

Cookie Rookie

An introduction to GSGLA's Product Sales

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Introduction to the Wonderful World of Product Sales

Behold the **POWER** of a Simple Cookie

Welcome. The Girl Scout Cookie Program is the world's largest financial literacy and business skills course for girls. Millions of girls have enjoyed the Cookie Program before you. In the years to come, you and your girls will look back on the fun and excitement the Cookie Program brings to the troop experience. Read on to start your adventure.

The concept started in 1917 as a modest effort to raise funds for a service project by a single troop. Girls baked cookies in their own homes, and mothers volunteered as technical advisors. The cookies were then sold in the local high school cafeteria. Nearly 100 years later, almost everything has changed about the Cookie Program, but Girl Scouts are still learning critical skills and taking charge of their future by selling the beloved Girl Scout Cookie.

Cookie Rookie explains the basics of how the Cookie Program works and why Girl Scouts sell cookies. First-time Troop Leaders and Cookie Chairs are often intimidated by the Cookie Program. Our hope is that by providing clear information the novice will have less apprehension and a better first-time Cookie Program experience. History shows that troops that truly embrace the Cookie season sell far more and reap the rewards of much higher troop proceeds. Over the life of the troop, the cumulative benefit of successful Cookie (and Fall Product) Programs is visible in the girls who exit Girl Scouts as young adults. In addition, the product sale programs make amazing things possible for girls from troop outings to service projects to trips that make lifelong memories.

Troop Leaders and Cookie Chairs are wonderful volunteers who put their heart into bringing the Girl Scout Leadership Experience to the girls. Often they are as excited about joining Girl Scouts as girls. Many have never been a part of Girl Scouts as a girl. GSGLA has developed trainings to help new leaders feel confident in their roles. Troop Cookie Chair trainings are normally conducted by the Service Unit Cookie Chair at a meeting, usually in mid-December. Some SUCPCs do a thorough job of training. Others may assume everyone knows how to sell a cookie and only give a cursory review of Cookies. *Cookie Rookie* will make you an educated student going into training. You will have a thorough overview of every aspect of the Cookie Program, and you will be prepared to ask good questions.



"...all I really wanted to do was to better my own best achievements...Yes, I wanted to sell...the most boxes of Girl Scout cookies; but more important, I wanted to sell more...cookies than I had the previous year. As I progressed through my career, the competitive spirit my mother had encouraged helped me through some very difficult days. And with each challenge, I concentrated upon competing with myself."

Business icon and Girl Scout, Mary Kay Ash. From *Miracles Happen, The Life & Timeless Principles of the Founder of Mary Kay, Inc.*

The Girl Scout Cookie Program

This is a PROGRAM for Girls, Not a Sale



The most frequent misconception about the Girl Scout Cookie Program is that it uses cute kids to sell an over-priced item to make a profit. Many schools now endorse fundraisers at the beginning of the school year to supplement their budgets, but the Girl Scout Cookie Program is very different. The Girl Scout Cookie Program is a real PROGRAM that TEACHES LIFE SKILLS in the context of running a girl-led business. As the largest financial literacy program for girls in the country, the Girl Scout Cookie Program contains powerful components that no school fundraiser can match, including willing consumers ready to support this generation of Girl Scouts. The Girl Scout Cookie Program has a proven history of developing young entrepreneurs who go on to make a difference in their lives and in their communities.

GSUSA promotes the benefits by educating adults on the *5 Skills for Girls* that girls acquire by participating. Parents need to hear and understand these dynamic benefits. Girl Scouts teaches many wonderful qualities to maturing girls, but the Cookie Program can uniquely boast the *5 Skills for Girls*.



Goal Setting – Sounds simple, doesn't it? But it is so powerful! We teach goal setting at the girl, troop, service unit, and council level. Everyone needs goals in life to get where you want to go. Otherwise, how do you know when you've achieved anything? The fundamental goal to set is "what Girl Scout activity do you want to do with your troop and how many boxes do you need to sell to make that happen?" This is supported by many interim goals. When a girl sets a goal and then makes a plan to achieve it, she learns that the goal can be anything she wants it to be.

In Real Life: When there is a school science project due a week from Monday, she will have the skills to allocate her time towards its completion. She won't tell you Sunday night that there is a project due in the morning and needs to go to the store for supplies. Wouldn't it be nice to never be in that situation again?

