

Cookie Boss

A large number of Girl Scout alums end up running a business. That's because the Girl Scout Cookie Program® is hands-on experience in setting goals, creating budgets, managing inventory, marketing to customers, and working as a team. The Girl Scout Cookie business also shows you how to lead with confidence. What better ingredients are there for a successful business?

Steps

1. Take the lead in your cookie business
2. Set SMART goals
3. Team up to make business decisions
4. Make your cookie boss pitch
5. Expand your customer base

Purpose

When I've earned this badge, I will have the skills to take the lead in my cookie business to reach my goals.



Before you explore,
review the “Supplemental
Safety Tips for Online Marketing”
and “Digital Marketing Tips for
Cookie Entrepreneurs and Families”
at [girlscouts.org](https://www.girlscouts.org).



Step 1: Take the lead in your cookie business

You are ready to completely take the lead in your cookie business! Start by exploring everything you need to know. Find out what’s new this cookie season. What are the cookie costs and varieties? What are the rewards and troop proceeds? What marketing tools are available to you?

Choices—do one:

Make a cookie program kickoff video for your families. Create a video that spotlights the information important for your troop’s families to know. Include important dates and deadlines and specific ways that people can support your troop to reach their goals. Talk about how you can earn the Senior Cookie Entrepreneur Family pin with their support.

Host a cookie rally. Research all you need to know about your cookie business. Then put together a rally (in person or online) to share what you know with younger girls. They’ll love hearing from experienced cookie bosses! Imagine the girls are your customers and, if you’ve sold cookies before, use your customer research knowledge from past cookie seasons to create an experience they will never forget. Put yourself in their shoes and think about what they need to know. How can you inspire them to set and reach their own cookie business goals?

Attend cookie training hosted by your council. If your council hosts training for leaders, find out how you can join, either virtually or in person. If it’s not possible for the whole troop, pick a troop representative who can go and have them report back to the group.

Earn your Senior Cookie Entrepreneur Family pin!

Go to [girlscouts.org/seniorcookiepin](https://www.girlscouts.org/seniorcookiepin) to find the requirements.



Words to Know

Brand: The name, symbol, mark, or logo a company uses to identify their product. It's also the way other people, especially your customers, think about and experience your product.

Brand identity: The image your business projects, including everything from your logo to how people perceive your business.

Cookie entrepreneur: When you sell Girl Scout Cookies, you set goals, talk to customers, make decisions, make mistakes, and try again. This is all part of being an entrepreneur!

Digital Cookie®/Smart Cookies®: A way for customers to buy cookies online. Depending on where you live, you will either use Digital Cookie (for Little Brownie Bakers councils) or Smart Cookies (for ABC Bakers councils) to manage digital sales.

Digital marketing: Using technology, such as computers, smartphones, and social media, to reach your customers.

Entrepreneur: Someone who creates something or finds a way to help people and solve problems. Entrepreneurs often use their ideas to create a business.

Feedback: What someone thinks about your ideas or how you run your business.

Package goal: How many packages of cookies you and your troop plan to sell.

Pitch: When you share your idea or message with people in a way that gets them excited and eager to support you.

Strategy: A plan you make for how your cookie business will attract customers and meet sales goals.

Troop goal: What you plan to do with the money your troop earns selling cookies.

Troop proceeds: How much your troop will get for each package sold, based on your council and budget.

Safety First

Find out everything about keeping your cookie business safe. Go to [girlscouts.org](https://www.girlscouts.org) to find safety guidelines for selling digitally, door-to-door, or at a cookie booth.



Step 2: Set SMART goals

Apply the SMART goal criteria (see page 5) and attach a budget to your goals. What does your troop want to do with its cookie money? How much will it cost? Can you set smaller sales goals to help you reach your team's larger goal? Create an action plan with tasks and responsibilities to achieve your goals.

Choices—do one:

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Create a goals poster board. Once your team decides what to do with your money and sets a budget, use the SMART goal criteria to break down how you will meet and keep track of your progress toward your goals. Write down your goals to help you remember and achieve them.
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Get SMART ideas. Find out what other Seniors and Ambassadors have done with their cookie money by doing online research. Or invite an older Girl Scout to a meeting to share their experience. Use the SMART goal criteria to analyze their goals. Then come up with goals with your team and use the SMART goal criteria to see how each plays out. Vote on your choices, determine the cost, and then set a budget.
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Get feedback on your SMART goals. Follow the process from “Think Like a Cookie Entrepreneur” on page 11. Get feedback on your SMART goals from a business professional, entrepreneur, or someone with experience in the Girl Scout Cookie business, like a Girl Scout alum. Analyze the feedback you get and decide what changes to make. Make the changes and test your SMART goals again. Is there something more you can change to help you achieve your goals? Are your goals realistic based on your past cookie program results?



SMART Goal Criteria

Specific: What are your exact goals for your cookie business? Who is involved? What will be accomplished?

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Measurable: How will you see progress on your goals and stay motivated?

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Achievable: Is there anything that might get in the way of you reaching your goals? How can you plan for these obstacles?

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Relevant: How will you meet your personal sales goal to support your troop's budget and project goals?

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Timely: How long do you have to implement your cookie business? When do you plan to achieve your troop goals?

