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Online Shopping Doubles Back On Itself

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Where Webvan delivers, GroceryStreet.com Inc. minds the store.

News

Crazy as it sounds, startup GroceryStreet is taking a retro approach to Internet-age grocery shopping: You order online, and somebody bags it, but you pick it up yourself. How quaint.

Tools

No branded delivery trucks, no warehouses the size of football fields, no complex logistics procedures, but actual stores and life-size shopping carts, used the same way your mother always did. Newly launched

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TechWeb Sites

GroceryStreet exists only as an online window for supermarkets reaching out to their local customers, who shop by store aisle or by recipe. Employees pick the items and bag them. There's a \$35 minimum order, and a \$5 service fee (charged by grocers) is waived for purchases of \$75 or more.

President and founder Francie Black insists that "I am not anti-delivery," and she wishes Webvan success. But, she says, "The economics for them are completely different than the economics required to make GroceryStreet profitable." To turn a profit, Black says, "they've got to be delivering to your house and everybody else on your street."

GroceryStreet, running on an initial funding round of \$1 million, generates revenue from monthly subscription fees of a few thousands dollars that each retailer pays. The fee differs based on total items listed and the number of stores involved.

-- Christopher T. Heun

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