Decision Making – As a girl-led experiential program, Girl Scouts requires girls to make decisions on all their troop's activities. In order to achieve the girl and troop goals, many decisions need to be researched, pondered, and finalized. During the program, if a specific booth sale is successful, or not, or a presentation to a business owner is successful, or not, the girl finds herself at a new decision point. Girls find themselves making and reevaluating decisions constantly. She learns to appreciate good results, and more importantly, to adjust to disappointing results of her decisions. Decision-making skills will help her every day throughout her life.

In Real Life: As she evaluates career opportunities, she can more effectively process all the possibilities. She can research colleges and determine the criteria needed to help with college applications because she knows a complicated decision requires preparation and consideration.

Money Management – All of Girl Scouting is girl-led whereas they collectively determine what their Girl Scout year will entail, and if they want to travel somewhere for their experience. Younger girls typically take local troop trips together. As the girl gets older, long distance travel becomes a more

common goal. All of these experiences cost money. Together with their adult leaders, the girls plot through a budget process to determine how much funding they will need, and then determine how many boxes will need to be sold. As girls develop the concepts around having to work to earn money for something they want, that is an important life skill.

In Real Life: Girls will appreciate the effort it takes to earn money the next time she asks for something because she knows that everything we want in life costs money and we have to work for it.



People Skills – Younger girls can be naturally shy with people they do not encounter regularly. Asking Grandma to support her Cookie Program may be easy, but what about a neighbor she hardly knows? At a booth sale, there can be an indifferent customer. Girls learn to read people's expressions and body language and find ways to turn the situation into a positive. She can explain her troop is raising money to fund the local animal shelter, and how their service projects make a lasting improvement on her community. The customer will see they can make a direct impact on their community by supporting a girl in a small way.

In Real Life: An ability to work with and see other points of view will help her find the solution when there is a disagreement on her sports team. In her career, she will benefit because businesses want employees who are persuasive, can get along with others, and build consensus.

Business Ethics – We can all share a bad customer service story that happened to us recently. We also know which businesses have lost our faith forever. Girls will learn first-hand how hard it can be to earn a customer and how easy it is to lose one. When a customer complains that a box is damaged, the girl knows to replace it without hesitation and with a smile. Friendly customer service when making sales and keeping promises to deliver product as the customer expects, teaches these basic business ethics.

In Real Life: Girls learn that if she doesn't keep her commitments, there are consequences. She becomes a more responsible young adult in all kinds of situations. Her friends, classmates and teachers count on her and think of her as trustworthy. This will make her a natural leader as people gravitate towards her when looking to solve problems.



When a troop embraces the Cookie Program well, they follow the program materials available, and utilize the marketing materials from council. The program curriculum can make troop meetings a breeze, as there is enough material to last the whole year. We strive hard to make the Cookie Program as clear and simple as possible even though there are so many moving parts. After years of experience, we have witnessed thousands of girls learn the *5 Skills for Girls* and have a blast at the same time. It is the consummate Girl Scout experience!

Cookie Terminology

Words and Acronyms that Make you Go Hmmm?

Girl Scouts has a unique language, and the Cookie Program is no exception. Here are some of the more common terms we use on a daily basis, but can be confusing until you know what we mean.

ACH Debit – an eBanking transfer from one bank account to another. ACH stands for Automatic Clearing House which is the federal system of sending funds electronically. Council instructs our bank to ACH Debit the troop accounts and deposit funds into council's bank account.

Allocations – a process that takes boxes that have been signed out to a troop, and gives credit for their sale to individual girls. When added to her individual Gift of Caring sales, this determines the girl's final sales quantity and her reward level.

Boothing – the process where girls sell their product to customers in a face-to-face transaction, usually in front of a store or other place of business. The average troop holds four booths, but many troops will have dozens of booths every weekend and even each day of the Cookie Program.

Boothing Chair – a service unit volunteer who manages the relationship of host businesses who grant written permission for troops to booth on their private property.

Booth Sale Recorder – a neat little smart phone app (iPhone or Android) that allows an adult to allocate cookies sold to the actual girl who sold them in real time. This can save a lot of manual record keeping and reduces the amount of clean-up work after the sale.

Booth Scheduler – a function that allows troops to sign up for available booth sites and times. Very specific timelines determine when the Booth Scheduler is available to troops for this process and can change with each season.

Camp/Program Credit – an optional recognition at higher levels. Girls can choose a credit that can be used to pay for other Girl Scout program fees such as camp, or to purchase from the Shop. This credit must be spent on Girl Scout items and is only valid within the GSGLA system.

Circle Sheet – a convenient form used during troop cookie delivery for easy troop pick up. It has colored circles that correspond to the cookie box color and is used to count out the number of cases the troop should be picking up. Also known as a "bubble sheet."

