent of the retailers gave definite figures which indicated that the average allowance for rental is in the range of 3½ to 5 per cent of gross sales.

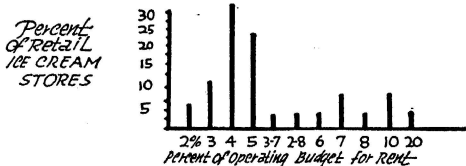
About 75 per cent of the retail ice cream store operators favor and recommend that the store and employees be protected by some system such as the Willmark Service System. These unannounced periodic checks on customer service, employee honesty and training serve to keep the organization alert.

Only 57 per cent of the retail operators consider that they have provided adequate parking facilities for their patrons. This is an important matter inasmuch as 96 per cent of the patrons are "on wheels" today.

Ice cream retailers realize the value of specializing on one particular stock item to the extent that a community reputation is established for it. Seven out of every eight retailers considers his organization as "famous for" such an item.

FIGURE 17.

WHAT SHOULD YOU ALLOW FOR RENT?



75% OF OPERATORS FAVOR PROTECTION OF STORE & EMPLOYEES BY SOME SYSTEM <sup>eq.</sup> WILL MARK

57% HAVE ADEQUATE PARKING FACILITIES

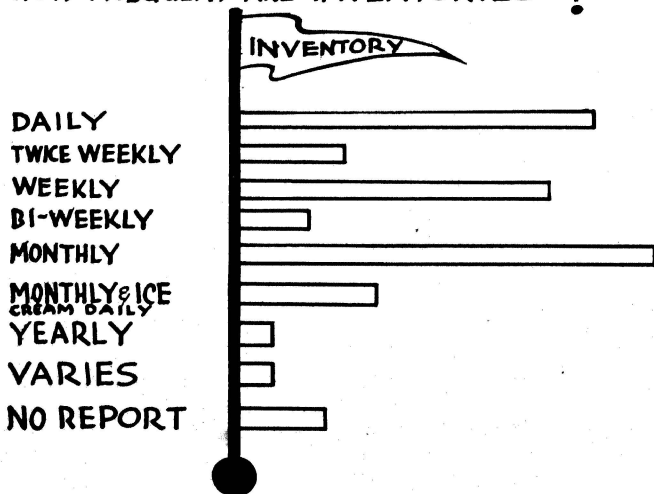
75% PROVIDE FREE UNIFORMS AND LAUNDRY

7 OUT OF 8 CREDIT THEMSELVES WITH A REPUTATION AS "FAMOUS FOR" AN ITEM.

Figure 18 presents a classification of retail stores by frequency of inventory. The interval between inventories ranges from daily to monthly. It was found that 31.2 per cent of the retailers took daily inventories, 26.2 per cent took weekly inventory, and 37.5 per cent made complete inventory only once monthly.

FIGURE 18.

HOW FREQUENT ARE INVENTORIES ?



**Seasonal Influence on Ice Cream Sales**

Figure 19 shows that ice cream production is affected by seasonal demand. Winter production amounts to only one fourth of summer volume. However, the fluctuation in labor used does not maintain a direct relationship with production because considerable employment is given during the slack production period. The efficient use of labor would be facilitated if greater winter sales were possible. One of the problems of the ice cream industry is to meet the question of seasonality in ice cream sales. Gains have been made in increasing ice cream consumption, for in 1910 the per capita consumption was 1.04 gallons (5) as compared to about 3.00 gallons per capita today in the United States.

FIGURE 19.

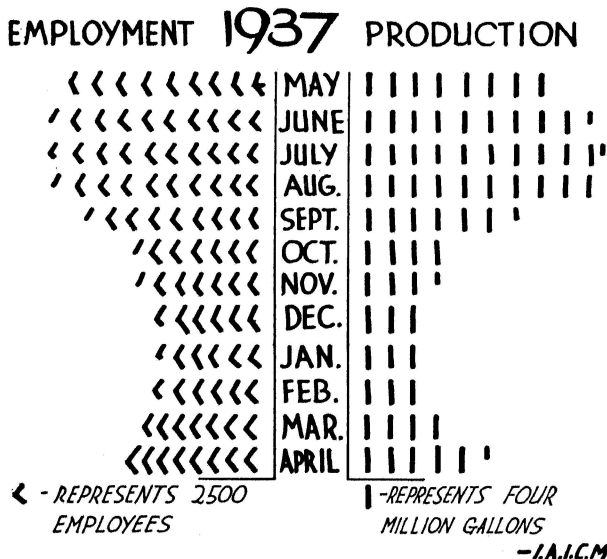


Figure 20 shows the average sale in the retail ice cream store by week days (6). The range in average sales was from 13.2 cents during the first four days of the week to 18.1 cents for the week-end days. The average sale of ice cream or ice cream products, at 13 St. Louis fountains (7) over the summer period ranged from 10.9 to 17.5 cents and for the winter period, from 11.0 to 20.2 cents. The week-end increase in the average sale may be accounted for by the fact that sales of packaged ice cream are greater.

