Online Cookie Program
Guidance & FAQs
Trial Year 2020
Trial Guidance
For 2020, girls may use the Internet to share their Cookie Program sales links, stories and learnings with the following guidelines:

- The Girl Scout Cookie Program is a girl-led program and online marketing and sales efforts should always be led by a girl while also being supervised by her parents or guardians.

- Girls engaging in online sales and marketing must review and apply the **Digital Marketing Tips for Cookie Entrepreneurs and Their Families**.

- Girls, volunteers and parents must review and adhere to the **Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge**, the **Digital Cookie Pledge**, the **Supplemental Safety Tips for Online Marketing**, and Girl Scouts’ **Safety Activity Checkpoints** for Computer and Internet Use and Cookie and Product Sales (with the exception that they may share beyond friends and family).

- Girl sales links should never be posted to online resale sites (Craig’s List, eBay, Facebook Marketplace etc.).

- Girls must adhere to all terms and conditions on Digital Cookie and Smart Cookie platforms. For copies of terms and conditions please contact GSUSA, ABC or M2 as needed.

- GSUSA reserves the right to remove or disable the link for any reason including violation of guidance, inventory fulfillment issues, safety issues, or if sales and marketing activity goes viral and otherwise creates unanticipated disruption.

- Parents, girls, and volunteers should contact and collaborate with their councils and GSUSA in advance on any national news media opportunities tied to girls online marketing and sales efforts.
Supplemental Safety Tips for Online Marketing
For 2020, Supplemental Safety Tips for Online Marketing:

When engaging in online marketing and sales efforts beyond friends and family through the Girl Scout Cookie Program®,

- Review and apply the Digital Marketing Tips for Cookie Entrepreneurs and Families.
- Continue to adhere to the Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge and Digital Cookie Pledge.
- Review Girl Scouts' Safety Activity Checkpoints for Computer and Internet Use and Cookie and Product Sales on your council’s website.

In addition, review and apply the below Supplemental Safety Tips for Online Marketing:

- To protect your personal identity, NEVER direct message with people you do not know online or on social media platforms.
- Always use your Girl Scout online sales link for customer orders.
- Parents or guardians must approve all girl delivered online orders and supervise all communications and product delivery logistics with any customers girls don’t personally know. As a reminder, girls should never deliver cookies alone.
- If your Girl Scout sales link is posted on a public facing site, be aware the link is now searchable by anyone and could potentially appear anywhere on the internet.
- Never share your personal information (e.g., last name, phone number, email, or street address).
- Never share your personal location information, including your booth location.

Available for download on Troop Leader Resources page of girlscouts.org/cookies.
Digital Marketing Tips for Cookie Entrepreneurs and Families
For 2020, Digital Marketing Tips for Cookie Entrepreneurs and Families:

All girls in engaging in digital marketing and sales activity beyond friends and family must review and apply the **Digital Marketing Tips for Cookie Entrepreneurs and Families**.

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**Digital Marketing Tips for Cookie Entrepreneurs and Families**

The Girl Scout Cookie Program® offers girls unique opportunities to engage in online marketing and sales as they learn about economics and how to think like entrepreneurs.

Follow these four steps as you run your cookie business, and take your marketing efforts to the next level by going online using your Digital Cookie® or Smart Cookie website and social media platforms.

1. **As you set goals for your cookie business**, think about how digital marketing can help you meet them, helping customers in your community who may not know a Girl Scout® bakery near you.
   - **Be honest**: Yes, the Girl Scout® can also apply to your sales technique from your Digital Cookie® or Smart Cookie site to your digital marketing campaigns, be honest, straightforward, and approachable as you write about your cookie business.
   - **Create a sense of urgency**: After all, Girl Scout Cookies® season only comes around once a year! Count down to the last days to order and a great motivator for driving sales. Use language that will encourage potential customers to buy from you right now.
   - **Make an impression**: Use social media platforms to upsell the products. Tell your customers about you and share the reasons why they should choose your cookies.
   - **Highlight special features and products**: Share the outstanding cookies in your lineup or any special varieties. Do you have a new flavor available for purchase? How about a gluten-free option? Do your customers know that Thin Mints® are made with vegan ingredients?

