Girl Scouts have been selling cookies since the 1920s when Juliette Low began the practice as a way for Girl Scouts to become self-reliant. In the beginning, girls baked their own cookies. In 1934, the first documented council-wide sale of commercially baked cookies took place in Philadelphia.

Today’s Girl Scouts develop their entrepreneurial and public speaking skills while earning money for special events, projects, supplies, equipment, and facilities.

**Skill Builders**

1. **To hone your marketing skills, write a 30- or 60-second television or radio commercial for this year’s Girl Scout cookie varieties.** Or create a public service announcement (PSA) on the benefits of cookie sales for Girl Scout activities, projects, and trips.

2. **Choose an activity that your group or troop would like to do, research the expenses involved (including things like admission fees, transportation, food) and then figure out how many boxes of cookies you would need to sell to finance the project.** Read page 44 in the *Cadette Girl Scout Handbook* or pages 129–131 in *A Resource Book for Senior Girl Scouts* to find out how to create a budget.

3. **Design a poster or flyer for your cookie campaign that you could post at local stores, businesses, religious institutions, etc.**

4. **Brainstorm 10 new locations in your community for selling cookies—for example, at train stations, parades, tag sales, malls. Then, narrow down your choices by conducting an informal “test.” Keep tabs on the numbers of sales made in each of these locations over the course of one week.

5. **Research the history of Girl Scout cookie production and sales. Then, with your troop, recreate some of the old ads campaigns for fun. Could they generate sales today? Take a poll.**

6. **One of the ways to ensure successful product sales is to develop a marketing plan.** Do a market survey of your community to determine the ages and occupations of those who buy certain kinds of cookies and use results to help in your sales efforts.

7. **Selling cookies requires skills in areas such as customer service, public speaking, and perseverance. Role-play different scenarios that might occur during the sale. You might want to include the customer who is cranky, obnoxious, or very inquisitive.**

8. **Create a press kit to send to media outlets and places where cookies are sold. Include information on Girl Scouting, the purpose of the cookie campaign, a current council newsletter or list of projects and activities for girls, and a glossey flyer of the cookie order form.**

9. **Hold a cookie-tasting party at a senior citizens’ facility, child-care center, or homeless shelter.**

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**Technology**

1. **Surf the Internet for marketing ideas for food products.** Download the information for your troop or group’s cookie campaign.

2. **Survey at least 10 people for their favorite cookies and their reasons.** On your computer or by hand, make a bar graph or chart showing the results, and interpret them.

3. **Study the design of a Girl Scout cookie box. How does it protect the product? How is it appealing? Look at the colors, print styles, artwork, or photography. Can you list five things the design says about Girl Scouting?**

4. **Prepare a spreadsheet that will help you keep track of your troop, group, or council’s cookie sales and the profits. Use graph paper or a computer program.**

5. **Start a “cookies coast-to-coast” newsletter.** Distribute it to your friends, family or troop members via e-mail.

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**Career Exploration**

1. **Examine different careers in the food industry.** Don’t forget jobs like those in marketing, sales, photography, and advertising, including the graphic arts and copywriting. Interview a professional in at least two of these fields. Ask about the job’s responsibilities, education requirements or training, and benefits.

2. **Be an entrepreneur and start your own business selling a product or service that you think will appeal to a specific group: for example, weekend baby-sitting services or a lemonade and cookie stand.** Read about one Girl Scout’s experiences with setting up her own business on pages 97 and 98 of the *Cadette Girl Scout Handbook*. Learn how to create a budget.

3. **Get some writing tips from a local reporter, freelance writer, or teacher, and then write a feature story about your cookie campaign for the council newsletter.**

4. **Arrange a factory tour for a food product and see what is involved in the making and packaging of that item.** Share what you have learned with your Girl Scout troop or group, or others.

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**Service Projects**

1. **Develop a cookie board game for Brownie Girl Scouts that will teach them skills like counting, matching, and following rules.** Hold an informal contest to come up with a great name for the game.

2. **Swapping sales techniques with another troop or group.**

3. **Recycle cookie boxes into an art project you have designed, constructed, and decorated. Or create something functional like a small toolbox or tissue holder.**

4. **Send thank-you notes to major supporters or helpers of your cookie campaign and share with them one project that came about as a result of the cookie sales.**

5. **Create a poster for a younger troop promoting the benefits of a healthy beverage (such as milk or juice) to go with their cookie snack.**

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**And Beyond**

**FIND OUT HOW MANY GIRL SCOUT COOKIES are sold each year in your council and nationally.** Keep in visual tally at your council office or meeting place. Write to Girl Scouts in other states to see what activities their cookie sales support. Deploy clippings, letters, or photos. Try these related interest projects to improve your sales skills and marketing strategies:

- **Your Own Business**
  - **Leadership**
  - **Dollar and Sense**
  - **Graphic Communications**
  - **The Food Connection**
  - **Scenes for Life**
  - **Collecting**
  - **Creative Cooking**
  - **Writing for Reid**