The development of the shopping trolley in the 1930s was important in the history of retail sales. An American supermarket owner, Sylvan Goldman, invented the trolley. His motive was not just to help customers carry their shopping, but also to encourage them to buy more.

To create the first trolleys, Goldman used folding chairs. He put one or two baskets on the seats, which he had raised by putting wheels under the legs.

He was disappointed to find that business did not improve. Shoppers hesitated to use the trolleys, because they were afraid they might not be able to control them. Goldman persisted with his idea because he knew that people could be easily influenced. He tried again, and this time his idea seemed to work. Crowds of people were seen coming from his supermarket with trolleys fully laden. Others, seeing them, were then convinced that the trolleys were safe after all. What they did not know was that they were the victims of a stunt: the people they saw had been paid by Goldman to impersonate customers happily pushing loaded trolleys.