

Girl Scout cookie sales are serious business

By Mary Widdifield

Yes, sir. There is a gap in my resume. That's right, 12 years out of the workforce. And no, it isn't a misprint that I garnered experience in sales, marketing, public relations, management and inventory control. That would be the Girl Scout cookie sales.

Try managing inventory of 660 boxes of Thin Mints, 588 boxes of Samoas, 420 Trefoils and 300-plus boxes of other flavors. Yes, there are other flavors. They apparently fill a niche or void that stubbornly resists the marketplace. There's filling each order for each Scout – you'd call them sales reps – and serving as liaison to the cookie czar running the warehouse out of her garage. Don't even think of arriving at her house before the appointed time. Didn't place your troop's cookie order in time? Too bad. You seriously don't want to cross her or you'll never get those 86 boxes of Thin Mints you promised to Alexis – she's the kid whose mother split and Girl Scouts is all she has, a fact she will remind you of when you're alone with her, waiting again for her father, who is always late picking her up.

Public relations? Counseling services? No irate cable TV customer can come close to matching the velocity of pre-pubescent girls' expectations. They absolutely must have the Walkabout Kangaroo incentive gift (for selling 250 boxes). And what about the Eco-Girl T-shirt (300)? The mini laptop (2,000 boxes)? It takes a strong leader to quash the entrepreneurial spark in those young, still-bright eyes when you inform them they would have to sell an average of 100 boxes a day (or 600 a week) to get the ultimate incentive reward – the iPad (3,000 boxes).

And it's not just the girls you have to think about. It's their addicted customers, both clamoring for their fix and whining about the price inflation: \$4? I remember when it was \$3!

Mary Widdifield is the cookie manager for her 9-year-old daughter's Girl Scout troop in San Rafael.

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