Club 500 FunFest – a recognition event for girls who sell at least 500 boxes, and who are the exclusive invitees to a customized, spectacular experience. Invited girls are welcome to bring an adult chaperone, including Dads.



Cookie Entrepreneur Officer (CEO) – a girl in business for herself, learning transferrable life skills, while building self-confidence and having fun with her other troop members.



Cupboard – locations throughout GSGLA where cookies are warehoused and troops are able to pick up additional product.

Cookie Club – an online sales program that can be used by girls of all ages. Girls send emails to family and friends to market their cookie program and receive “promises” to purchase in return.



Cookie Delivery – a 2-day process where starting inventory cookies are delivered locally to troops. Each service unit coordinates this process for their troops.

Cookie Delivery Site – a special location that each service unit determines where cookies are sorted and distributed to troops. It has intrinsic qualities that make it a suitable staging area.

Cookie Locator – a database of booths that have a troop scheduled to run a booth sale. The Locator is on our website during the boothing period or by downloading the Cookie Locator App for your smart phone. Customers can type in their ZIP code, and the Locator will return all current and future active booths closest to that ZIP code. It is our best way to connect customers to the product. www.girlscoutcookies.org is the national URL that works with each council’s database of booths.

Credit Card App – a free smart phone application that will process a customer’s credit or debit card and deposit the funds into the troop bank account.

Cupboard Manager - a volunteer or council staff person who manages the local cookie warehouse.

Customer Care Hotline – troops should look to their service unit for most answers and support, but GSGLA’s primary phone number for troop questions is 213-213-0123.

Digital Order Card – GSUSA’s initiative that is the only approved online sales channel.

Direct Sale – a specific sales model that sets up girls with cookies from day 1 of the sale. Troops commit to a starting inventory for their sales goals. It is a faster and shorter, but more intense, sale.

eBudde – Internet-based product sales software used to track sales, inventory, booth sites, booth scheduling, rewards, and payments. Every facet of the Cookie Program is managed within eBudde.



Elite 1000 – a recognition event for girls who sell at least 1000 boxes, and who are the exclusive invitees to a custom, unique and exclusive Girl Scout experience. Invited girls are welcome to bring an adult chaperone, including Dads.

Financial Responsibility – the distinction of who has the burden to pay for the cookies. Every cookie has either a girl responsibility or a troop responsibility attached to it. Financial responsibilities are layered and cumulative from the girl/parent up to the troop leader.

Gift of Caring – Council-wide troop service program where other partnering non-profits receive cookie donations toward their mission. A critical business model for every girl’s sales goal.

Girl Order Card – Customized form that girls use as a sales tool and reference guide. It contains information about the cookies for the customer and details of the reward plan for girls.

GO Day – the very first day of cookie sales. To respect every other Girl Scout, we all start selling on the same day regardless of when troops physically receive their cookies from Cookie Delivery.

GO Teams – a team of volunteers working in partnership with council staff on a specific topic. Product Sales has their own GO Team. Each team works together to develop policies and procedures that are effective to solve the challenge at hand.

High 5 for Five – this is GSGLA's program to train girls on the Five Skills for Girls. Available for purchase in the Retail Shops, these age appropriate materials provide great programming.

Initial Orders – an alternative sales model where girls seek cookie orders first, place that order with council, and then deliver. Contrasts to a Direct Sale.



Little Brownie Bakers (LBB) – the GSGLA cookie bakery partner located in Louisville, KY. Only two bakeries produce all Girl Scout cookies in the USA; the other baker is ABC Bakers.

Mascot – every Cookie (and Fall) Program has an adorable animal mascot that helps give the program a unique personality. Patches, rewards and materials frequently incorporate the mascot's image or name.



Opt out – Older girl troops (Cadette and above) can elect to waive the rewards they would otherwise earn, and instead receive an additional \$.10 per box sold in proceeds.

Parent/Guardian Permission and Responsibility Agreement – form that parents or guardians sign to grant permission for their girl to participate in the Cookie Program, and accept financial responsibility for all cookies their girl sells.

Position Description and Agreement(s) – various written documents signed by SUCPC, SUBC, SURC, SUCM, and TCC that defines their role and responsibilities to council for the cookie program.

Product Sales Manager (PSM) – the council staff member who has primary responsibility for working with volunteers in her service center to deliver the Cookie Program. SUCPCs work closely with the PSM on all operational needs.

Recognition – carefully screened and selected item received by girls for reaching a specific sales goal.

