Retail Innovation Shout Out: Grocery Shopping Meets Smartphone Technology

by Heather LeVan

Online shopping for retail items is no foreign concept in today’s technologically advanced society. Buying groceries outside of brick and mortar, however, is the newest, popular way to shop in South Korea. The virtual supermarket provides customers with ease and convenience. The only requirement is that the customer must have a smartphone.

Pictures of food and beverage groups line the billboard along the platform of the underground station in Seoul. Users must hold their phone over the Quick Response code that is in place, just under the picture of whatever product they want to buy. Different kinds of each product group will then appear and users decide what type and size they want. An address is required for delivery when the order is complete. Same day delivery is promised for all orders placed before 1:00pm.

There are still some glitches to work out before spreading the idea to other underground railway stations and even other countries. Some people still use grocery shopping as a means to decompress after a long day at work. Many also like to see and touch produce to confirm the quality before buying. It’s also not feasible for those who have not yet joined the smartphone world. If it’s successfully adopted by customers, this virtual way of shopping could be the next big consumer experience innovation to change the way we buy our weekly groceries.

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