

advice from leaders just like you!

Liz, in Oregon, wrote,

“The girls love their troop, but as ‘very cool’ high-school freshmen, they are mortified others will find out they are Girl Scouts. They are terrified to do a cookie booth.”

been there, done that

As a college junior, I understand. Just six years ago I was that same high school freshman girl absolutely terrified of letting anyone know I was in Girl Scouts. I found, however, that people usually make fun of things that they do not understand. You could have girls share with other teens how Girl Scouts has changed their lives—highlighting travel opportunities, leadership roles, friendships, and how the Girl Scout experience can help with college admissions and scholarships. Girls should not let a simple cookie sale scare them—help them to understand that the cookie activity is their opportunity to learn entrepreneurship, sales, goal-setting and other business skills, which is very grown up. They are tomorrow’s business leaders. What makes someone “cool” is their confidence, ambition, and kindness towards others. Whether they realize it or not, they are already “very cool.”

—Stacie Trepanier, Lancaster, WI

My Senior Girl Scouts recently were interviewed by Cadettes for their bridging requirements and were asked that same question. Their answer: being in Girl Scouts in high school is not un-cool. Everyone is in so many different things, and no one really worries about what else others are doing. If they’re in band, that’s okay. If it’s ROTC or Spanish Club, that’s okay. If it’s Girl Scouts, that’s okay too.

There’s a lot more freedom to just do your own thing and no one really makes fun of each other like in middle school. It’s much easier than in middle school, plus everyone is so busy that they don’t have time to worry about it. In fact, their best cookie customers are their fellow high school students! They take a few boxes to school each day, sell those, then come home and re-stock for the next day!

—Janice Felps, Round Rock, TX

location, location, location

We did three things that worked great: (1) contacted the council to get sales locations that weren’t close to their friends; (2) assisted with younger Brownie Girl Scouts selling cookies; and (3) had a cookie booth at a troop garage sale with permission from our council.

—Kim Stafford, San Jose, CA

We solved this by having the booth sales at locations or times in which they would be unlikely to run into fellow high schoolers. Example—Saturday mornings outside a hardware store (most of their friends would still be asleep or at a sports practice) or at the train station on a Friday evening. Another idea was to partner with a different service unit and trade locations with a similar level troop from another town. None of the girls

would run into kids they knew and both groups would have a chance to make the money they need for their wonderful projects and trips.

—Pam Valliere, Palatine, IL

mentors and mentorees

Pair them up with a younger troop. They can be there to help make sure change is counted correctly and to keep the girls safe and under control. They can all share the profits. This relieves the burden for the younger troop leaders and gives the older girls a perfect excuse for doing something they might perceive as too young for them otherwise.

—Jill Johnson, Springfield, VA

The coolness factor is probably the toughest issue facing older Girl Scouts. I posed this question to my daughter, who will be a high school senior in the fall. Her response: “Tell those girls to get over themselves! The only way that Girl Scouting will ever be considered cool is if the girls who are Girl Scouts stop being afraid to admit it.”

—Lynne Cantwell, Senior Troop 2847,
Alexandria, VA

think outside the cookie box!

Perhaps there is a faster-paced venue where they can sell. For example, within our council, older girls vie for assignments in the downtown Seattle business district along the Metro bus routes. It’s a very different setting for selling that is more suited for assertive girls, able to work fast, before bus riders board their buses for the long ride home.

—Ellen Schoonover, Girl Scout Troop Leader,
Bellevue WA

Mature girls (in pairs) can approach businesses like car dealers, hotels, and doctor’s offices to buy large quantities of cookies as incentives for employees and customers. Restaurants may feature desserts with Girl Scout cookies for an ingredient, buying by the case from your troop. Let the girls take an active part in deciding how and where to earn money.

—Karen Fraley, Willoughby, OH

Let your “very cool” Girls Scouts strut their stuff. Our Cadette troop decided that they wanted to go to New York City to see a play on Broadway. When it was time to sell the cookies, the booths were decorated with street signs “Broadway this exit,” “Broadway bound” and also “to NYC to see a Broadway show.” They even dressed up in cookie costumes. They were serious about going and people were eager to help (buying more boxes or giving great donations). It took two years to raise the funds but when it was time to go, we all had a great time. What did their friends think? Most of them wanted to join us. Have the girls set a goal, decorate the booth and just have fun with it. What does it matter what anyone else thinks!

—Kym Horsey, Cocoa, FL

GIRL SCOUT PRIDE

When I was a Cadette and Senior Girl Scout, my friends and I had similar feelings. However the fact that I was a Girl Scout somehow leaked out. When it came time to sell cookies I was really surprised to have people (even cheerleaders) approach me about purchasing a box of cookies because Girl Scout cookies are just so delicious. My fellow classmates were also impressed with the fact that I had been repelling, climbing, horseback riding, and to the beach with Girl Scouts, and I had been awarded scholarship money based on my Girl Scout experience.

—Brooke Borek, Somerset, PA

compiled by Chris Bergerson,
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top ten cookie strategies for teens

1. Switch booth locations with another service unit.
2. Set up in another town by arrangement.
3. Sell in a place not frequented by peers, e.g. business district, hardware store.
4. Help a younger group at their cookie booth—share sales knowledge, help the leaders and be a role model for the girls.
5. Come out of the cookie cupboard! Let peers know you are “the cookie connection.” We have it on the best authority that Girl Scout Cookies work as a “guy magnet”!
6. Stretch cookie selling skills honed by years of experience—pick a challenging, faster-paced venue—like a transportation hub at rush hour.
7. Set an awesome goal and share it with peers and the public—whether its a trip to Broadway or Switzerland—chances are, they will want to join you.
8. Forget the cookie booth! Focus on businesses and CEOs to close large-quantity sales.
9. Use cookie selling expertise to help train leaders and cookie chairs in how to set goals and conduct a successful activity.
10. Have fun with it! There’s safety in numbers and ways to really make an impact on your community. Practice courage, confidence and character—even when selling cookies.

how would you answer this question?

A Cadette leader from New York writes:

How can I coach my girls to make connections to address real community needs when deciding on their service or leadership projects?

Send your responses to:

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Include your name, address and telephone number.