Reward – a comprehensive term that includes all items received by a girl, a troop, or a service unit such as recognitions, troop proceeds, and program credit.

Round-Up – an eBudde process that rounds up the troop's starting inventory order of each cookie variety into whole case increments. Starting inventory orders are only in whole (12-box) cases.

Service Unit (SU) – a geographic area set by council to create manageable groups of troops. Boundaries can be set by town lines, school districts, roadways, or other demarcation.

Service Unit Cookie Program Chair (SUCPC) – a volunteer who coordinates the Cookie Program for the service unit. Chosen by the SUM, and appointed by council, this position recruits and trains Troop Cookie Chairs. The SUCPC is the main point of contact for all questions by the troops.

Starting Inventory Order – the troop’s requested cookie allotment to start selling. Troops need a very healthy volume to start a direct sale, and we suggest 75% of their prior year’s total volume.

Theme – every Cookie (and Fall) Program has a theme that is used to unify the program and give it direction. Themes are sometimes incorporated into patches, rewards or printed materials. They give an over-arching message to parents what their girl is doing. Recent national themes have been based on open ended questions such as “What can a Cookie Do?” or “What can a Girl Do?”

Troop Cookie Chair (TCC) – a volunteer who coordinates the Cookie Program at the troop level. Chosen by the Troop Leader, and appointed by council, this position trains girls and parents.

Troop Proceeds – monies earned by a troop on their total cookie sales, including opt out proceeds.

Troop to Troop Transfer – the flexibility to move cookies (and their financial responsibility) from one troop with an excess supply of cookies to another troop with a demand for those cookies. This can be very helpful at the end of the program when a troop would otherwise be left with excess inventory and few prospects to sell them. Troops working together to clean out stock and wrap up their program collectively is a source of pride and an example of Girl Scout sisterhood.

VIPeTraining – this is a website created by Little Brownie Bakers that provides a comprehensive overview of all facets of the Cookie Program. There are areas devoted to girls, families, and cookies. In addition, GSGLA is able to upload additional training resources such as troop training PowerPoints. If you need training, this is the first place to go.



Girl Scout Cookies.
RULE!

Cookie Kick-Off (CKO)

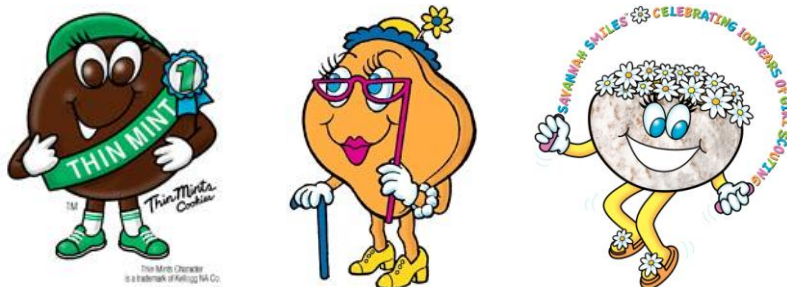
Let's Start Off on the Right Foot

Since the Cookie Program is the single largest Girl Scout program of the year, it's only appropriate that it begins in traditional Girl Scout fashion – with a celebration! The Kick-Off is meant to excite the girls and inspire them to set and reach their goals. A Cookie Kick-Off is typically held in early January, and is an opportunity for one (or more) service units to come together for the direct benefit of their local girls. The Cookie Kick-Off is divided into a few major focuses.



1. Booths feature hands-on activities for girls, many of which link to earned awards, such as badges. Older girl troops can host booths that allow younger Girl Scouts to see some of the experiences they have gained because of their involvement in Girl Scouts. Here you can also learn about any new cookies for the year and see the girl rewards for the very first time!
2. Cookie University is the best place to learn some new marketing techniques. Service Units may offer fun activities that engage the girl to learn something new about cookies, or how to sell them. Cookie U is also geared to help girls with their specific marketing plans. Some classes are designed for the parent or Troop Leader. We can help you motivate the girls as well as answer your questions.
3. Larger Kick-Offs may host a Mobile Council Shop. We bring the latest cookie merchandise and marketing tools to you!
4. Have a blast! Kick-Off is meant to be fun and interactive for the girl. There are lots of things to see and do. It is always centered on giving the girls a fun and fantastic day. For example, in 2015 Little Brownie Bakers will offer a national virtual party of the Samoa's 40th birthday. It's simply the best way to start the cookie season.

