

Top 5 Reasons to Sell Cub Scout Popcorn

➔ A Parents Perspective ←

*Cub Scout popcorn sales don't just raise money for your pack.
They also give your scout opportunities to practice important life skills*

Selling Cub Scout popcorn is a great way for a pack to earn money for its activities while teaching the boys that we earn our own way. Now, I know some people don't like to sell popcorn for a variety of reasons. But your **son and daughter can practice some valuable skills** during your pack's popcorn sale.

Recently, we had a "show and sell" event where we set up a table at Lowe's and sold popcorn to people coming in and out of the store. During our shift, I started thinking about **what Grant was learning through this process**, and I realized that there are **some great lessons to be learned by selling Scout Popcorn**.

1. Goal Setting Skills — Grant's goal this year is \$7,000. Where did he get that number? I have no clue. Why did he set such a high goal? I don't know that either. The most he's ever sold in a year is about \$1,500. Grant won't sell \$7,000, but so far, he's sold over \$3,100—double his previous record. He's doing that because **HE set the goal and HE wants to work toward it**.

Most packs usually give prizes to scouts depending on how much popcorn they sell. The prize your scout wants can be their goal. Just make sure that **it is something that they pick out by themselves**.

Your Cub Scout might not make their goal, but I'll bet **they work hard at trying to!**

2. Persuasion Skills — Because the popcorn is a bit on the expensive side, a scout **has to be persuasive**. In our pack, the scouts are taught to say, "Would you like to support Scouting by buying some popcorn?" They're **selling support of a great organization**—not just some popcorn. I admit, I was skeptical of this approach at first, but it works.

They learn little tricks like **telling people that our best seller is the caramel corn** and that **the best value is the microwave popcorn**. Grant also figured out that the bag of premium caramel corn has twice as many ounces as the regular caramel corn, but "it has a special treat—pecans, almonds, and cashews."

Part of being persuasive is **overcoming objections**. When someone tells Grant that they don't have any cash, he tells them that we can take debit and credit cards through our Square account. If they don't eat popcorn, he asks them to make a Hometown Hero donation. When they say it's expensive, he tells them that over 73% of the price stays in our area to support local scouting.

Even if your scout doesn't grow up to be a salesperson, **persuasion skills are necessary** for almost every job.

3. Handling Rejection Skills — Yep, those **little scouts are going to be turned down**. They will knock on doors where no one is home. Sometimes at show and sells, they're going to be ignored.

(Side note: This is a huge pet peeve of mine. If a young scout is trying to sell you something that you don't want, just say "no." Don't walk past without even acknowledging them.)

So, they will get a lot of practice handling rejection. When we don't sell much Cub Scout popcorn, Grant will say, "It's a slow night," but he usually doesn't complain about it. I think that's because **he's been told no many times before**, so he realizes that getting upset doesn't change anything.

4. Perseverance Skills — Selling popcorn is a **huge lesson in perseverance**. If you don't sell at this house, you just go on to the next house. If that person leaving the store doesn't stop and buy, you just ask the next person. Being **tenacious is important**—it's what gets you through big school projects and big work projects.

5. Math Skills — Oh, my! There are so many ways to **practice math** with your scout during the popcorn sale! Here are just a few of the calculations they can do:

- Add up order totals
- Make change
- Calculate how much more popcorn they need to sell to get to their goal
- Figure out how much they sell in an hour
- Divide the sales at a show and sell to determine how much credit each scout will get

You may have to walk them through some of these, especially if they're a younger Scout. Not only are they practicing math, they are also **seeing how we use math in everyday life**.

Why Sell Popcorn?

Simple: you can make a LOT of money for your unit and it fits in well with the aims of the BSA.

How does the Trail's End Popcorn Sale fit the mission and aims of the BSA?

When we conduct a Unit-Money Earning Project it is important that we keep the values of Scouting in mind. One of the goals of Scouting is to teach a Scout to become self-reliant and to earn his own way. Through a proper money-earning project, leaders have the opportunity to show Scouts how they, through their individual and combined efforts, can earn all the money it takes to operate their pack, troop, team or crew for the entire year. The only limiting factor is their level of participation.

Many times, we hear of potential money-earning projects that rely heavily on the leaders or parents and very little on the Scouts. Other times we hear of projects that rely on the good name of Scouting to promote a commercial project or service. Many times, "the most amount of money in the shortest amount of time" is a signal that it MAY not be the best fit for Scouting--if we're going to view it as another opportunity to instill values in the young people we serve.

Please review the chart below that shows the types of lessons we teach when we choose one type of money-earning project or another. Then, give careful thought as you consider what and how your unit will generate the necessary funds to operate.

When a Unit Chooses to:	Here's what we teach the Scouts:
Conduct a money-earning project that relies much more heavily on adult participation than to that of the Scouts.	Someone else will do the work for me.
Rely on generous financial support of individuals, service clubs, chartered partners, etc. just to "make the budget."	Let's look for a handout for what we want.
Assess a "program fee" on families or to collect the "weekly" dues in one lump sum at the beginning of the month or year.	I'll look to mom and dad--again--for money to do the things I want.
Offer to have parents donate extra money rather than deal with "another door-to-door sale."	I don't have to work for what I want, there's always another way.

We have failed to teach the Scouts the value of self-reliance.

But, if the Unit chooses to:	Then, we can teach a Scout:
Conduct a product sale with goals and projected use of the funds clearly explained before the sale begins.	By my efforts and those of my fellow Scouts, my unit gets the money it needs for badges and other supplies for my program.
Support a product sale with a portion of the unit proceeds designated for an individual Scout's use to further his Scouting experience.	Not only does the unit benefit, but I can earn money for camp fees, Scouting supplies, etc. The harder I work, the more I earn.
Avoid the temptation to look for a "quick fix" or someone to sponsor, underwrite or otherwise financially support the unit.	If it is important enough for us to have it, it is worth our effort to earn the money to buy it.

We've taught the value of paying your own way.

TRAIL'S END POPCORN

Each year, the Las Vegas Area Council sponsors a Trail's End Popcorn sale to raise money for local Scouting programs and activities. The annual product sales of the Las Vegas Area Council provide a unique fundraising opportunity for Scouting units to raise funds to provide a quality Scouting experience for their Scouts and families. Annually, the Council provides units with opportunities to participate in the fall Product Sale and spring Camp Card sale.

WHY SELL TRAIL'S END POPCORN?

- Increase your unit and council income – 73% stays local
- Pay for your entire Scouting program.
- Scouts learn life lessons by "earning their own way".
- The prize program motivates Scouts.
- Cool new incentives for Scouts who sell.
- For additional revenue, sell online to friends and family out of town.