



EMERGENCY ICE

Rich in History and Vision

Dallas Independent Thrives in Corporate Country

Earl Toler grew up in the ice industry and has grown his company even in the literal backyard of the nation's largest competitor. His company history is a combination of timely decisions, and one of his key vendors asked him to talk about how his history relates to their product.

From Mr. Toler:

I love the ice industry because it has been good to my family. My great-great grandfather, great grandfather, grandfather, mother and dad all have or are in the ice industry. It has been ingrained in me; it's truly in my blood. I went to college to become a minister, and at the end of the day when it was time to enter a post-graduate degree program, I felt and still do that I am supposed to be in the family business that my dad started. Hopefully some or all of my four boys will join the company. I try to serve our customers as well as employees with principles I gleaned in college. There is nothing more rewarding than serving a satisfied customer, the monetary rewards are nice, but having a good name is priceless.



On the flip side, there is nothing more rewarding than seeing an employee improving their life situation. We make a deliberate effort to promote from within and give our team every opportunity to grow personally and career wise. We want motivated people! That mindset has allowed us to grow and it is one of the major reasons we went to RouteMan software.

In 2010 we knew that we had reached our maximum capacity. We would take all deliveries and would write them on an order book, and then we would wait for the driver to call and give him the

order. One driver might have five calls waiting, but we would give them out one at a time, all while trying to take orders. This made for a stressful and crowded office; we felt it and believed our breaking point to be 100 deliveries a day.

My sister came in frustration and told me that we have to do something better for our customers and our own sanity. At the time there was not a system that fit our business model; the hot shot one hour delivery. I searched for a software product, and one company later reached out with the idea to help with the development of a system that would meet our business model.

We wanted real time dispatch with immediate data entry. I felt that it was not realistic to wait until the end of the day for invoices to be downloaded into the system, and the reality is that drivers lose devices. I did not like the prospect of losing a day's worth of invoices if a device is lost (not to mention the cost of the device). I found an answer to all of those concerns, along with eliminating a crowded office.



Dallas Independent Thrives in Corporate Country (cont.)

Often I feel that less is more, that too many people in an office can lead to lack of focus and increased opportunity for human error. Because of the software integration we handle 200 deliveries with relative ease with a single office staff. On busy days a driver knows he has to move quickly because he sees what needs to be done on his device without calling the office. It has allowed the office to focus on servicing the customers and the drivers to accomplish the deliveries given to them. On top of all of that at any time I get a real snapshot of our daily sales, I don't have to wait for manual data entry in QuickBooks.

I 'preach' this software to anyone that does not have it. All of the folks over there get it and understand the ice industry. We have basically three months to make our year, and immediate assistance is absolutely necessary. Above all that, the customer is impressed with the system. I don't know why but they immediately take you more seriously when you print the invoice on site. The software's Customer Care Center has been a hit. Our customers can login to their account, look over invoices, pay them online, and even order online. Truly amazing and all customers that have used it have called with rave reviews.

This is an exciting time for the independent ice producer, I am really excited about the future of the ice industry and even more excited to see what unfolds over the next five years. I have had the opportunity to meet

a lot of bright 'young' guys in the ice business that have great ideas and are implementing exciting new programs that benefit the independents.

Emergency Ice has always been synonymous with our family name in a way. My dad started the company as a 'peddler' back in the mid-seventies. He then put in Manitowoc Ice Cubers that eventually grew to forty cuber ice machines! My dad has always been my hero and anyone that meets him loves him. I watched him struggle as he tried to keep the doors open at times against bigger competitors and he always survived while never breaking his smile or letting anyone see him 'sweat.' "Mr. Cool," the company character we still use today in all our marketing, was created in my high school days while sitting in class doodling, my idea of the image my father showed in business.

"Mr. Cool" is the closest thing I could come up with that reminds me of my dad and embodies us as a family and a company. Since that time we have grown to over two hundred tons of production and expanded our service area from Oklahoma to Central Texas. On those long hot days in the summer or even longer cold days in the winter I look at Mr. Cool and think of my dad, who drops by every now and then, and I just keep smiling.

For more information on RouteMan products and services, contact Darrell Mount, Keet Consulting Services, at www.kcsgis.com. ■



Don't miss Leer's booth at the Grand Event where we will be presenting our new Full Glass Front model. This brand new unit features a stylish new design, optimal space configuration, and significant performance enhancements to address the growing needs for a safer and cleaner ice merchandiser - including NSF certification. Come see this unit for yourself; along with an additional ground-breaking new product arriving in 2015, all revealed at this year's Grand Event! ■

