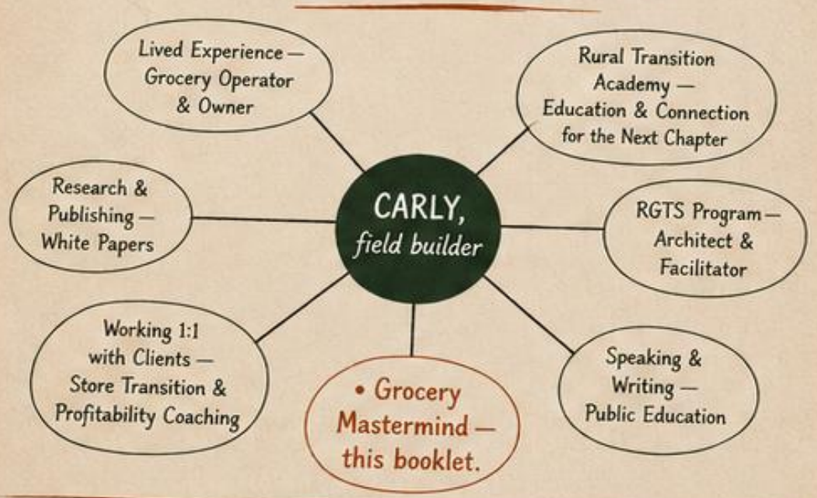
THE WORK CARLY IS BUILDING

Grocery Mastermind is one piece of a larger field — each piece feeding the next, all of it pointed at the same horizon.

## Toward Thriving Rural Communities




## Carly Whorton

Profitability & Transition Coach • Field Builder

I love rural life — the pace of it, the connectedness of it, the way a small-town grocery store is never just a place to buy food. My background is an unusual combination: microeconomics training, years in software doing change management; and the lived experience of building and running stores. It turns out to be almost exactly what this work calls for.

I didn't build this from a plan. I followed a thread — the kind that has a life of its own, that asks a question you can't stop trying to answer. Somewhere between software and grocery I chose to buy into the belief that life is supposed to be fun for you. Each spoke on the wheel was pulled into reality by following the same thread.

*"If something in this lights you up — that's your thread."*

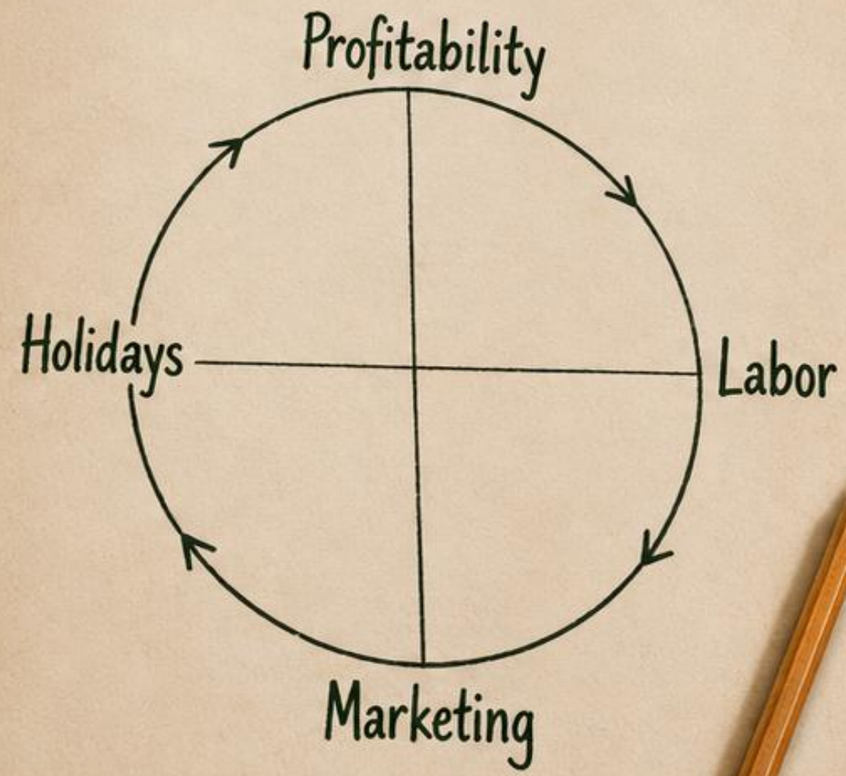
**JOIN THE FREE MONTHLY SESSION**

Live, once a month, hosted by Carly. Any grocer welcome.

ruraltransitionacademy.com

# The Grocery Mastermind Method

*Four Levers. A Recipe That Compounds.*




Spread 1 · Cover

WHY THIS METHOD GOT DEVELOPED

# The Owner Grows It. No One Else Can.

The Grocery Mastermind Method began with a consultant choosing to focus on what was hers — she took the knowledge she'd developed and found a way to share it with the grocers she wants to support.

