

# AMBASSADOR RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT BADGE

**Badge Purpose:** When you've earned this badge, you'll know how to research and develop new ways to build your cookie business.

Activity	Materials Needed
<b>Track It!</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make a spreadsheet to track your sales, and then research what your data shows about your cookie sales.</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> Computer or phone with internet access <input type="checkbox"/> Paper <input type="checkbox"/> Writing utensils <input type="checkbox"/> Calculator
<b>Get the Word Out</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research companies doing innovative marketing to inform your cookie business marketing plans.</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> Computer or phone with internet access <input type="checkbox"/> Paper <input type="checkbox"/> Writing utensils
<b>Back to the Drawing Board</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Find out how companies research, develop, and change their products.</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> Computer or phone with internet access <input type="checkbox"/> Paper <input type="checkbox"/> Writing utensils
<b>A Captive Audience</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Poll your customers to get advice on possible projects.</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> None
<b>Develop New Ideas</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Come up with creative new ways to use Girl Scout cookies.</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> Computer or phone with internet access <input type="checkbox"/> Paper <input type="checkbox"/> Writing utensils <input type="checkbox"/> (Optional) Girl Scout cookies

## Activity #1: Track It!

Badge Connection: Step 1 – Analyze sales trends

Materials Needed: Computer or phone with internet access; paper; writing utensils; calculator

- Part of Research and Development (R&D) for your cookie business begins right with your own sales. Tracking different aspects of your sales can help you discover what's working—and what's not working—so you can improve your strategies along the way.
- Choose a few aspects of your cookie sales that you want to analyze. Do you sell at different locations and want to know which one has the highest sales? What about tracking response rates to different customer communications (emails, flyers, etc.)? Keeping track of details while selling can be as easy as having a tally sheet on a clipboard. Make a check mark for each response you're tracking.



- Next, make a spreadsheet either on a computer (Excel, Sheets, and Google Docs are good options) or on a paper ledger (you can buy ledger books at office supply stores, or simply make a grid in a regular notebook). Enter the data you gathered into the spreadsheet or ledger, and analyze the results. You may be surprised with what you learn!
- This data can help you make a strong strategy for next steps in your cookie sales. Keeping good records and researching your own data can highlight which parts of your cookie selling strategies were successful and which parts need tweaking.

## Activity #2: Get the Word Out

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Badge Connection: Step 2 – Research how other companies innovate

Materials Needed: Computer or phone with internet access; paper; writing utensils

- Have you ever noticed a unique way that a company has marketed their product? You don't have to have an airplane with a banner flying behind it to get the word out about your product (although, that's perfect in some cases!) – there are plenty of innovative ways to spread the word to customers about your product, including social media, websites, and good old word of mouth.
- Research three companies who are using innovative means to market their products.
  - What was unique about their method or message?
  - How did their message make you feel? Why did it work (or not work!) on you?
  - Can you use or adapt any of these innovations for your cookie business?

## Activity #3: Back to the Drawing Board

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Badge Connection: Step 3 – Find out how companies use R&D to improve their products

Materials Needed: Computer or phone with internet access; paper; writing utensils

- Did you know that the Coca-Cola company spent five years developing their latest Coca-Cola Zero Sugar soda, which replaced the former Coke Zero soda? The company invested those five years in recipe mixing and testing before unveiling the new product to consumers. They made the formula and packaging change when they realized (through focus groups and market research) that it was unclear to the customers whether the original product (Coke Zero) had sugar in it or not.
- Sometimes a company must go back to the drawing board to reformulate a recipe, marketing plan, or sales strategy. As the saying goes, "the best lesson is your last mistake."
- Select a company or product that you like to find out how they research, develop, and change their products in response to customer feedback.

## Activity #4: A Captive Audience

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Badge Connection: Step 4 – Explore possible projects during your cookie sale

Materials Needed: None

- Do you have Gold Award plans? Are you considering a Take Action project? Getting community feedback is crucial to the success of your project. How about some R&D for your project with your cookie customers?
- While you've got your customer's ear for cookie sales, take a moment to ask for advice on your project. Describe your ideas to them, share project goals, and ask them to vote on directions you could take, if you're facing decisions for your project.
- Be sure to ask your customers if they know people who could help you with your project, and ask if they would be willing to introduce you. This is a great networking opportunity!



## Activity #5: Develop New Ideas

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Badge Connection: Step 5 – Develop a fun, new way to use Girl Scout cookies

Materials Needed: Computer or phone with internet access; paper; writing utensils; (optional) Girl Scout cookies

1. We all know that Girl Scout cookies are delicious on their own, but are there other ways that they can be used in recipes to make an even tastier dessert? Of course! Now it's time to move on to the "D" part of R&D: Development. You get to develop an idea for a new use for Girl Scout cookies! Putting a personal spin on your cookie sale with a unique use for cookies will help connect you with your customers in new and exciting ways.
2. How about creating a new dessert using Girl Scout cookies? You could feature your Girl Scout cookie dessert at a customer appreciation event, or share it on free recipe cards that could be passed out to customers. Check out some tasty ideas here to get you started: <http://bit.ly/gs-cookie-recipes>
3. Do you have an idea for partnering with a local restaurant? Maybe the restaurant could feature a dessert made with Girl Scout cookies during cookie season, and you could make a flyer to promote it? (Remember, Girl Scout cookies cannot be re-sold by the box after the initial sale so a restaurant can't buy them from you just to re-sell them.)
4. What other ideas can you develop that would use Girl Scout cookies in new ways to catch your customers' interest?

