

Consumer Products Case Study

# Social Capitalism and ice cream.

## That's right— ice cream!

Using social to build, nurture, and drive brand value registers at the cash register for this creative consumer-products company.

“A platform like CIQ allows us to internally build lists, track campaigns, and monitor results. **It's easy to get great results from CreatorIQ.**”

Global Assistant Marketing Manager  
& Influencer Relations

## Business Description

# This iconic American company manufactures ice cream, frozen yogurt, and sorbet.

Founded in 1978 in Burlington, Vermont, the company went from a single ice cream parlor to a multinational brand over the course of several decades. The company was purchased by a global conglomerate, and is now one of only 13 brands owned by this conglomerate to eclipse \$1 billion in annual brand sales.

Innovation and social impact are core principles at this U.S.-based global brand. For example, they were the first global brand to transition to “Eco-Pint” packaging, which packaged all flavors first in environmentally friendly unbleached paperboard, then brown-craft unbleached paperboard, critical steps toward a totally biodegradable package made without added chlorine.

## Business Impact



Revenue



Cost Optimization



Operational Efficiency

“Our creator team is run so lean. We have so few internal resources. But that’s shifting in our organization. There is a big shift to influencer marketing. As a company, we know there’s more trust from fans from influencers and less trust in brands.”

Global Assistant Marketing Manager  
& Influencer Relations


# Social issues and selling ice cream have always gone hand-in-hand for this brand, as demonstrated by...

- | Opposition to drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. On Earth Day, when a vote in the U.S. Senate proposed the opening of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil drilling, the brand launched a protest by creating the largest-ever Baked Alaska, which weighed 900 pounds (410 kg), and placing it in front of the U.S. Capitol Building.
- | An April Fool's Day joke which saw the brand launch an advertising campaign and a fictitious website to promote its milk products, which purportedly came exclusively from **cloned cows**.

**This tongue-in-cheek hoax** was done to raise awareness of the increasing presence of products from cloned animals within the food chain, and to campaign for a tracking system of cloned animal products. The hoax was revealed on April Fool's Day with the message: "We believe you should have the right to choose which foods you eat—and not to eat cloned foods if you don't want to. And that's why we believe we need a national clone tracking system, so people and companies can know where their food is coming from."

"Agencies still help support us. But without CIQ we would need to at least double the size of our team"

Global Assistant Marketing Manager  
& Influencer Relations



Today, with the support of its parent company, the brand has partnered with **influencers and ambassadors** who also feel passionate about social issues.

Together, these brand partners have pressed for:



**Approval of same-sex marriage**



**Campaign finance reform**



**Support for the Occupy Wall Street movement**

The new detente is real, according to the brand's senior food scientist in the company's South Burlington, Vermont headquarters. After working at the brand's parent company's food division in its U.S. corporate offices in Englewood Cliffs, N.J., for four years, she transferred to the brand two years ago. "When I first got here, there were different people in leadership, and there was a sense that it was acquired versus the acquirer," she said. "It's definitely become a lot easier to work together lately, and the cross-pollination is happening more and more."

"We've seen a shift in the industry. The consumer marketplace puts more trust in influencers than in brands. This belief in the shift goes all the way up [to our CMO]."

**Global Assistant Marketing Manager  
& Influencer Relations**

# Whether you agree or disagree with the brand's politics, you can't question its **conviction**.



This attitude extends to the way the brand treats its customers, people, environment, and all manner of social causes.



This approach is synonymous with the brand, and has been integral to brand recognition and successful global growth.

**Creativity, innovation, and tackling social causes requires authenticity with everything you do. Without this authenticity, everything the brand stands for could be called into question.**

"If our CFO insisted on pinning me down, I would say you could attribute 2% of our sales to our micro- and nano-influencer programs. I could defend that."