We highly recommend that at least three girls from every troop plan to attend Cookie Kick-Off. Often, entire troops attend together as a troop event. There's something new to learn and experience every year, and the girls can at least bring back their stories and inspiration to the other troop members. Data shows that girls who attend Cookie Kick-Off sell 50 more boxes on average than those that do not attend. Cookie Kick-Off motivates, educates, and inspires girls to set and attain their highest goals!



Pre-Program Actions & Requirements

Volunteering, Trainings, and Paperwork

The Cookie Program, like all of Girl Scouts, is an amazing network of passionate volunteers and a professional staff and who come together for the benefit of about 30,000 girls who enjoy the fun, excitement and rewards. Mobilizing this army of people takes time, talent and hard work.

GSGLA is divided into geographic regions, and then by service units at the local level. Each service unit has a Service Unit Manager (SUM), a volunteer position, who has responsibility for the troops in her jurisdiction. For the Cookie (and Fall Product) Program, the service unit provides a Service Unit Cookie Chair (SUCPC), or Fall Product Chair (SUFPC). This volunteer is charged with overseeing the entire Cookie or Fall Product Program in their area. They may recruit volunteers for other roles, although for smaller service units the SUCPC may fulfill all roles:

- SUBC – Service Unit Boothing Chair cultivates relationships and takes care of booth site details
- SUDC – Service Unit Delivery Chair locates the delivery site, assigns troops to a schedule to pick up, and coordinates operations for Starting Inventory Order delivery
- SUCM – Service Unit Cupboard Manager is responsible for operating a local cupboard. She will fill troop orders in eBudde, and work with council to keep appropriate quantities on hand. SUCMs will sometimes house the cupboard at their home, if appropriate, and recruit others to work the cupboard.
- SURC – Service Unit Rewards Chair distributes girl recognitions after the program



Little Brownie Bakers' eBudde

The Software that Makes Your Life Easier!



GSGLA utilizes custom software to manage all aspects of the Cookie and Fall Product Programs. eBudde (for Cookies) tracks all product, inventories, amount due, and payments made. It accounts for each parent's financial responsibility to the troop and also the troop's financial responsibility to council.

eBudde access is given to each troop following their training and completion of the required paperwork. The Troop Cookie Chair will place a starting inventory order, schedule booths and order additional product. Full financial accounting is built in so that troops know exactly what is owed by each girl, and Troop Cookie Chairs can record payments and see balances owed. Girl rewards are computed within eBudde, and troops know exactly which girl has earned what recognitions to make distribution easy!

There is an excellent written manual and a video is available on the VIP eTraining site. Some service centers also offer in-person trainings. Product Sales Managers are always available for questions. While it takes a little training to learn eBudde, the system is very intuitive and user-friendly. Once volunteers learn it, they love how it completely manages their Cookie Program.



Product Sales for Daisy Level Girls

Never Underestimate the Effect of Being Cute

Daisies are permitted to participate in Product Sales, but with additional limitations and safeguards. All of the information provided in *Cookie Rookie* is applicable; however, some additional common sense rules are here:



1. Overall, parents or guardians will assist to a greater degree. Five- and six-year-old girls should not be approaching strangers. A well-supervised booth sale environment provides a more controlled environment.
2. Daisies do not handle money at all. Adults hold all funds. Daisies can explain what the cookie varieties are, but the adult closes the sale.
3. Daisies should not booth for more than an hour at a time. Their attention span is shorter, and they get tired faster than Brownies and older girls. Daisy troops who sign up for booths need to coordinate amongst themselves how to rotate different girls to cover the entire duration of a committed booth shift.
4. Adult to girl ratios are higher for younger girls. Check *Safety Activity Checkpoints* for further details.

Your Service Unit Cookie Chair may train on additional safeguards. Nothing, however, will replace the parent or guardian's personal sense of what their girl should or should not do.

Starting Inventory Orders, Girl Order Cards, & Deliveries

It's Time to Flex Your Strategy

The Direct Sales model is new for GSGLA troops in 2015. A Direct Sale is fast. Special training focuses on preparing troops and girls on how to best maximize the opportunity. Troops will place a starting inventory order in eBuddle for delivery during the Cookie Delivery. Troops typically order about 75% (or more) of their total expected sales volume up front, and plan to pick up the last 25% from their local cupboard. Troops accept financial responsibility for these cookies. For new troops, we can help you determine an appropriate starting inventory based on averages for girls in your age level, in conjunction with the motivation level of your girls.