The data further shows the increase in net profits possible if the average sale is increased by two and one-half cents or 27.17 per cent of the prevailing winter range in existing average sales.

FIGURE 20.

AVERAGE SALE BY WEEK DAYS

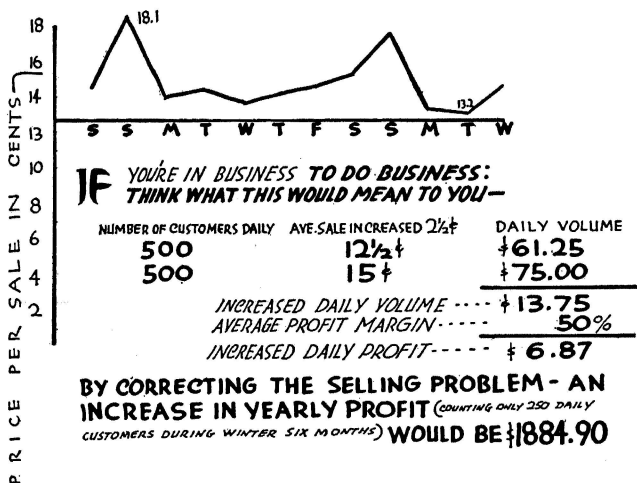


Figure 21 presents a solution to the problem of increasing the average sale in the retail ice cream store. This answer is peculiarly adapted to the merchandising of ice cream because it was upon this adaptation that the retail store is economically justified. Through retail outlets the ice cream manufacturer maintains a direct contact with consumers. The retailer can train and closely supervise his

FIGURE 21.

INCREASING *the* AVERAGE SALE —

FAVOR	9	yes
CAPPEL-McDONALD	14	no
SYSTEM	57	UNANSWERED
TRIED	6	yes
SYSTEM	53	no
	21	UNANSWERED

ONLY ABOUT 1 OUT OF 10 HAVE TRIED TO STIMULATE SALES BY USE OF EMPLOYEE COMPENSATION

fountain operators. They are the "front" or contact representatives by which the business is judged. The data indicated that only about one out of ten retailers have provided a compensation stimulus in an effort to advance selling. The trend is toward increasing the average sale by encouraging the clerks to practice suggestive selling.

**The Store Manager**

Figure 22 classifies the retail stores by the methods used in compensation store managers. Sixty per cent of the 747 store managers are receiving financial incentives in addition to a base pay. This observation suggests that an attempt is being made to pay store managers for extra initiative that results in sales. If a similar effort were made to reward the clerks on the floor for suggestive selling, the retail sales organization would approach its potentialities. Besides increasing sales, the morale is improved.

FIGURE 22.

**COMPENSATING STORE MANAGERS**



FIGURE 23.

**ARE WOMEN RESPONSIBLE MANAGERS IN LOW OR MEDIUM VOLUME STORES**

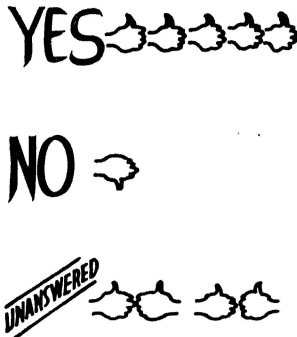


Figure 23 shows that women are considered by the majority of retailers to be responsible managers in the low to medium volume retail ice cream store. A great scarcity of capable men has developed and to meet this condition women have been employed behind the soda fountain. Incidentally, the standard of women's wages is somewhat lower than that for men in the retail ice cream store.

**Operating Trends in the Retail Ice Cream Store**

Figure 24 shows the makes of ice cream dishers that were being used in the retail ice cream stores included in this survey. Eleven differ-

ent commercial dishers were mentioned by the retailers, although 75 per cent of the retailers used one of three makes.

FIGURE 24.

### MAKES OF *Dishers* USED

19	HAMILTON BEACH
16	ZEROLL
10	MYERS
5	BENEDICT
4	RAINBOW
3	ARNOLD
2	PYRAMID
2	FRANKLIN
2	VARIOUS
1	ZERO
1	ROLLHI
1	GILCHREST
20	UNANSWERED

• 75% Used Only 3 of the  
12 Makes Mentioned —

FIGURE 25.

