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The supermarket is designed to lure customers into spending as much time as possible within its doors. The reason for this is simple: The longer you stay in the store, the more stuff you' ll see, and the more stuff you see, the more you' ll buy. And supermarkets contain a lot of stuff. The average supermarket, according to the Food Marketing Institute, carries some 44,000 different items, and many carry tens of thousands more. The sheer volume of available choice is enough to send shoppers into a state of information overload. According to brain-scan experiments, the demands of so much decision-making quickly become too much for us. After about 40 minutes of shopping, most people stop struggling to be rationally selective, and instead began shopping emotionally—which is the point at which we accumulate the 50 percent of stuff in our cart that we never intended buying.

超市的设计力图吸引顾客在里面尽可能多呆得些时间。理由非常简单：你在商店里呆的时间越长，你就会看见的东西越多；同时你看见的东西越多，也就会买得更多。超市里总是有很多商品的，根据食品研究所的报道，平均每个超市中会有 44,000 个以上不同的商品，很多商店会有好几万个。商品选择的数量之巨足以使顾客处于信息量过载的状态。据脑扫描实验可得，快速做出如此多得决策，我们是无法做到的。在购物 40 分钟以后，大多数人难以做到理性购物，购物开始出现冲动——此时，购物车中有一半的东西，是根本没打算要买的。