

## Cookie Marketing – Dos and Don'ts

The top priority of the Girl Scout Cookie Program is to make sure the girls learn the five skills while having fun and being safe. Participating girls and adults are expected to follow the Cookie Program's safety, social media/marketing and business ethics guidelines. Teaching her business ethics means being honest and responsible at every step of the cookie sale.

Nine times out of ten, violations of the guidelines are simply misunderstandings that can be resolved by clear and direct communication. However, if an adult is unable to act in accordance with the program guidelines, her participating Girl Scout(s) may be penalized by loss of a portion of her rewards/Cookie Dough.

### Social Media

We know that today's Girl Scouts are tech-savvy and have grown up in a world where social media always existed. A quick scroll through Instagram or Facebook will show you how many brands use social media to market their business. Girl Scouts of Greater Iowa (GSGI) allows parents/guardians to make decisions with their girls about using social media to achieve their Cookie Program goals. Social media can be a great tool, but the time-tested methods of booth sales, door-to-door, and online sales through Smart Cookies to friends and family have proven to be the highest-performing sales channels!

#### Best Practices:

- Social media or online posts should be signed with a girl's first name only, troop number (optional), and council name (Girl Scouts of Greater Iowa). You may also include the community, as customers may prefer to support local troops!
- Personal emails or street addresses of girls should never be used.
- Girls should be involved in the process—for instance, she can share her goals, photos, or artwork, and messages of thanks. Remember, customers are getting more than delicious cookies—they are supporting the development of female leaders!
- Be age-appropriate—most sites state that children should not have their own accounts until age 13.
- GSGI urges caution when families choose to utilize swap sites (Facebook Market, Craigslist, Community Pages, etc), after the February 1 start date.
- Ultimately, families will make different choices about how their Girl Scouts can use social media to promote the Cookie Program. If you see something you disagree with, please be respectful and move along. Neither GSGI nor other parents/volunteers have the authority to remove posts or reprimand others.

#### A Note on Early Selling:

The official start date of the Cookie Program is February 1 - this means that no "pre-orders" should be taken before this date. Individuals may post to their personal pages prior to February 1 letting friends and family know that "cookies are coming," provided no orders are taken before the program starts.

If you see a post on social media where a family in Girl Scouts of Greater Iowa is gathering orders for Girl Scout Cookies before the official February 1 start date, we have posted [a sample message on The Bridge](#) that you can send them, to let them know about the official February 1 start date.

## Advertising – including newspaper, digital media, & other Forms

Occasionally, parents or families will ask about using targeted advertisements, including paid ads, through newspapers or other publications/media, to promote their Girl Scout's cookie sale. **GSGI does not allow advertisements to be placed promoting one girl's sale for several reasons.** One, we are committed to girl safety and ensuring that no girl's personal information is shared. Second, though each girl can set her own goals and participate in ways that work for her and her family, the Cookie Program is a unified program for thousands of girls working together. The use of paid advertisements to direct customers to one girl is an unfair advantage in the marketplace. Finally, Girl Scouts as a national organization has strict guidelines around the use of the name, brand, and logo, which is not licensed for use in personal advertisements. In the spirit of Business Ethics - one of the 5 Skills of the Cookie Program - we ask that families find other means to help their Girl Scout achieve her goals besides paid advertisements.

## Business Promotion of Booth Sales

Local businesses can be great partners during the Cookie Program, especially with hosting booth sales! However, there are specific trademark regulations around the name, brand, and logo of the Girl Scouts and Girl Scout Cookies. This means that businesses may not promote a Girl Scout cookie booth in order to drive revenue for their own business. If a business would like to discuss an official event partnership or sponsorship, please direct them to contact [info@gsiowa.org](mailto:info@gsiowa.org).

### Best Practices:

- Businesses are prohibited from using trademarked information to advertise cookie booth sales. If there is an offer to place an ad to promote a cookie booth, the following phrasing may be used:
  - Come See Girl Scout Troop XXXX with your favorite cookies!
  - Date, time, location
- The use of the words and phrases "Girl Scout Cookies," any cookie name, and any and all images associated with Girl Scout Cookies is not allowed for use by a commercial establishment.
- Businesses may not use cookies as an incentive to sell their products, i.e., no "Buy a product and get a free package of cookies."

## Additional Products at Booth Sales

Sometimes, enterprising Girl Scouts have the idea to sell additional products, like hot chocolate or handmade gifts, alongside cookies at their booth sales. This gets tricky, because just like business promotions, trademark regulations mean that girls/troops cannot use the Girl Scout and Girl Scout Cookie brands to raise additional funds.

### Best Practices:

- Instead of selling additional items, girls/troops may offer free items, like beverages, and encourage customers to make a donation towards the Joy Project.
- If a girl/troop would like to pursue the sale of an additional product, first complete the [Money Earning Project Application](#). Note that the sale of commercial products is always prohibited.
- The girl/troop must also get express permission from the booth sale location, to sell an additional product besides cookies.
- If all permissions are granted, there must be clear signage for customers about where the proceeds from the additional products are going (such as a troop trip, project, or Joy Project donations).