Global Assistant Marketing Manager  
& Influencer Relations



# Critical Business Issues



**Identify** authentic, true-believer influencers and brand ambassadors.



**Leverage** the new reality: influencers are more believable than brands.



**Support** a billion-dollar brand with a lean influencer marketing team.



**Optimize** the Mixed Media Model (MMM) and increase the social media value of influencer marketing—particularly “owned”



**Support the “triple bottom line”:** “Make Great Products, Deliver Solid Profitability, and Work Towards Progressive Social Change”.

“We are a socially conscious activist company that just happens to sell ice cream. Because of that, we find that local-market micro-influencers are the most powerful sources of creating a community. CIQ helps us focus on authentic micro-influencers, which allows us to stay true to our brand. Micro-influencers drive up our Social Media value (SMV). Our agencies are doing a global study MMM [Media Mix Modeling] right now to measure the impact of our marketing and advertising campaigns to determine how various elements contribute to our goals, including the amount of SMV we generated last year—particularly our owned social media.”

Global Assistant Marketing Manager & Influencer Relations

## Addressing The Challenge

This global consumer brand sees itself as an **activist company** that happens to sell ice cream.

Because the brand was acquired by a \$45 billion global consumer products conglomerate, there were considerable challenges to this self-conception.

Brand potential was the reason for the brand's \$326 million acquisition price. One challenge was that the ice cream maker now had to satisfy its new parent company while staying true to what it called the "triple bottom line": "Make Great Products, Deliver Solid Profitability, and Work Towards Progressive Social Change."

Prior to its acquisition, this company donated 7.5 percent of its profits to charity, offered living wages and strong benefits, supported local farmers, and **believed that its progressive social mission was as important as its profit.**

Surely a \$45 billion conglomerate had other ideas—it would undoubtedly choke the brand, remake the culture, and transform it into a profit-driven marketing machine that would eventually become unrecognizable to its fans.

"We are very selective about who we include in our influencer program. We check out everything about them by leveraging CIQ. We only partner with the influencers who are real in their pursuits. For this reason, we keep the number of influencers we manage to 200-250. Our campaigns may run for months."

Global Assistant Marketing Manager & Influencer Relations

## Addressing The Challenge

# But a **funny** thing happened on the way to the makeover.

**A dozen years after the acquirer paid handsomely for the ice cream maker, the progressive, activist, socially responsible culture is alive and well, and continues to spread its version of caring Capitalism all over the world.**

Rather than melt the ice cream maker's spirit, the acquirer, now a \$58 billion global powerhouse with more than 400 brands and 165,000 employees, has remade its own corporate mission to emulate socially conscious ideas. In this case, the very profitable tail is wagging the extremely satisfied dog.

"Our success has to do with our mission and values," says the brand's Global Assistant Marketing Manager & Influencer Relations. "It's hard to directly attribute earned to sales. But we do measure awareness. When we see awareness spiking, we see sales spiking." "If our CFO insisted on pinning me down, I would say you could attribute 2% of our sales to our micro- and nano-influencer programs."

### And rightly so:

**of the 400 brands owned by the conglomerate, only 13 have ever eclipsed \$1 billion in annual revenue—and our ice cream maker is one of them.**

"[Our] brand is only one of 13 brands owned by our parent company that has eclipsed \$1B in sales. Our success has to do with our mission and values. Our influencers must be like us, and CIQ helps ensure that they are. I said we are activists who just happen to sell ice cream—well, our partners are influencer activists who just happen to like ice cream :)."

**Global Assistant Marketing Manager & Influencer Relations**



## Addressing The Challenge

# The conglomerate **knew** what they were getting into.

“You have to understand what you are buying,” said Philip H. Mirvis, senior fellow at the Social Innovation Lab at Babson College, and an expert on mergers and acquisitions in the CSR (corporate social responsibility) space. “You are not only buying a brand, but an organizational way of **making the brand authentic**. You are delivering not only a socially responsible product, but one that is really good. If you don’t understand those pieces and manage that as part of the integration, you risk losing and ultimately undermining the brand.”