Girl order cards are distributed to the girls just as soon as the troop's participation in the Cookie Program is confirmed. The order card is a tool for selling as well as a form to record customer purchases (think customer contact information and preferences). As a selling tool, the girl order card has a back panel that lists the official rewards offered by council. The girl should record her personal goal as a commitment to herself. When selling, the public frequently engages the girl in conversation about what she is working toward. The girl has the rewards at her fingertips to show what she will receive and explain what her troop will do with the proceeds. The girl order card lists the varieties of cookies available, their package weights, and descriptions. Girls should be familiar with the basic characteristics of each cookie to answer the consumer's questions, but also to encourage customers to try other flavors.

The start date of the sale is well publicized, and is printed right on the girl order card. Girls must never sell before the start date under any circumstances and will be penalized by losing part of their troop proceeds.

Girls usually engage their first customers right away: Mom and Dad. These are great early attempts for easy sales and learning experiences before they venture farther out into the world. Mom and Dad should help her develop basic skills of selling and determine her basic sales pitch. Self-confidence is one of the most reported qualities that girls learn from the Cookie Program (5 Skills). Overcoming the innate fear of asking a stranger to help you achieve a goal can be a life-changing skill. Girls will use their order card as a tool to show potential customers exactly what they are offering. For younger girls who have never done this, the order card is an essential tool to get them going.

Troops pick up their Starting Inventory Order cookies at the specified date and time. Girls pick up their cookies from the TCC at a prearranged time and are then ready to start selling with cookies in hand. Check the timeline in the Troop Cookie Manual for details.

Cookie Cupboards

Show Me the Cookies!!!

A cookie cupboard is the method of cookie distribution after Starting Inventory Orders have been delivered. Some are large trailer-based cupboards at council service or program centers. Other cupboards are smaller and run by specially trained volunteers out of their homes.

As boothing approaches, the cupboards are opened and staffed for troops to pick up product. Each troop should have placed an initial booth order as part of their Starting Inventory Order. For most troops, boothing is a marathon and they want to get as much product delivered up front, so there is less to pick up on their own. Remember that all product delivered to or picked up by a troop is non-returnable and has been purchased by the troop. Note that some troops are also at the cupboard 4-5 times per week.



Through eBudde, troops are able to place pending orders for their additional pickups. This helps the council monitor inventory and demand by flavor to ensure the cupboards are stocked properly in advance of pickups.

Cupboards are very dependent on volunteers to host or to contribute several hours of their time. Cupboards run for five weeks and are open many hours. It takes a strong commitment of volunteers to have proper coverage. This is an ideal opportunity for Girl Scout Dads to assist the Cookie Program.

Boothing

The Public Face of the Cookie Program

Troops that actively booth will achieve far greater success in the *5 Skills for Girls* than troops that booth only on opening weekend, or not at all. Boothing requires greater strategic thinking, planning and customer service skills. Interaction with the public produces a much more well-rounded experience than simply selling to family and friends.

Each service unit has a dedicated volunteer whose job is to build relationships in the community with businesses. The generosity and partnership of these businesses provides venues for boothing. The sites, dates, and times are entered in eBudde for selection at the designated time by troops. The boothing calendar is set by council, but each hosting business has the right to determine exactly when and where the booths can be established.

Keep in mind that host businesses are first and foremost operating their business and are focused on servicing their customers as best as they can. GSGLA booths are secondary and must never interfere with the operations of the host business.



There are specific boothing rules and proper etiquette that apply to all GSGLA booths. Some Service Units also provide guidelines, but they cannot change council policy. Troops are trained on these before the Cookie Program starts. Host businesses can set additional criteria aside from date and time. Sometimes they have a preference on exactly where the booth is set up or that girls must be in full uniform. These criteria are listed in the eBudde Booth Scheduler so that troops know what they can expect if they choose these booths.

The eBudde Booth Scheduler is a fantastic tool to empower troops to set their booth choices at their convenience. All booth opportunities are listed in eBudde before the Starting Inventory Order is due. At a predetermined schedule, troops can log in and select their 1st, 2nd, etc. choice. There are some limitations on quantity and which booths can be chosen first, but these are minor. The best feature is convenience. When the Booth Scheduler is open, troops can add booths, or edit prior choices, all on their own.

