

LONG-RUNNING ALTERNATIVE TO EQUIPMENT OF TRADITIONAL MARKET LEADERS



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President of the Board, Commercial Director and Co-Owner of Ice Group company. Former scientist and university teacher, for the last 30 years having the possibility of verifying his theoretical knowledge acquired in three finished universities in practice, in the ice cream business.



INDUSTRIAL ICE CREAM MACHINES

Machines for industrial ice cream production manufactured by Ice Group have been for many years a remarkable alternative for equipment of traditional market leaders.

We have been in the market for 30 years and especially the last 10 years have been characterized by rapid development, quality growth and extension of portfolio of offered machines.

Ice Group has always developed mostly thanks to our own internal potential. We mean here our own Designing Department, consisting of 12 Designing Engineers, our own Automation Department with 4 Software Specialists. As a result, both the machine design and Software are created In-House. It's worth to mention that as this text is created, 5th of July, we are at project number 5778.

A feature that is important for Ice Group is also our own production of components that is Machining Department. We can say that most of components of strategic character are created here. Of course we also use subcontractors, mainly in season peaks, however our own Machining Department allows us quick reaction to requests for spare parts. We are also able to introduce corrections and eliminate errors on the go, also because Designing Department and Machining Department, as well as Assembly Room are just a few steps away. It also means that our Designing Engineers can check the effect of their work right away and our Assembly Engineers, by verifying the work of our Designing Engineers, are in direct everyday contact with them at any given moment.

The element which connects Designing Department and production is a group of technologists, whose task consists in "translating" the design into practical "language of materials", taking into account the feasibility of production of a particular part with possible indication of necessary corrections or simplifications. It happens sometimes that a given part has been designed in such a way that making it less complicated does not lower the quality and is able to improve its execution. Here is where the circle closes: designing, technologists, production and of course programming all work together as cogs in one machine.

Taking into account that the After-Sales Department, reacting 7 days a week, 24 hours a day, together with the Commercial Department, working in 6 languages, are also indispensable for Ice Group's activities, the company represents a full structure, enabling execution of large projects overseas even for the most demanding Clients, such as multinationals or local leaders.

The key element of Ice Group's strategy is also the use of best quality materials. We don't have different standards depending on machine destination, neither in relation to execution nor components. We are aluminum-free. Our machines are made exclusively of stainless steel AISI 304 for frames and minor elements and AISI 316L or AISI 321 for components in direct contact with the product, and we offer it without additional surcharges.

We use undisputable quality components, available practically in every part of the globe. It is worth to mention that nearly 99% of the equipment we produce is exported.

The geographical span of Ice Group's orders includes South America, Central America, North America to a certain degree, West and North Africa,

East Africa, including some islands in the Indian Ocean. Certainly we are also present in the Middle East, in all of Europe, including Iceland, in European and Asian parts of Russia, as well as Ukraine, China, Korea, Australia and some Pacific islands. We are proud of the scope of our markets, however we are still trying to work and add new areas to our collection.

That was also the case with India. We appeared in India for the first time at AAHAR exhibition in 2012, attracting large interest, but with no concrete sales. In the following years we started to visit India more often. We noticed also to our great pleasure an increased number of Indian Clients at SIGEP exhibition in Rimini, Italy, which we participated in for the 18th time in 2020, or at ANUGA exhibition in Germany, where we have been present regularly since 2003. Persistence, systematic contacts and close cooperation with **Trade Centre company (Mr. Tapan Shah), representing us in India**, brought effects. We can now state that India is one of the strategically important markets for Ice Group. Strategic is also the character of our references in the Indian market.

Our machines are used by market leaders, including the biggest and most admired for their invention in relation to final products companies in India. An important circumstance here, the core of Ice Group's strategy, is the focus on the final product, which being a key value also for Clients buying our machines, means joining the interests of machine producer, ice cream manufacturer and, in the final count, also the final consumer. This is a classic take on the basic rule of effective marketing, consisting in satisfying needs. This simple statement can be summed up also in a different way: this is the way challenges are born, this is the way brainstorming is born. As a part of the process of discussing how the product (and consequently the machine configuration) should be turned into life, we mostly use image - product drawings. We also use data we receive from our Clients, referring to packaging characteristics or requirements regarding type of closing, inclusions or possible decoration.

We recommend you to see our newsletters by visiting our website www.icegroup.pl, especially the one referring to ingredient feeders (see **Newsletter 6/2021**) - the most complicated machines in the field. We encourage you to analyze the options, which the ingredient feeder can be equipped with. It is not bad either to dedicate some time for the selection of the correct freezer, because these machines, both with filling equipment and extrusion tunnels, create in fact the physical base of the product, on which all the marketing additives such as brand, means of promotion, etc. are built.

An interesting, visual systematization of our offer was executed last year by publishing funny videos **"Summer Shorts"**. These videos are still available on our website and refer to ice cream cakes, sandwiches, cones, stick products, etc. and at the same time to machines for their production manufactured by Ice Group.

