



Ruth Hunt Candy Company Maintains a Perfect Blend of Tradition and Technology

Mt. Sterling, KY- Ruth Hunt Candy Company in Montgomery County is synonymous with Kentucky tradition. The company has been making home-made confections since 1921. According to General Manager Toby Moore, “The equipment and candy are still the same.” While the company is unwavering in the preparation of the candy, the marketing and sales of the famous candies has taken a technological approach to supplying Ruth Hunt candy lovers.

“Over the years, people have moved in and out of the area, and the website allows them to be reunited with the Ruth Hunt,” Moore said. Although Ruth Hunt maintains a storefront in Lexington, Kentucky and continues phone and mail order sales, the company has been marketing and distributing confections on the Internet since 1998. Internet sales make up twenty-five percent of the company’s mail order sales at present, with substantial increases projected in the year ahead.

While the Internet has allowed life-long customers to take a trip down “memory lane,” the company continues to see a surge in new customers as a result of the website. Each year, Ruth Hunt Candy supplies beloved treats, such as cream candy, bourbon balls, and ever popular Blue Mondays, to a growing customer base.

The company website allows visitors to view all available candy products, including specialty tins and baskets. The order is registered on the website before being processed in the office. Credit card purchases are then managed by employees with DSL Internet technology.

However, sales are not the only way Ruth Hunt Candy Company uses broadband capabilities. Ruth Hunt Candy Company uses technology and broadband Internet capabilities in all facets of the candy business, except the candy-making.

“Technology has allowed us to mainstream operations and save money,” Moore said. The word-of-mouth of yesteryear is being replaced by the creative, technological marketing of today. Along with the impressive website, Ruth Hunt Candy also distributes color brochures that are drafted in their own offices.

The emphasis on technology is crucial to Ruth Hunt during the company’s most popular selling seasons: Christmas and the Kentucky Derby. The Christmas season remains the most popular season for the candy company, which ships orders to servicemen and women overseas.

The spring brings a new surge in business due to the strategic partnership between Ruth Hunt Candy Company and Churchill Downs of Louisville. In 1993, Ruth Hunt was named “The Official Candy Maker of Churchill Downs and the Kentucky Derby,” an honor that continues to set Ruth Hunt Candy Company apart from competition. Ruth Hunt pays homage to this Kentucky staple by using horse inspired tins and packaging with information about the famed race track.

Ruth Hunt is also on the cutting edge of chocolate. Ruth Hunt Candy Company believes the best ingredients make the best product. Their commitment to quality ingredients took them too Ghana, the second leading producer of coco beans in the world. By importing the best possible chocolate, the company hopes to attract more interest from the national market.

Moore looks forward to the future of technology in Ghana. Coco bean suppliers are moving in the technological direction. The convenience of high-speed Internet and the inexpensive communication costs would break many barriers that currently exist, all the while bringing more business to the United States.

About KY 120:

In the fast-pace world of technology-driven business, it should be recognized that best practices can be studied and emulated. As a part of the [connectkentucky](http://www.connectkentucky.org) initiative, CiTE (Center for Technology Enterprise) is profiling business initiatives in each of Kentucky’s 120 counties. For more information visit our Web site at www.connectkentucky.org or call 270.781.4320.

Name:
Ruth Hunt Candy Company

Internet:
www.ruthhuntcandy.com

Products/Services:
Candy Maker

Location:
Mt. Sterling/ Montgomery County

Leadership:
Larry Kezele, Owner
Toby Moore, General Manager

Employees: 16

Founded: 1921

Reach: International

Innovative Insight: *“By way of the Internet we have found that surrounding states have a deep loyalty to Kentucky and Kentucky- made products.”*

Way Internet Has Made You More Competitive: *“The capabilities we have allow customers to buy Ruth Hunt candies from miles away. It also provides the traditional word of mouth with a twist due to marketing on the internet.”*

Advice to Growing Companies: *“Technology can be intimidating, but keep and open-mind and embrace it.”*

Ways to Continue to Attract the Best Workers: *“Ruth Hunt Candy is a testament to the community we live in. They have supported us and provided a good base of employees.”*