

Best Practices for Girl Scout Troop Cookie Managers
Design Document

Angella Alvernaz
George Mason University
EDIT 575 - Spring 2018
Dr. Theano Yerasimou

Background: The position of Troop Leader is the most difficult volunteer position that a parent can hold in Girl Scouts. Another position that is very challenging within Girl Scouts is that of Troop Cookie Manager (TCM). Many of the volunteers that take this position do not initially realize the length of time that it will take or the obstacles from other parents that they will encounter. As a result, many volunteers give up in the middle of the year which causes numerous problems for the troop for the remainder of the troop year. With a little planning, proper communication, and firm guidelines many of these problems can be reduced or avoided entirely.

The standard troop year runs from September through June, which corresponds with the school year. The responsibilities of the TCM begin in November and end at the beginning of July.

Problem: Many TCM's do not take the time to establish firm guidelines and procedures for the families to follow during cookie season, which causes many questions and misunderstandings. These issues can cause unhealthy relationships between the families.

Some of the problems that occur when guidelines and procedures are not set include:

- Questions about who should be taking orders (Scouts vs. Parents).
- Misunderstandings about when and how to submit the initial orders to the TCM.
- Delinquency on the parents part when picking up the initial cookie orders from the TCM.
- Confusion about how and when to turn in cookie money to the TCM.
- Parents scheduling to work at booths and then not showing up or canceling at the last minute.
- Reward orders not being picked up promptly.

Purpose of Training: This training module will guide TCM's who are new or who may be having problems with their troop through best practices for each stage of the cookie sales season. The overall goal of the training is to ensure that these processes run smoothly, thus reducing the frustration that is felt by both the troop families and the TCM. Customizable resources will be provided for the TCM throughout the module.

Format of Module: The module will be created through responsive design which will allow it to be accessed via desktop computer and mobile devices. It can be assumed that most TCM's will access this training on desktop computer, laptops, or tablets because it focuses on the planning and implementation of the cookie season. They should not need to access it via mobile phone when they are at booths. It will be distributed throughout GSCNC Service Units in Maryland, Virginia, Washington DC, and West Virginia.

The outline of the module is shown below:

- **Cover Screen**
- **Chapter 1: The overall timeline for the cookie season with tasks for each month**
 - This chapter will go over the important tasks for each month of the cookie season. The TCM handbook will be highlighted. Specific dates will only be referenced as examples. The exact dates change slightly from year to year.

- **Chapter 2: Preparing cookie materials for distribution**
 - Cookie materials should be distributed throughout the cookie season, as needed. This chapter will discuss what to include in the initial packets that are provided to families. It will also discuss when to distribute the remaining materials.
- **Chapter 3: How to train the Scouts in your troop**
 - Each year, the Scouts in the troop should be trained on cookie sales. Even if they are veteran Scouts, the skills that they will focus on will change each year as they get older and become more mature. This chapter will detail the training resources available as well as what skills to focus on at each level (ie: Daisy, Brownie, Junior, Cadette, Senior, Ambassador).
- **Chapter 4: How to train the parents in your troop**
 - Parents should be informed about the timeline of the cookie season, how to support their Scout appropriately, how to handle monies due, and what is expected of them. When parents are properly trained they are not as frustrated.
- **Chapter 5: Scheduling cookie delivery with your troop**
 - A smooth cookie delivery involves much more than just counting boxes of cookies. This chapter will illustrate the process of scheduling drivers to pick up the cookies, sorting the cookies, preparing the delivery packets for parents, and the meeting that should be held with each parent when they pick-up their initial order.
- **Chapter 6: Additional cookie orders**
 - Many families will need to pick-up additional cookies throughout the season to fill additional orders and reorders. This is a great problem to have; however, the orders need to be filled promptly and documented accurately. This chapter will give suggestions for making this process quick and simple.
- **Chapter 7: Scheduling booths**
 - Scheduling booths correctly is very important. This process will determine the number of cookies that need to be ordered for booths when the initial orders are placed. Ordering too few cookies will have negative effects at the first 1-3 booths. Ordering too many cookies can cause the troop to lose profits at the end of the cookie sale season. The process of communicating with your families to properly schedule booths is vital. This chapter will give best practices for scheduling booths and staffing booths before cookies are ordered.
- **Chapter 8: Financial responsibilities and expectations**
 - This topic will explain the financial responsibilities that the families have in regard to cookies that they take possession of. Additionally, it will discuss how to simplify the process of money being turned in promptly. There are numerous deadlines throughout the season for money to be turned in. These are vital deadlines because Council automatically withdraws monies owed throughout the season from the troop bank accounts. If parents do not turn their money in correctly the troop bank account will experience overdrafts.
- **Chapter 9: Expectations for booths**
 - Cookie booths in the GSCNC region are held in the winter months. It is not unusual for parents to sign up for a booth and then think that they can cancel the booth at the last minute because they “don’t want to be cold”. This chapter will discuss the guidelines and expectations that should be given to parents when staffing booths. These guidelines include their responsibility to find a replacement family if they need to cancel their shift. Booth

cancellations impact the troop cookie inventory which can negatively impact the profits of the troop at the end of the season when there is an overage that the troop must pay for. Cookie booths should not be canceled unless there are exigent circumstances.

- **Chapter 10: Setting up and running booths**

- Booths can be simple and fun or they can be stressful. The way that the TCM prepares the troop for booths will make the difference. This chapter will discuss how to create a “booth box”, how to determine cookie inventory, and how to set-up the booth. It will also discuss returning the supplies and money to the TCM.

- **Chapter 11: Final rewards**

- The process of ordering and distributing final rewards is not difficult; however, there is some paperwork that should be completed. Not all TCM’s realize that Scouts who sell 500+ boxes individually or who sell a combined 500+ boxes with their sibling earn additional recognition. This chapter will discuss the required paperwork, additional recognition that is available, and the best way to quickly distribute rewards so that the TCM doesn’t become a storage locker.

- **Credits Screen**

Assessment: There will not be a formal assessment for this module. There will be informal knowledge checks at the end of each chapter.