

# THOMAS THALDORF

Omnichannel Initiatives & Product Leader | Business Cases, Physical & Digital Shelf, & Program Management

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BUSINESS CASE ONE-PAGER | REI CO-OP | OMNICHANNEL INITIATIVES

**26M+** members | **\$3.54B** 2025 net sales | **90-day** pilot to prove it

## Green Vest Picks: one expert story, every shelf.

### THE MEMBER MOMENT (ILLUSTRATIVE)

It's 10 p.m. in Minneapolis. A member compares three backpacking tents on REI.com, reads a green vest review, & saves one to her cart. Saturday morning she's in the store. The endcap tells a different story: the tent she saved isn't on the floor, & the green vest who could help doesn't know what she researched. She buys later, maybe somewhere else.

### THE OPPORTUNITY

REI's edge is human expertise, & green vest content already lifts product-page conversion. Peak 28 calls for elevated service in-store & online & reinvented membership. Green Vest Picks connects the two: a seasonal, regionally curated set of expert picks that tells the same story on the endcap, REI.com, the app, & member email, & stays in stock in both places.

### THE PROGRAM

- **Curate:** store teams in each region nominate 8 to 12 seasonal picks; Product Management & merchants approve against margin & in-stock targets.
- **Show up everywhere:** one creative kit for endcaps, REI.com landing pages, product-page badges, & member email; QR codes link the aisle to reviews & sizes.
- **Stay in stock:** Supply Chain prioritizes picks in pilot stores & online, with in-store pickup as the safety net.
- **Reward members:** early access or bonus rewards on picks, a low-cost test of a reinvented membership benefit.

### WHAT IT COULD BE WORTH (ILLUSTRATIVE, TO VALIDATE WITH REI DATA)

If pick categories carry 2% of net sales (about \$70M) & the program lifts them 3% to 5% through higher conversion & fewer out-of-stocks, that's \$2M to \$3.5M a year at chain scale, before membership & attach-sale effects. The pilot's job is to replace these assumptions with REI's own numbers.

### 90-DAY PILOT & HOW WE'D KNOW

- **Days 1-30:** 2 regions, 8 test & 8 matched control stores; set baselines with Stores, Digital, Supply Chain, & Finance.
- **Days 31-75:** run one seasonal story (e.g., winter camping) across endcap, landing page, & member email.
- **Days 76-90:** read results & bring leaders a clear call: scale, fix, or stop.
- **KPIs:** endcap sales per inch & per sq ft vs. control; landing page & product-page conversion; in-stock % in both channels; pickup & attach rate; member sign-ups; green vest time (goal: under 1 hour/week).

### THE SUPPORT CASE: RISKS & HOW WE HANDLE THEM

- **Store labor:** green vest input stays in a short weekly huddle; no new tools to learn.
- **Inventory mismatch:** if a pick dips below its in-stock target, it gets swapped, not promoted.
- **Competing for space:** picks earn the endcap on productivity per inch, not just the story; weak ones rotate out.
- **AI & marketplace shoppers:** expert content helps AI shopping tools find REI expertise; member perks stay exclusive.
- **Picks miss plan:** add value before discounting (fresh expert content, member perks), the same countermeasure that protected margin on a \$35M+ retail/yr Target business.

### WHERE I LEARNED THIS: YOوبي BACK-TO-SCHOOL LISTS

At Yoobi, I was involved early in grade-level classroom lists that families found online & in Target stores. The lesson: a trusted list is a reason to shop, & it works best when the store & the site tell the same story. Green Vest Picks applies it with green vest expertise as the list, backed by 10+ years competing for the physical & digital shelf: endcaps, Target.com landing pages, a Home Depot exclusive, & Amazon 1P.

Prepared by Thomas "Teej" Thaldorf for REI's Senior Manager, Omnichannel Initiatives role (req 31691). Built from public information (Retail TouchPoints, Sept. 2025 & Jan. 2026; Chain Store Age, May 2026). Figures marked illustrative are assumptions.