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PLAN

\$ GOAL

\$ 5,250

\$ 7,430

5,250

7,430

Step 3: Team up to make business decisions

Everyone on a team wants to be heard and to have a role. Together with your troop, decide who will do what, how much inventory you will have or need, where it will be safely stored, and what your marketing strategies are. Then decide what kind of help you'll need from adult troop leaders and other adult supporters to reach your goals. Write up a plan with your group and then act on it.

Choices—do one:

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Brainstorm with your team. On a large poster board or whiteboard (or online), create two columns. In the first, come up with team marketing and sales strategies for how to reach your goals. What has worked for your team in the past? Were there strategies that were more successful than others? In column two, assign roles and responsibilities. Listen to the ideas presented and decide on the ones that make the most sense. Then make a plan to move forward.
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Talk to a professional. As a team, brainstorm some ideas for the coming season. Draw from past experiences, if possible. Find someone with a business background to talk to your group about the strategies they use to meet their goals. Encourage your team to get feedback about their ideas for your cookie business. Then, with your team, come up with strategies and assign roles.
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Forecast sales based on data. Go online to find trends in the cookie business. Are cookie sales across the country trending up or down? Then, if you've sold cookies before, gather your sales data from the past year or two. Did some cookie booths perform better than others? Were there sales tactics that worked better than others? Assess your assets: Do you have more or fewer salespeople this year? More or fewer leads for new customers? Share your findings with your team to get feedback and come up with a plan together.



Step 4: Make your cookie boss pitch

Pitching is a valuable skill for your cookie business, career, and life. You pitch to sell products or ideas, when you want to promote something, or to share your story. For your cookie business, design different pitch messages to attract new customers, announce a special sales package, invite customers to a sales event, encourage customers to buy on the Digital Cookie®/Smart Cookies® site, to give cookies as a gift, or to get loyal customers to help promote your business. Once you've figured out who your audience is and what outcome you're hoping for, do one of these choices to help craft your pitch.

Choices—do one:

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Make a team video pitch. Decide together who your target audience is and what message you want to send. Then film a pitch video as a group. You only have a few seconds to grab your viewer's attention, so what will you do? What will you say to convince your audience to believe in you? You might want to create a short, catchy phrase or sound bite to make your message memorable. Try creating a video pitch that is 5 seconds, 30 seconds, and 3 minutes long.
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Watch other pitches. Go online to watch videos of different pitching styles. One might be an entrepreneur pitching their business to a bank. Another might be someone sharing ideas on an online video talk. Check out start-up pitch competitions online for ideas. Which ones grab your attention or tell you a lot about the product within a short span of time? Then create your pitch and decide how you'll deliver it.
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Create a pitch for different platforms. Prepare different pitches to deliver in person, to a large group, through email, video, or social media. Customize and structure your pitch to meet the needs of your audience for each platform. For example, what's a compelling subject line to use for emails? How long should your pitch be to a large group of people? Is there a better time to post your pitch on social media so it doesn't get lost or ignored?

Pitch Guide

- Clearly establish the need
- Be succinct
- Reveal what the benefits are
- Make it memorable
- Tell a story



A close-up photograph of a person's hands with light blue nail polish. One hand holds a red speckled enamel mug, while the other hand is reaching towards a stack of round, golden-brown cookies on a wooden surface. To the left, a green lantern is partially visible. The background is a blurred blue and green.

Cookies Are Coming!

Before cookie season starts, put together a campaign to build anticipation. Come up with something fun, like a cookie taste test or a bake-off at a community gathering. Start a countdown on social media in the days leading up to the first day of business. Hang up flyers in local shops. Ask your chamber of commerce if they'll place an announcement online.

Step 5: Expand your customer base

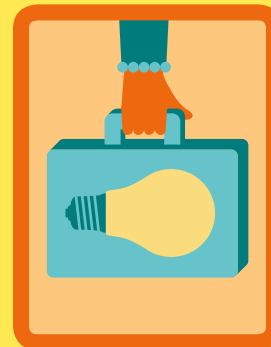
Growing your customer base will help keep your cookie business competitive and on track to reach your goals. Put equal energy into taking care of your current customers and attracting new ones. Remember that loyal customers can help expand your customer base! Think about ways to reach customers that you might see in your day-to-day life. Check out “Digital Marketing Tips for Cookie Entrepreneurs and Families” at girlscouts.org/cookiedigitalmarketing for ideas.

Choices—do one:

Explore customer service. Customer service is how you interact with your customers, answer their questions, and solve problems. Check out companies that provide great customer service. How do they keep their current customers and attract new ones? How do they go the extra mile? Do they send out regular newsletters? Have a loyalty rewards program? Engaging social media campaigns? Learn what you can do for your cookie business and, with your troop, come up with a plan to expand your base.

Get opinions. Create feedback cards or surveys for your customers and ask them to rate their experience with you. The happier a customer is with a brand, the more likely they are to be a lifetime buyer and spread the word. What do your customers like and what do they think can be improved about the Girl Scout Cookie business? What can you do to improve your customer’s experience? Choose at least one thing to change.

Be active on social media. Create a poster, graphic, video, or presentation to share different aspects of your cookie business. Include information about the product and how customers help girls when they buy cookies. Let customers know how they can donate cookies. Think about your strong selling points—the varieties, the brand identity, and your goals—and promote your cookie story.



Earning your **Business Startup** badge will give you even more tools to learn about teamwork, mentorship, and ways you can expand your network.





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