**If a corporate giant is simply seeking a shortcut to social responsibility, these deals will inevitably be troubled.**

“There are plenty of companies presenting themselves as caring Capitalists,” Mirvis said. “But if the partnership isn’t rooted in how they make and source the product, and how they really do business, then it’s just a phony advertising campaign.”



“We value qualitative over quantitative. Awareness among influencers and sentiment are important to us. The non-dairy or vegan space is a great example. The right influencers are talking about it. We use CIQ to measure qualitative. When engagement is high, we know they are “real” in the eyes of our customers. We look at actual posts, positive terminology, and overlap with traditional earned.”

**Global Assistant Marketing Manager & Influencer Relations**

# Are you **getting the idea?** **This ice cream maker is good at its core.**

**So it should come as no surprise that the brand will only align itself with influencers who are made of the same stuff.**

That's also why the brand chose CreatorIQ to help it build an influencer program in its image and likeness—and with more than a few sprinkles of authenticity.

Social Capitalism must be traversed carefully. Authenticity is hard to measure. We all know when we've found it, and we all know when it feels hollow. You can't fool the collective consciousness of social media.

The ice cream maker's Global Assistant Marketing Manager and Influencer Relations explained why this is so important when she said the following: "We've seen a shift in the industry. The consumer marketplace puts more trust in influencers than in brands. Influencers are collectively more relatable. This belief in the shift goes all the way up [to our CMO]. We believe customer's trust influencers more than they trust brands—even great brands like us."

"We are a socially conscious activist company that just happens to sell ice cream. Because of that, we find that local-market micro-influencers are the most powerful sources of creating a community. CIQ helps us focus on authentic micro-influencers, helping us stay true to our brand. Micro-influencers drive up our Social Media Value (SMV). Our agencies are doing a global study 'right now'—a MMM [Media Mix Modeling] to measure the impact of our marketing and advertising campaigns. This will determine how various elements contribute to our goals, including the amount of SMV we generated last year—particularly our social media owned."

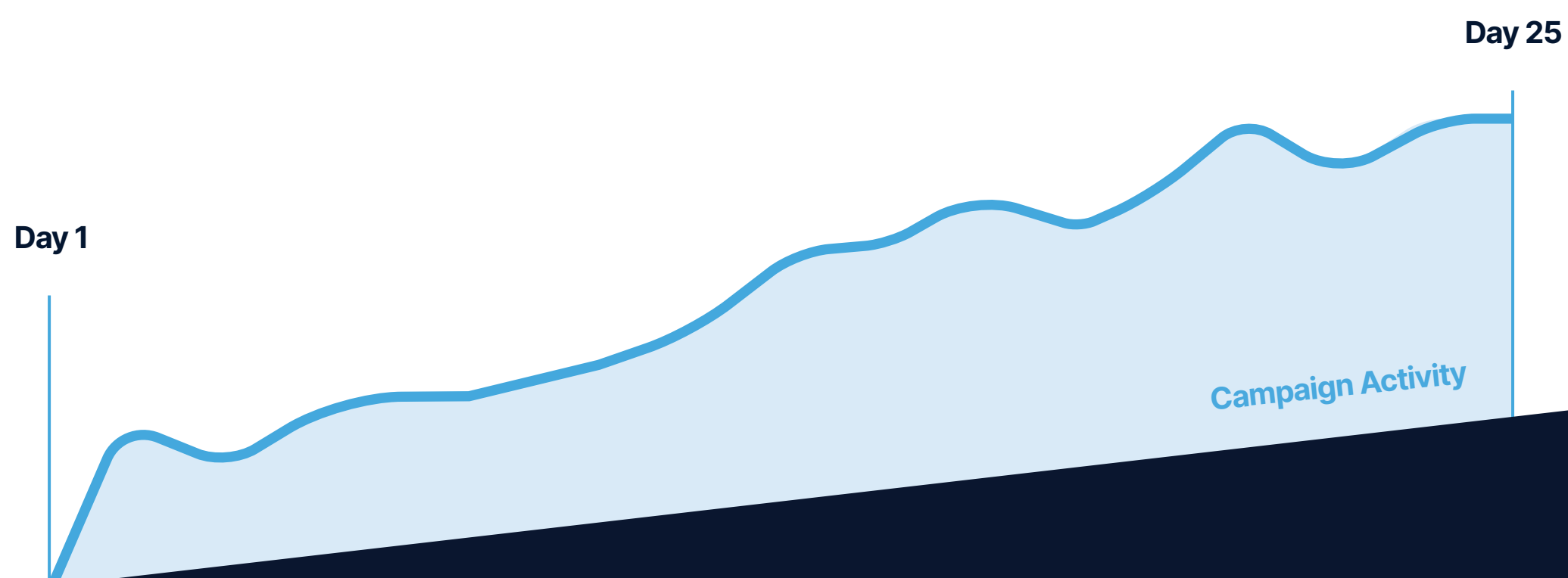
"We take on harder issues. We don't mind making people mad. Our success comes from being true to who we are. Influencers are at the heart of that. Finding the right influencers is hard, but critical."