2. **Earn one of the Cookie Business badges**, and put a digital marketing spin on it. Check out these prompts to get you thinking about how you can digitize your sales efforts.
   - **Digital Marketing**: Does your digital customer pitch include answers to commonly asked questions? Immortalize your story and customers' feedback in your online content. Join a digital marketing platform and keep your customers engaged.
   - **Cookie Business**: How will you market your cookie business off your online platform?
   - **Cookie Business**: How will you expand your cookie business through social media platforms?
   - **Cookie Business**: How will you teach younger girls about business ethics in online marketing?

3. **Digital marketing to expand your network and grow your people skills**. Try some of the following strategies:
   - **Think of your favorite brands**, and then check out their websites and social media accounts. What do they do to create a relationship with their customers on Facebook or Instagram? What can you do to safely build a relationship with your online customers?
   - **Use platforms** that potential customers could be on. Think about your target customers and where they're most active online.
   - **Engage your customers through email marketing**. Send an email through Digital Cookie® or Smart Cookie to improve potential customers' interest in your cookies and help you achieve your goals.
   - **Turn loyal customers into brand advocates**. Emphasize customers can be your secret weapon, especially with word-of-mouth marketing in digital spaces.
   - **Use marketing to inspire, educate, entertain, and engage your prospective customers**. Share how you use your cookies to make a difference in the world. Leverage your scouting program and social media to raise awareness and inspire potential customers to buy from you.
   - **Share off customer testimonials**: Collect and highlight enthusiastic testimonials from your customers through social media. This shows potential customers that buying cookies from you is a great investment. Make sure to ask if you can share their reviews.

4. **Practice business ethics by safely marketing online**. Before you get started, review the below safety standards. When in doubt, recall these resources.
   - **You and your supporting parent/guardian must read, agree to, and abide by the Girl Scout® Internet Safety Rules, the Online Cookie Store, and the Safety & Behavior, Cyberbullying, and Online Safety Rules for Online Merchandising**. Before engaging in online marketing and sales efforts through the cookie program.
   - **Adhere to Girl Scout® Safety Checklists for Computer and Internet Use and are Cookie and Product Sales on your council’s website.

Available for download on **Troop Leader Resources** page of girlscouts.org/cookies.
FAQs
FAQs:

Q: Why are we looking at changing online guidance for the Cookie Program?
A: Today's girls are tomorrow's entrepreneurs. In keeping up with today's digital age, we are excited to offer Girl Scouts more opportunities to utilize their digital marketing skills and ensure safety by offering programming that prepares girls for the future.

Q: When does the Trial Guidance go into effect?
A: 1/1/2020 This is a trial for the 2020 membership season. We are monitoring to ensure the change will make sense for girls while keeping them safe and helping them reach their goals. We will evaluate the success and implications of this trial program at the end of the season.

Q: Is there a new badge for the Digital Marketing Tips for Cookie Entrepreneurs and Families?
A: Not this year, but it is essential for Girl Scouts to review and apply the tips that are included in the Digital Marketing Tips for Cookie Entrepreneurs and Families to make the most of their experience. We hope to expand this program after the pilot year.

Q: Some girls in my council are not on social media. Are they at a disadvantage?
A: Not at all! Using social media is just one of the many ways to promote their sale. Cookie booths, door to door, email invites and more are all a way for girls in your council to participate in the cookie program.