Our machines have always been of multiproduct character. It is very rare that a required effect of work of single production line should be just one or two products. Moreover, we are talking about extremely different product categories. Let's take for example the first extrusion line that we installed in India and that is used in the factory in Maharashtra where we produce stick ice cream, stickless products, sandwiches, ice cream cakes and casattas. The Client obtained a practical tool, which allows them to create their own portfolio by investing in products, the demand for which is

rapidly growing. The second line in this company is high capacity, full servo inline machine with automatic transfer and hardening tunnel - this time for cone. We should not forget also about Ice Group's freezers and Jumbo Robot working in India, that is robotized dosing system for family tubs as well as products positioned in HoReCa area and about Auxiliary Equipment, that is Master - our ingredient feeder.

We reached sales in South India with another market leader. We also have machines in a company licensed by a world ice cream brand, which was familiar to us because we already equipped a factory of this company in UAE.

An important feature of **Ice Group's offer is that it is multilayered and rich**, because selected machines from our portfolio can find place both in small production plant, as well as in medium-sized factory and big industries, whose owners require usually much greater capacities. It is because the portfolio of our machines has grown just like us and our Clients, starting from small machines with low scale production, through bigger capacities till heavy duty industrial installations at the highest possible technical level.

My personal hobby is **Food Service**, where products of artisan character or the so called **hand-made look** found their very good place during the pandemic. In relation with the current state of affairs regarding Covid-19 such products reach retail trade. Generally speaking, the process that we currently observe in many markets, even those with no direct connection, I call **"supermarketization" or "retailization" of food products**, which happens because the channel identified as **HoReCa** cannot function and we buy more and consume more products at home, looking for something new, more interesting and surprising.

The above influences also one of the strategic features of the product, which apart from brand and quality is the packaging. The preferences for multipack packages are also significantly growing in most markets we are present at. At the same time we notice preference for automation of the packing process of individually packed products in multipacks and collective containers. In this area we see possibilities of Ice Group's development.

Development is inscribed in our business formula as its main feature, because no other area can be compared to the business we function in. I'm talking here both about ice cream machines and about ice cream, where changing 30-40% of SKUs every year is nothing weird. Ice cream producers discontinue products, add new ones, they approach their offer very actively, taking into account signals from the market and trends, which means constant investments in machines.

A curiosity is that there are market trends which don't depend on latitude. It applies for example to the so called American ice cream, most often appearing in 1 pint cups. It is a low overrun product with large amount of inclusions. As I once heard in the USA it is something to rub on your tongue, something to crush with your teeth, so altogether it is a sort of complete taste experience, called "mouth sensation". At the same time the requirements are constantly increasing, I'd say more of everything - bigger additives, more massive syrup cores, more layers, hidden elements, which require consumer cooperation to unveil them, being at the same time a surprise personalizing the product. It is a personalization by addressing ice cream lovers. It is like in my case, when someone asks me why I chose work in this business, I often reply that I've always liked ice cream.



COURTESY OF LIDL SUPERMARKETS CHAIN

Another interesting product I recall lately is made by our Dutch Client for LIDL chain of supermarkets, produced of course on our machines with addition of 30mm diameter (!) choco-candies stuffed with peanut butter. The product is called "Pretty Peanut Butter" and it is indeed pretty and yummy - nothing more, nothing less. We make such products with the use of our inline or rotary machines, depending on the packaging characteristics and the required capacity. We can boast of references in the form of huge inline machines in some factories of the largest international players e.g. in Australia.

Another interesting product is the ice cream cake. We have such references in India, also on a line which is currently waiting to be installed. There is a group of consumers which is absolutely faithful to ice cream cakes and even though they constitute a relatively small element in terms of turnover, it is a very stable market share, also outside of the typical season. Round layer cakes or horizontally extruded layer cakes usually accompany family parties, weddings, they are also popular in large families because they can be easily portioned. Ice cream cakes are very popular in Spain or in Russia, where they are of truly social character. According to the culture of this country you should not come empty handed when visiting your friends. This means that the guest usually brings either sweets or e.g. an ice cream cake.



COURTESY OF AMUL

I could talk about ice creams for hours and hours, going through thousands of drawings we prepared for our Clients and products we helped produce. These are products which have functioned in the market for many years, as well as conceptual products and the ones which undergo current evaluation in the present talks. I only mentioned example products, without going to details of sandwiches, candy bars, bonbon candies, but I think this is material for the next publication.

We are not talking only about fantasy, because in Ice Group, as a company with over 100 employees, with our own Designing Department, our own Software Engineers, our own production of components, with qualified assembly staff and Service Technicians, as well as After Sales Department, we are technically prepared to make the fantasies and ideas of our Clients come true. We are a company, whose structure despite its maturity for challenges, allows us to still develop. We look at the future with humility, wishing our Clients always a perfect season, perfect effects of their hard work and so that they come back to us for more machines.

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