**Global Assistant Marketing Manager  
& Influencer Relations**

# The insights derived from media mix modeling allow the ice cream maker's marketers to **refine their campaigns** based on a variety of factors, ranging from consumer trends to external influencers.

Ultimately, these marketers will be better equipped to create an ideal campaign that will drive engagement and sales.

"We are very selective about who we include in our influencer program. We check out everything about them by leveraging CIQ. We only pursue the influencers who are real in their pursuits. For this reason, we keep the number of influencers we manage to 200-250. Our campaigns can run for months, but the average is somewhere between 15-25 days."



"Our influencer program reports have a wide effect on the rest of the organization. Our CEO, CMO, management team, Digital team, Retail Operations, Global teams, and product development [over 20 people] all get our reports and insights helping make them all more productive and effective."

Global Assistant Marketing Manager & Influencer Relations

# Today, the parent company credits its relationship with its billion-dollar ice cream brand for teaching the corporate giant about **initiating stretch social goals** that really test the organization.

“We’re helped by having an organization like [the ice cream maker], where that has always mattered so much,” says the parent company’s President of Refreshment. “We’re learning about how to find completely new Fair Trade, sustainable sources of product from an organization that has always put stretch objectives into such areas.”

To balance with a \$58 billion parent, and to maintain and retain its authenticity, the brand carefully vets every influencer. Every campaign is crafted to ensure it supports the brand—not to make money, but to make good. And the money follows.

From a pure business perspective, the acquisition is an unquestioned success. Our global ice cream company has **grown every year since the acquisition, and has more than doubled its revenue.**



**The brand is stronger than ever, and is available in nearly 30 countries.** By any measure, it is a crown jewel in its parent company’s brand portfolio.

“It’s hard to attribute digital media’s effect on sales, but we do see correlations with “earned” to traditional sales when we combine it with an ‘Ice Cream Now digital campaign,’ where our product is then delivered via Instacart, Uber Eats, or Amazon.”

Global Assistant Marketing Manager & Influencer Relations



# Metrics



Social media influencer marketing helped this brand become a globally recognized socially responsible ice cream maker that's increased its revenue from \$237M to over \$1B per year since 2000.



Increased productivity of 20 additional downstream executives—digital, product, and marketing leaders are more effective thanks to CreatorIQ's reporting and analytics.



Lean influencer team is 100% more productive due to CreatorIQ



Staying true to the brand's "triple bottom line": "Make Great Products, Deliver Solid Profitability, and Work Towards Progressive Social Change".

"[If our CFO said I had to run influencer marketing without CIQ]... first I would say 'no', then I would make a case for value and ROI. CIQ has allowed us to run with no added costs, and we have better capabilities and run better more effective programs. Our success proves it. We have sold more every single year."

Global Assistant Marketing Manager  
& Influencer Relations