

Turbo Leadership Systems

The **TURBO** **Charger**

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To our clients and friends

Issue 809

Pioneering the Oregon Trail Volume XI:

September 1, 2020



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Think outside of
"the cart" to
solve your
problems.

Chaotic Grocery Carts

Can you lend me a quarter?



Day eleven of our journey from Loganville, GA to Seabeck, WA: We shopped at old town Independence, Missouri's Aldi, the nearest grocery store to our campsite. One of the nagging problems of chain grocery stores is the abuse, miss use, failure to return, and stealing of grocery carts. To solve this problem, stores have full-time employees bringing carts back, offer to help you out with your groceries, and provide easy parking lot places to return carts.

These carts range in price from \$75 - \$150. A large supercenter grocery has 2,000 carts and lose between 10 and 30 a month. Two million grocery carts are stolen each year, translating to a per-store loss of \$8,000 to \$10,000 annually in the grocery industry alone.

Aldi has found a solution. An original solution I've never seen practiced before. As I say in Session 4A of the Leadership Development Lab (LDL), you either copy or create. Aldi is a creator; creators always have a competitive edge.

They have no employees to bring their carts back in, no parking space is dedicated to grocery carts. Their carts seem well cared for; all the wheels are working fine. Their grocery carts aren't rolling around in the parking lot damaging customer's cars.

How did they solve this problem? To solve any problem, you must find the root cause, the critical factor that must change, and since most of your problems involve people, you must understand human nature. Let's look more closely at human nature. People work out of self-interest and respond to incentives.

So how did Aldi solve the dilemma of the shrinking inventory of grocery carts? When I tell you, you're going to say it seems so simple. By the way, they've also solved the dilemma of "paper or plastic." They don't give you either. You put all your groceries in their cart or the bags you've brought with you. Aldi solved the grocery cart problem by charging a quarter, 25¢ to use their carts. When you return the cart to the front of the store and lock it to the other carts, the rack dispenses a quarter. Aldi gives you a 25¢ incentive to return the cart to its proper place. They have found the solution to the grocery cart dilemma.



What problem has no one else in your industry found a solution for? Crew members showing up late, failing to wear PPE, late time cards, or poor job cost coding? As you ponder your solution, remember the grocery cart story is about motivation, motivating the customer to do the right thing. Do as Aldi has done. Remember that people operate out of self-interest, everyone responds to incentives. "Get out of the cart!" You can solve your problems.

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