### HOW MANY DIPS *for a nickel?*

60%	↑↑↑	DOUBLE-DIP
40%	↑↑	SINGLE-DIP
19	RETAIL STORES	#1 DIPS vs #2 DIPS
1	-	1 - 16 -
4	"	1 - 20 -
1	"	1 - 30 -
2	"	1 - ? -
2	"	1 - <sup>SPoon</sup> SCOOP -
7	"	2 - 20 -
24	"	2 - 24 -
12	"	2 - 30 -
3	"	2 - ? -

• 75% of the *dippers*  
were #1 \* 24 \* 30

Figure 25 shows that there is a definite lack of uniformity in the size of ice cream cone servings. The size ranged from a single dip with a No. 30 disher to two dips with a No. 20 disher. Regardless of the weights involved, the consumer notices these extreme variations in the amount of ice cream for a nickel. The majority of retailers seemed to favor the double dip to the single dip cones.

FIGURE 26.

### PRICE STRUCTURES *Compared to* NEARBY STORES

50%	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
35%	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓		
15%	=	=	=						

Figure 26 indicates that half of the retailers regard their price lines as higher than that of neighboring fountains. Perhaps they are justified on the grounds that the consumer expects higher quality in product, service, and related conveniences from the retail ice cream specialist (see Fig. 27).



FIGURE 27.

↗ DOES CONSUMER EXPECT HIGHER QUALITY *from A* SPECIALIST?

53% *YES*  
 35% *NO*  
 12% *Better Quality - Less Price*

**Carry-home Sales, Venders, Home Delivery Systems**

Figure 28 shows that the retailers do not consider that the house-to-house ice cream vender who visits the residential sections is taking over any material amount of the trade which normally would go to

FIGURE 28.

↗ HOUSE TO HOUSE COMPETITION  
 DO YOU FEEL THAT "HOUSE-TO-HOUSE SALES"  
 IS TAKING OVER ANY OF YOUR TRADE?

YES +  
 NO - - - - -

the retail store serving that neighborhood. They feel that he is out inviting new business. Actually, the vender is the retail ice cream store's system of home delivery in some sections. Thus, in Figure 29

FIGURE 29.

MAINTENANCE  
 OF A  
 HOME-DELIVERY  
*System*

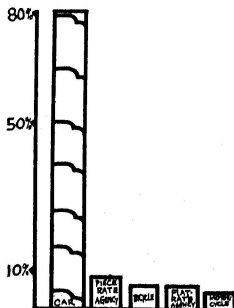
55% NO  
 40% YES  
 5% UNANSWERED



*only 2 out of 5  
 maintain Home Delivery System.*

FIGURE 30.

MAINTAINING  
 THE  
 HOME-DELIVERY  
*System*



Methods of Maintenance

one observes that only about 40 per cent of the stores maintain delivery service in the area which they serve. Figure 30 shows that the majority of home delivery systems are maintained by a company-owned car.

FIGURE 31.

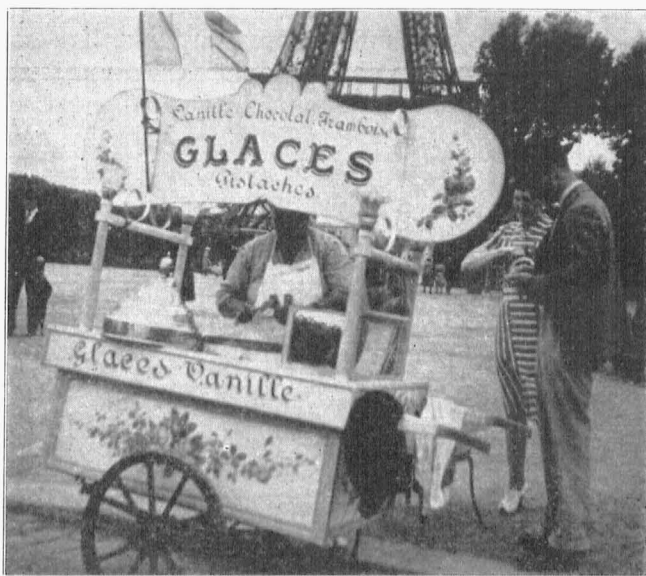


Figure 31 pictures a French ice cream venter at the base of the Eiffel Tower in Paris, France, on Bastille Day, 1938. The attendant is seen dipping two cones of ice cream which cost about three cents apiece. The metal bell-jar on the top of the two-wheeled cart covers the ice cream. The cream was refreshing to thirsty cyclers but considerably below American standards of quality. Per capita consumption in France was one pint before the Second World War began. Since there are no soda fountains (as Americans know them) in the European countries, ice cream sales are made chiefly through such venders.

Figure 32 shows that over half of the retailers believe that their winter carry-home sales of ice cream are greater than their summer sales. One third of the retailers are so located as to find that summer carry-home sales larger than their winter sales. The graph in Figure 32 compares the per cent of total sales arising from carry-home sales during the winter and summer periods. The line representing the summer period is the one whose peak is opposite the questionnaire

FIGURE 32.