Q: Will Safety Activity Checkpoints and Volunteer Essentials be updated with Trial Guidance?
A: Because this is a trial year, GSUSA has not updated these documents to reflect the lift on Friends and Family. Councils must train volunteers, parents and girls on the Digital Cookie Pledge, Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge, Supplemental Safety Tips for Online Marketing, and Girl Scouts' Safety Activity Checkpoints for Computer and Internet Use and Cookie and Product Sales. Councils should insert the Trial Guidance in any council customized documents (Volunteer Essentials, Cookie Manuals and Trainings) when training volunteers, parents and girls.
FAQs:

Q: Can parents refuse an order that is placed online for girls to deliver?
A: Yes, parents can still refuse any online girl delivered order. For ABC Smart Cookie, parents should supervise girls and notify the customer that the product cannot be delivered.

Q: What do we do if a girl receives a large order that will cause a variety or varieties of cookies to be out of stock?
A: If a girl is receiving orders which causes a variety or varieties of cookie(s) to be out of stock:

If the order is a shipped order:
The cookie will show as unavailable for shipping to all customers

If the order is a girl delivered order:
ABC Smart Cookie and Digital Cookie Instructions:
Parents will need to secure girl delivered cookies from their troop leaders. If the leader or council cannot fulfill the order, troops, girls and parents should work in partnership to notify customers the order cannot be filled.

For Digital Cookie, additional options exist:
- Council can disable girl delivery for that girl
- Council can turn off a variety or varieties at the council level for girl delivery
- Parent can turn off girl deliver for the girl (if council has enabled that option)
- Parent can make a flavor or multiple flavors of cookies unavailable to her customers

For M2 – Digital Cookie Pilot Councils: Council should contact M2 for additional options.
FAQs:

Q: How does a council manage refunds for prepaid girl delivered cookies if council inventory is not available for fulfillment?
A: If an out of stock situation occurs (i.e. cupboards run out of cookies) causing customers to not receive their full order of girl delivery cookies follow these instructions to issue customer refunds.

For ABC's Smart Cookie: The customer does not prepay for cookies in ABC's Smart Cookie. The parent/girl should simply adjust the amount they charge the customer according to the cookies they are able to deliver.

For LBB Digital Cookie: Contact GSUSA Digital Cookie with information on customers that need full or partial refunds

For M2 – Digital Cookie Pilot Councils: Contact M2 with information on customers that need full or partial refunds

Q: Will GSUSA post or repost individual girl links?
A: No. In order to ensure the Girl Scout Cookie Program remains girl-led and fair, GSUSA will not post or share posts that contain individual girl links.

Q: Can councils post or repost individual girl links?
A: No. In order to ensure the Girl Scout Cookie Program remains girl-led and fair, girls should do their own posting with the supervision of their parent or guardian. Councils should not share post that contain individual girl links.

Q: Can I submit individual girl links to be shared by GSUSA/Girl Scout Councils?
A: No. In order to ensure the Girl Scout Cookie Program remains girl-led and fair, GSUSA nor Girl Scout Councils will share one individual girls link.
For 2020, girls may NOT use the Internet to share their Fall Program sales links beyond friends and family:

- The change in online guidance applies to the Girl Scout Cookie Program only.
- Online marketing and sales efforts for the Fall Program should be limited to friends and family only and not promoted on public facing web sites.

**FAQ’s for Fall Program:**

**Q: Why is the Fall Program limited to Friends and Family only?**
**A: **There are three fundamental reasons to keep the Fall Program with Friends and Family:

**The Foundational Girl Scout Experience:** While the fall program is important to councils and troops to meet their goals, if girls are engaging large amounts of time in the cookie program AND the fall program it leaves little room for outdoor, STEM, life skills and other entrepreneurial experiences.

**Press and Public Perception:** The Girl Scout Cookie program is the foundation of our Entrepreneurship pillar and we don’t want the public or press to get distracted by fall program media. Additionally, many councils are adhering to United Way Black out periods agreements which limit their Fall Programs to Friends networks only.

**Volunteer and Parent Retention:** The Fall Program at a larger scale has potential to put additional responsibilities on families and leaders. Reducing volunteer workload and potential burnout in all aspects of product sales should be considered.
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