The Booth Scheduler feeds data directly to the Cookie Locator. The Cookie Locator is a website (and now a smart phone app) that allows the public to search for available booths via ZIP code. GSGLA is committed to marketing your booths and connecting customers with a booth. The single most common phone inquiry that council receives during the program is “where are the booths?” Again, the public wants to support the girls’ efforts, but that can be harder than it should be at times. The Cookie Locator’s effectiveness is directly related to the accuracy of the Booth Scheduler. Only booths that have an assigned troop will appear in the Cookie Locator. For that reason, if a troop cannot fulfill its booth commitment, the troop must delete itself from that booth in the Booth Scheduler for two reasons. First it deletes the booth from the Cookie Locator and the public will not see it as an opportunity to make a purchase, and second, the booth becomes available to other troops who can take advantage of the booth slot.

Finances

How to Safeguard the Money

All troops must have a checking account that is opened in the troop's name and in the council's federal tax ID number. This is one of the first things new troops must complete, and is absolutely essential for Product Program participation. All payments to council are processed via an electronic ACH Debit. This online banking tool is very effective at tracking payments, and is of utmost convenience to troops and service units. Troops must complete the *ACH Debit Authorization* form and attach a voided troop check for each product sale. The invitation to log on to eBudde is predicated on receiving this paperwork.

Council processes two debits for each troop. The first ACH Debit is processed approximately two weeks after delivery of the Starting Inventory Orders, which gives the troop plenty of time to deliver product to girls, and for the girls to deliver to customers, collect payment and remit to the troop.

The second and final ACH debit is processed approximately ten days after the end of the program. At this time, the full balance owed to council is collected. Total sales, less total troop proceeds, less opt out proceeds, and less the first ACH debit compute the current balance due.



Sometimes troops have trouble collecting from girls and their parents, and troops may modify the debit amount, if needed, by contacting their PSM. Other issues concerning payment can be a customer's NSF (non-sufficient fund) check. Please know that GSGLA has a national reputation of excellent payment procedures and collection efforts. Council can assist you at every opportunity to prevent cash management issues. Girls should turn in funds to the troop promptly and frequently. Likewise, troops should deposit into their troop bank accounts promptly and frequently.

Variation from this golden rule is the foundation for trouble down the road. Adults are responsible for safeguarding the sale proceeds and should be teaching young girls common sense rules for handling cash. Adults should safeguard large (\$20+) bills, and the cash box at booths should contain only a reasonable amount to make change. We encourage troops to use one of the many smart phone apps that will accept credit cards as this will prevent any loss. Sadly, we have seen rare incidents where a troop's cash box can disappear along with all funds. Troops are still responsible for payment to council even under unfortunate circumstances. This is an example of what real businesses have to deal with, even if it is one of life's hardest lessons.

Rewards, Recognitions & the Cookie Events

Time to Celebrate the Girls' Successes

Girl recognitions are one of the more popular aspects of the Cookie Program. Girls are very excited to see the items that are featured each year. GSGLA produces two special events as part of the overall rewards structure. Club 500 FunFest and the Elite 1000 events are spectacular. A great amount of planning and thought goes into their content. GSGLA is proud of these events, and their popularity grows each year.

Rewards are done quite differently at GSGLA than at most councils across the US. Each cookie baker produces a line of recognitions in keeping with that year's theme from which the council can choose and place at the levels it selects. The convenience of having the bakery pre-select items can be a big time-saver for councils. GSGLA, however, has a different view in that generic bakery items may have mass appeal in some parts of the country, but sometimes they just don't fit the way we would like in Los Angeles. GSGLA does its own shopping at large expos, conducts research, and develops relationships with suppliers.

In July, GSGLA puts a survey out to the entire membership where girls and their parents can vote on what items appeal best that year. In addition, GSGLA holds focus groups that provide valuable insight into new trends for both girls and parents. What appeals to younger girls does not necessarily appeal to older girls. The data from the voting is used to narrow down the field to about 25 items. Council product sales staff makes the final decisions.

Recognition levels are the pre-set number of boxes a girl must sell in order to receive the item listed. GSGLA's rewards are cumulative. Girls receive all rewards up to the top selling quantity – not just the highest award. Recognition levels currently range from 24 to 3,000 boxes.



Older girl troops are allowed to “opt out” of the recognition plan and instead receive an additional \$.10 per box in troop proceeds. Older girls (Cadette, Senior & Ambassador) are usually on different paths than the younger set. Some have large, faraway trips planned around the world. Others are planning their Silver and Gold Award projects which can require additional funding. At the same time, older girls may have outgrown the recognition items (no matter HOW cool they may be) and simply would rather have more money for their troop activities or travel.

Opting out is a girl decision (not an adult decision) that affects the whole troop. Individual girls cannot opt out which makes it important for the girls to discuss it as a group and make the best decision for the troop as a whole.

eBudde will compute the rewards earned for each girl automatically. However, the TCC must allocate boxes accurately to be sure each girl receives her correct rewards. This step is completed after the end of the program as part of the final wrap up of money and cookies.

