

# Popcorn Selling Tips and Best Practices

2015 Revision

Make it easy on yourself. Read through and implement suggestions from experienced Kernels.

## GENERAL

**Have Assistant Kernels, Den Kernels (Cub Scouts) or Patrol Kernels (Boy Scouts).** This parent is responsible for communication and “energy” of the sale in their respective Den or Patrol. They keep track of their Scouts’ weekly sales and use that info for weekly prizes if your unit offers those.

They also check out popcorn for Show-N-Sells and collecting forms & money when Take Orders are due. They balance and double check it all before giving it to the Unit Kernel.

**Have a Goal. Have a Goal. Have a Goal.** We can’t say this enough. **Units** that have a written down and expected goal sell more. **Scouts** who either have a goal that is given to them by the unit OR a goal they’ve selected sell MUCH more. (Like 170% more!)

**Don’t be wimpy. Pick a substantial goal.** Start at \$400 ... or maybe even the \$600 Club as a goal. Average Door-to-Door sales are \$200/hour and average Show-N-Sells are \$125/hour. With only 3-6 hours work (over a 3 month period), they could easily make that. Just think of the great things your Unit could do if every Scout sold that much.

## **Communicate with Assistant Kernel or Scouts**

**Families every couple of weeks:** check up on how they are doing, keep them informed, remind them of \$600 club and other incentives, etc. Not a high pressure email, just updates and reminders.

## SHOW-N-SELLS

### **Schedule Show-N-Sell dates as early as possible:**

After a couple of weeks, customers will have seen the popcorn and your sales will start to drop. Time slots at businesses go fast, too. Begin to request date/times in the summer before school starts.

**DON’T have a donation jar.** Accept donations as a last resort. But a donation jar encourages people to give the least amount. If you were walking up to a Walmart and had a choice of giving them change in

your pocket or buying \$10 bag of corn, which would you do? If there’s a no-sale, Scouts can ask for donations as their “last attempt.”

**Donation Note:** Apply donations to Military Popcorn and tell your donor that’s what it’s for. If you decide to apply the money straight to the unit’s bank account without buying popcorn, then you should NOT apply donations to the Scouts’ prize levels. Applying it to Military popcorn is the right thing to do.

**Have enough Show-N-Sells opportunities for all your dens/patrols.** Large units should have a minimum of 2 time slots for every den or patrol. Give priority for Show-N-Sell slots in the second time around to scouts who were unable to sell the first time.

**Cub Scouts only work for 2 hours.** Cub Scouts tend to burn out after 2 hours in the sun (Maybe even 1 hour for Tigers?) So if you have a 4 hours shift, then work it so that half the den sets and works for 2 hours then the other half takes over and finishes last 2 hours. If it’s hot, bring a pop-up awning.

**Know your location.** Generally need 2-3 scouts per door as some places may have more than one exit. **Sell on the way out, not in.** More than 3-4 scouts working at once tends to get too busy and there is not enough to keep them focused.

**Keep scouts active.** Don’t let scouts sit and do nothing during the sale. It’s THEIR sale. Have them approach people leaving the store. Have them ask specifically to “support scouting” by buying popcorn. If they just stand there waiting for people to come to them, sales won’t happen. Let them take breaks, of course, when necessary.

Maybe 1 approaches customer and brings them to the table, 1 stands behind the table to make the sale and 1 rests. But it’s better to schedule shorter hours and work the whole time then to schedule a long time and get worn out.

**DO NOT BLOCK THE DOORS!** ... neither with your table or getting between customers and the door or their car. Stay to the side. Have signs. Big smiles. Loud voices. Say “thank you,” “please,” “have a good day,” etc.

**Find a Hook:** make the sale fun. Have adults dress up in costume, cook and give out free hotdogs, silly signs, pictures of cub scouting events, have a good popcorn cheer, be a little silly and fun, have a “game” a customer could participate in for a trinket, etc.

**Decide how you to divvy up sales.** Either give each scout an equal share or pro-rate on a time basis. Use sign-in/sign-out sheets to track who worked, when, where, how long, etc. There’s a sample **Tally Sheet** at the AAC webpage:  
<http://www.atlantabsa.org/popcorn>

**Den/Patrol Kernels or parents are responsible** for getting the popcorn and supplies to and from the Show-N-Sells, not the Unit Kernel....unless you just like keeping your schedule extra busy. 😊

## **ONLINE SALES**

**Online sales apply to prize levels.** Ensure that all online sales are tabulated into the Scout’s other sales for prize earning. The Trails-end.com Leaders Section lists how much each scout has sold. If a Scout has sold but you don’t see their sale, make sure they registered themselves to the correct unit (ex: they registered to Troop 1234 instead of Pack 1234.)

## **TAKE ORDERS**

**Focus On The Rewards Not The Popcorn.** Most Scouts don’t care about the popcorn, but they do care about the incentives. The first thing Scouts do is look at the prize page and figure out how much they has to sell to get the reward he wants. Does that Scout want that new knife? Look at the goal and then go for it!

**Take Show-N-Sell product door-to-door** also known as **Show-N-Deliver**. Many units create good profits using this method. If you have the product at the door, you don’t have to return to the house and the customer gets his product at point-of-sale. Have a process for checking out corn to families just like for Show-N-Sell. OR have organized neighborhood canvassing or “Blitz” days where scouts and popcorn meet in a parking lot, neighborhood activity house, or nearby location with designated streets for each den, patrol, etc.

**Have a Unit Level Rewards that complements the rewards from Trails End.** Some ideas: gift cards, cash for top seller or top den(s)/patrol(s), pie in the CM/SM face, free camping trip, dues refunded, special unit activity if they sell above X dollars, free pizza party for the highest selling den, etc.

Find freebies at local stores such as free oil change, free massage, free day spa, etc. for the parents! Parents who are motivated will get their kids selling.

**Give yourself enough time to collect the money and place the order.** Make the forms and money due TO the Den Kernels or Patrol Kernels about a week before you have to place the order. The Assistant Kernels then give you what they collected several days before so you can get everything in order. This gives everyone time for shoring up discrepancies and tracking down scouts who you know have sold but haven’t turned in their form, etc.

## **TAKE ORDER PICKUP DAY**

Large orders might need more than 1 person to pick up popcorn.

If your unit has a fair number of Scouts, have Assistant Kernels meet the morning of distribution day to sort the Take Order shipment into dens/patrols BEFORE Scouts come to retrieve it. For large units this might take an hours Once you get going it goes faster than you think.

Each Assistant Kernel is responsible for distribution to their Scouts. Emails are sent out ahead of time telling them when and where they can pick up the popcorn. (Have a plan if someone doesn't or can't pick up their corn that day.)

... OR ...

Once it is sorted, the Assistant Kernel can take the popcorn for their den/patrol to their home or other meeting place and assign a time for Scouts to come pick it up.

## **PAYMENT**

Due by December 3, 2015 if you want that extra 5% or 8% commission! Also you must submit Prize order and retrieve any \$600 club items by Dec 3, too. Top Sell forms should be in by Dec 3.

Prizes will not ship until payment is made.

**Visit the AAC Popcorn Website for More Awesome Info**

**<http://www.atlantabsa.org/popcorn>**