## DOES SEASON AFFECT CARRY-HOME SALES?

GREATER IN WINTER Months **58%**  
 GREATER IN SUMMER Months **32%**  
 SAME **10%**

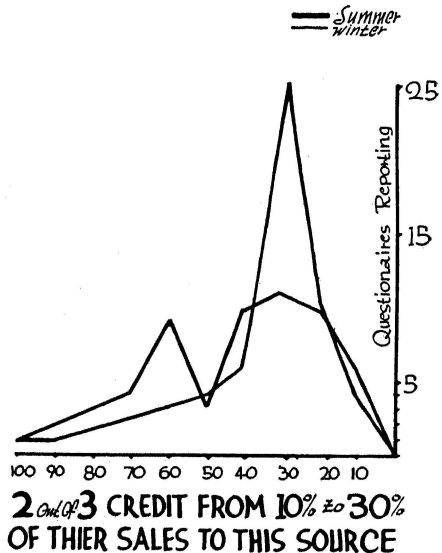


figure 25. Here it is observed that two out of every three retail ice cream stores that do a carry-home business in the summer months credit from ten to thirty per cent of their gross sales to this source. The line representing the winter period has two peaks. One is at the 30 per cent of sales figure and the second is at the 60 per cent of sales figure which means that about 20 per cent of the stores fall in each major percentage classification. The need for more accurate accounting in retail ice cream stores is emphasized by the fact that 50 per cent of the retailers were unfamiliar with the per cent of sales contributed from carry-home merchandise during the winter months and 30 per cent for the summer months.

Eighty per cent of the retail ice cream stores which maintained systems of home delivery reported that ten per cent or less of gross sales were contributed by the home delivery system. The range began at one-half per cent of gross sales attributed to home delivery and extended to 20 per cent.

### Advertising Medias and Budgeting the Expenditures

Figure 33 shows how the retailers evaluate nine leading types of advertising medias. The retailer's rating may be compared with what the wholesaler actually invested in the different kinds of media in the year of 1936 (8). On the retailer's side, it is noted that on the basis of novelties receiving one citation, point-of-purchase media was awarded eleven citations and the other nine media in proportion to the



# TABLE OF ADVERTISING PERSUASIVENESS

1939 (POINTS IN ORDER) 1935

FIGURE 35.

FIGURE 36.

HEALTH CLEAN SCIENTIFIC CONSTRUCTION USES TIME SAVED APPETIZING EFFICIENCY SAFETY QUALITY MATERIAL WORKMANSHIP PRICE SERVICE CONVENIENCE FAMILY AFFECTION FIRM REPUTATION GUARANTEE SYMPATHY IMITATION COURTESY ECONOMY RECREATION HOSPITALITY		III III II  III III III (FOOD)  III III III III III III II (APPETITE + REFRESHMENT + FLAVOR)  III III III III I          III III I (CONVENIENCE + SEASONAL)  III III     III
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Figure 36 shows the relative amounts of ice cream advertising dollars which were spent for each of the appeals listed in Figure 35. Seven basis appeals were emphasized in the ice cream advertising copy. They included, in order of importance from the standpoint of dollars spent for each, the appetizing appeal, quality of product, food value, healthfulness, convenience, firm's reputation, and the economy of the product. (10)

Pacemakers in selling the dairy industry are proving that the future in advertising lies in consumer education. Although the average food dollar in the United States contains 26 per cent worth of dairy products, the milk and equivalents in average low-cost diets (11) in Chicago amount to only 12 cents as an average figure. By careful dietary planning and buying, much more healthful meals were provided on the same or less money as the family had been spending for food. In changing the diet, milk and equivalents were raised to

supply 29 cents of each dollar in the demonstration diet. This is a positive approach in advertising.

### Why Customers Are Lost

Figure 37 shows why customers are lost by the retail store. (12) It was found in a survey of 1,483 retail stores that the human element was responsible for two-thirds of the dissatisfied customers. High prices, operating methods, and quality of product were of considerably less consequence in turning customers from retail stores than were the clerks and other company representatives. This fact emphasizes the importance of high grade personnel in the retail ice cream store.

FIGURE 37.

## *Why Customers are Lost:*

### POOR SALESMANSHIP

<i>indifference</i>	<i>ignorance</i>	<i>haughtiness</i>	<i>insistence</i>
---------------------	------------------	--------------------	-------------------

### POOR SERVICE

<i>errors &amp; delays</i>	<i>trickery</i>	<i>substitution</i>
----------------------------	-----------------	---------------------

### HIGH PRICES

--

### SLIPSHOD METHODS

--

### POOR QUALITY

--

**60%** OF LOST CUSTOMERS LEFT WITHIN <sup>the</sup> FIRST YEAR AFTER BECOMING CUSTOMERS

— National Cash Register Survey 1,483 Stores

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