Girl recognitions are delivered in early May. The council has contracted with its suppliers for specific quantities six months earlier, but sometimes the quantities needed exceed our best estimates, which can delay custom items.

The two GSGLA special events are planned months in advance. Club 500 FunFest is on a large scale with currently 1500+ girls. Elite 1000 is more exclusive by its nature with currently 220 girls reaching this achievement. Any girl who has reached these sales levels and has attended either event is extremely motivated to repeat it the following year (with her friends). These events are that good.



Gift of Caring

Community Service is at the Heart of Girl Scouts

A major learning component of Girl Scouts is that of community service. Girls learn the value of helping others and putting their time and effort back into the communities to truly make a difference in the lives of others. These service projects will instill the value of serving others that will continue into adulthood. The public is keenly aware of the valuable services that Girl Scouts brings to their communities and are eager to support.



Through the Cookie Program, girls offer the public the opportunity to purchase cookies for someone else in need of a smile that the box brings. The girl accepts a monetary donation from the customer and counts it as a sale. The customer does not purchase an actual box that the girl has on hand. Gift of Caring (GOC) sales are virtual boxes and are not physical at this time. Donations toward GOC cookies are put toward the council-wide Gift of Caring program. Currently, GSGLA collects approximately 165,000 boxes per year for donation to its GOC partners. GOC is the definition of a “win-win” situation. The general public donates a product toward a large-scale service project and also helps fund the troop’s more personal service projects in the future. Troops keep their proceeds on all boxes sold, including GOC. Cash donations received during booths should be earmarked towards the troop’s GOC total.

The largest share of GOC cookies goes to organizations such as Operation Gratitude, the USO, and the LA Regional Food Bank that supplies other food banks throughout LA County. Operation Gratitude sends care packages to military personnel deployed overseas to provide a taste of home. The public is eager to support the GOC partners as much as the girls themselves.

GOC cookies are recorded in eBudde as sales. Council will then place an additional order for thousands of cases of cookies that are drop shipped directly to the GOC partners. Understandably, girls and volunteers want to be a part of the delivery. The tangible aspect of being there makes an important impression. Council is able to arrange for these opportunities on a limited scale. Troops are encouraged to donate leftover cookies to their favorite or local food pantry. However, these cookies are NOT counted towards GOC.

Currently, less than 40% of girls sell the GOC program. It seems that troops are apprehensive to ask “too much” from customers. We believe this logic is flawed. Girls should be trained to ask every customer for ONE Gift of Caring box in addition to their own personal purchase. This method keeps the service to others concept active in the girls’ minds. They learn how such a simple step can reap huge benefits for others. It is the perfect vehicle to grow their sales and to exceed their personal goals. Customers WANT to help girls achieve great things. Gift of Caring is the easiest sale you could make and you put girls at a disadvantage by not encouraging each girl to set a separate GOC goal.

Summary

Cookies and Beyond...

The annual Girl Scout Cookie Program is the single most public aspect of Girl Scouting. The general public has a cursory understanding of what it's all about, but mostly they cannot wait to get their allotment of delicious, exclusive treats. Girl Scouts OWNS the cookie market nationwide during the Cookie Program. Keebler, Nabisco, and Pepperidge Farms all see their sales drop sharply when our product is available. But as we have learned over the years, it's NOT just a box of cookies. Cookies represent the myriad of opportunities that girls will have as a result of their participation in the Cookie Program.

Troop proceeds will fund the needs of a troop on an annual basis, including community service projects, troop supplies, uniforms, GSUSA registration fees, and local field trips. It will also fund the larger troop activities like travel that will create memories of a lifetime. Girls are rightly proud of their accomplishments and know that their experiences from Girl Scouting have set them on a better life journey. The Girl Scout Cookie Program not only funds all of these possibilities, it teaches fundamental, tangible life skills that stay with her forever.

The Product Sales Department is passionate about its work. We work year round to develop and implement the best Cookie (and Fall Product) Program we can imagine. Collectively, we have over 50 years of Girl Scouting experience as staff (much more as parents of Girl Scouts and as former Troop Leaders), and we are supported by one of the most creative Marketing and Communications staff in the country. All of this is to support the girl and her dreams for the future.

Our hope is that *Cookie Rookie* has made the Girl Scout Cookie Program easier to understand and that you are energized for your first Cookie Program. Please let us know if you have any questions and what we can do to be of service.

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