

Research & Development

Ambassador Cookie badge 1

When you earn the Financial Literacy badge called On My Own, you make a plan for your future. One way that businesses plan for the future is through R&D – Research and Development. They spend time and money researching new ideas. They, also, budget for development – taking those new ideas, refining them, and bringing them to the market. (R&D could, also mean changing a product to meet new customer needs.) When you earn this badge, you'll know how to use R&D for your cookie business plan.

Steps

1. Analyze sales trends
2. Research how other companies innovate
3. Find out how companies use R&D to improve their products
4. Explore possible projects during your cookie sale
5. Develop a fun, new way to use Girl Scout Cookies

Purpose

When I've earned this badge, I'll know how to research and develop new ways to build my cookie business.

"Engage your heart, your gut, and your mind in every decision you make."

*-Carly Fiorina,
former CEO, president, and
chairman of Hewlett-Packard*

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Step 1 Analyze sales trends

Invest some R&D time into figuring out the effectiveness of your sale. First, set up a system for tracking results, based on what you want to measure. For example, if you sell at different locations, you may want to compare which location garnered the most sales. If you're focusing on new ways to market to your customer base, such as e-mails or flyers, you may want to analyze response rates. Once you've figured out what you want to measure, keep good records so you can analyze the results at the end of the sale and use the information to plan for future sales.

Step 2 Research how other companies innovate

Find at least three other companies that have developed new ways to tell customers about their products. For example, you might find a company that is using social media to build word-of-mouth buzz or a jewelry artist who created a website to show examples of her custom-made rings and necklaces. Brainstorm how you could use these innovations – or a variation of them – to market your cookie business.

Step 3 Find out how companies use R&D to improve their products

Developing a new product is a complex process that can take several years. Choose one company that makes a product you like and, then, find out more about how the company researches and develops new products (or changes an existing product).

Step 4 Explore possible projects during your cookie sale

If you're considering several different Gold Award or Take Action projects, use your customers as a sounding board. Find out which projects they think fill the biggest need in the community. If you've already decided on your project, ask your customers for advice on making it have the most impact. This is a great opportunity to network, too – one of your customers may be able to connect you to someone who will offer help or guidance on your project!

Step 5 Develop a fun, new way to use Girl Scout Cookies

R&D can be more than coming up with new products – it can, also, mean finding new ways to existing products that engage consumers' interest. You could create a new dessert using Girl Scout Cookies, and, then, ask a local restaurant to feature it on the menu during the cookie sale. You could, also, make recipe cards to hand out to customers, post the recipe online, or serve the dessert at a "customer appreciation" event.

Add the Badge to Your Journey

You might use your cookie money to fund a Take Action project for one of your Journeys, or to fund a trip that will really bring your Journey themes to life. While you're selling cookies to customers is, also, a great time to hear their thoughts and ideas about community needs!

Now that I've earned this badge, I can give service by:

- Helping a service unit or group of younger Girl Scouts set up systems to analyze their cookie sales
- Creating an even that increases consumer awareness of the cookie sale
- Helping a friend brainstorm innovative ways to improve her cookie business

I'm inspired to: