



King of Pops: The Power of the Georgia Community

WHO IS KING OF POPS?

Founded in 2010, King of Pops is a popsicle company founded by Steven Carse and his brother Nick. Their pops that have become a local favorite in Atlanta and in other cities where they sell the ecologically responsible, fresh, all-natural frozen treat out of their signature pushcarts.

THE STORY

In the mid-2000s, brothers Steven and Nick Carse often enjoyed summers with their eldest brother, an anthropologist, in South America. During their time in Panama and Ecuador, they enjoyed paletas – Latin American Ice Pops. The brothers fell in love with the pops and dreamed of bringing the fresh-fruit creations back home to share.

Steven, an insurance data analyst, eventually fell victim to a massive layoff and decided it was time to pursue the dream. With the help of Nick, a lawyer, and friends and family, he began to experiment with a variety of techniques and recipes to capture the essence of the first pops they enjoyed years prior.

In 2010, King of Pops opened its first location at a convenience store in Poncey Highlands in Atlanta. They modeled their own carts after the pushcarts, or paletería, in Mexico. As business grew, Nick left his job as a lawyer and came aboard to fulfill their dream together.

After the first year, King of Pops located their headquarters next to the Belt Line in Inman Park. Today, they have carts in Athens, Greenville, Charleston, Charlotte, Richmond and Nashville. Each city has its own kitchen, and the company employs 180 throughout these locations. Steven says that the Atlanta community's interest in local business helped their unique pops flourish.

King of Pops' treats range from fruity to creamy, with flavors such as Strawberry Lemonade, Salted Caramel, Pineapple Habanero and Thai Tea. Steven explained

Company:

King of Pops

Industry:

Small Business
Food Processing

What Georgia provided King of Pops:

- Agricultural ecosystem allows direct sourcing from farms and stores
- Support from local community in expanding to new markets

Awards:

- **Named one of the South's Best Frozen Treats**, *Southern Living*, 2016
- **Reader's Pick "Best Local Food Company"**, *Creative Loafing*, 2016
- **Best Free Class for "King of Pops Yoga"**, *Atlanta Magazine*, 2016
- **Civic Impact Award**, Center for Civic Innovation, 2015



that keeping it simple was a key component of their business. “There are typically only 4-5 ingredients. We purchase straight from local farms, like Pearson Farm in Fort Valley, and only go for ingredients with a great quality taste.”

The company has grown from selling 60,000 pops the first year to selling 2 million pops and reaching \$5 million in sales in 2016. King of Pops is still growing and hopes to open up shop in Savannah, parts of Florida and even New Orleans.

They have also obtained partnerships with Mercedes-Benz and SunTrust Park for the new Atlanta Falcons and Atlanta Braves stadiums.

When asked his advice on entrepreneurship, Steven says its simple: “Set a date to start your business, and then do it.”

HOW GEORGIA HELPED

- Georgia’s strong agricultural ecosystem allows the business to source ingredients directly from Georgia farms and stores.
- Support from the local community in expanding business to new markets.

AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS

- **Named one of the South’s Best Frozen Treats**, *Southern Living*, 2016
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“I felt connected to Atlanta because it’s a place where you can easily get involved and make a mark. We’re able to source from local farms and stores, provide fresh ingredients and have a tremendous support from the local community.”

- Steven Carse, Co-Founder, King of Pops

