

# The shopping cart economics



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Economics in APA Style Ralph Nader once offered the example that the shopping cart size is how the capitalists and economics of the time manipulate consumers. How can Ralph Nader's comment tie into the size of the shopping cart in our economy?

#### Brief History of Shopping Cart

On June 4, 1937, Sylvan Goldman introduced the first shopping cart to his grocery store called Piggly-Wiggly. The first shopping cart was a mixture of two wire baskets set atop a buggy-style cart. Unfortunately, the customers were hesitant in using the carts. Young men thought that using the cart would make them appear weak, young women felt that carts were unfashionable and the elderly doesn't want to look helpless using them. So, Goldman hired decoy shoppers of all ages and both sexes to push the thing around the store. That and an attractive store greeter did the trick, making him a multimillionaire and a legend.

Market research showed that shoppers purchased more when the size of the cart is bigger. So as the stores grew, so did the cart and today's average grocery cart is almost two times the capacity of the original. So, how can a shopping cart affect our economy? Goldman's concept was simple: Make shopping easier for the customers and they will visit the store more frequently and buy more, generating Goldman more income.

To make customers feel more comfortable while shopping, there are many additions made to a shopping cart like booster seats and seat belts for young children, miniature sized carts for children to shop alongside their parents, and shopping cart vehicles for the elderly and disabled. After all, a happy shopper makes a good income for the store.

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With the shopping cart around, the following scenarios are present;

Consumers tend to forget what they really need to buy and want they want to buy. In the end, they end up buying more than half of what they really need, which means more profit for the company.

Since the customers are not bothered with weary arms carrying loads of grocery items, they have the extra time to check out other items, compare prices and contents. This has a subtle but big impact on the economy since this will foster a healthy competition among product manufacturers which will have two results:

- a.) The birth of new quality products that will fit to every consumers needs.
- b.) The emergence of new companies (product manufacturer) which will lead to a higher employment rate.

Aside from those economic benefits, shopping for grocery items nowadays is not only a chore that needs to be done but it's also a bonding time for the whole family.

Whenever we see a shopping cart we just see it as a necessary object that makes shopping easy and convenient but the truth is companies are investing on these carts to give them more profit. This has been used for many years by companies to manipulate its customers to buy more and spend more time doing grocery/shopping.

#### References

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