The business won't grow itself. If the owner isn't steering it, no one is — and your community's food access, your team's jobs, and your own future are all riding on that choice.




This isn't a rulebook, it's a basic recipe that can be modified to fit your store. A starting point for grocers ready to focus on what's theirs to control.

# Grocers.

## Hard working.
## Big hearted.
## Community pillars.

*Beginning to end,*
*thank you for showing up*
*every single day.*

*The Grocery Mastermind*
*Method was built by a*
*former grocer, for grocers*
*at any stage.*



Just starting out.



Feeling the squeeze.




A few years
from selling.



Already strong,
hungry for more.

# CONTROL YOUR CONTROLLABLES

The grocery landscape is always changing, mostly getting harder.

Big-box has prices you can't touch.
Staff is hard to find.
Technology that's always outdated.
Cost of living through the roof.

Some fights were never yours to win.
Stop leaking energy into what you can't control. Put it into what you can.

That energy, aimed instead of spent, is what builds something that lasts.

# The Year at a Glance

*Not a program you finish. A recipe you run — every year, on purpose.*

## Q1 · Profitability

The foundation that allows us to focus on growth.

## Q2 · Labor

An investment toward stabilizing operations and building your own future.

## Q3 · Marketing

Sharing your journey with those who already care + introducing yourself to those who need what you have, but don't yet know you exist.

## Q4 · Holidays

A built-in season of winning, even more so when we plan to make the most of it.

*Year's end. Examining what you've built. A celebration of the winning season you're concluding, making it the foundation of the next season about to begin.*

When what you're working toward, day after day, is the long-term healthy food access of a community — you don't just deserve to win. You need to.

Q1 · Profitability & Specializing

# Margin Is the Lever.

Every store has a foundation. Somewhere in yours, there are aspects already working better than you realize.

Each quarter has its own deep-dive resource. Q1's is Healthy Bucket — a workbook that helps you find where you're already strong, and lean into it.

What is the gross margin of your business?
What is the net margin?

Now — what do you wish those numbers were?

This is where attention repeatedly turns into profit — one decision at a time.

# Attention Is the Lever.

Q2 · Labor & Capacity Building

Your business's growth is built with bricks of your attention.

Each quarter has its own deep-dive resource. Q2's is Think Like a Buyer — it helps you look closely at your weekly work to see which of your efforts are building real business value, and what isn't.

What is the return on your investment in labor?

Which of it moves your business forward, and which is just getting through the week?

Now — what would you want your labor to be building instead?

This is where you lay every brick on purpose – for your business, and for your community.

# Service Is the Lever.

Q3 · Marketing & Becoming Irreplaceable

Does your marketing focus on winning new customers? Or deepening the ones you already have?

In the Grocery Mastermind Method, we first focus on the ones you already have.

Serve them better, on purpose. The story of their satisfaction becomes the marketing for new customers.

The resource for this annual quarter is **"Becoming Irreplaceable"**.

The sharpest advantage a rural grocer has against a big-box price tag: nobody can compete with you being you.

What is most unique about your store?

What do your most loyal customers already love you for?

Now — if you served that even better, on purpose, what would that look like?

When you serve with care, your community comes to depend on you. That's what makes you impossible to replace. And when the holidays arrive, of course, they want to celebrate with the people they love.

Q4 · Holidays & the Grand Slam

# Preparation Is the Lever.

Preparation is profitable. The community's holiday season is coming, whether your store is ready or not.

What memories do you want to create with your customers this holiday season?

What does it mean to you for your store and your community to be a family?

What role do you want your store to have in your community?

To complete the set, Q4's resource is Magic Making — moments that don't just create memories, but deepen the loyalty you've been building all year.

When what you're working toward, day after day, is the long-term healthy food access of a community — you don't just deserve to win. You need to.

# Build Yourself Into the Store They Can't Afford to Lose.

The real competitor is your store this time last year. That's the one to beat.

This isn't a sprint. Grocery is a long road, and this year's win doesn't retire when the year ends — it becomes next year's floor. "Slow and steady wins the race" has never been more true.

A yearly recipe, where you consistently feed your roots what they need to grow deeper and stronger.

A thriving business is the most resilient, and insulated, thing in this rapidly changing world.

# The Grocery Mastermind Method

## Two Places to Practice.

**Business Builders**

Free · Monthly · Live

Start here: When Your Effort Is Maxed Out

Join free

**The Grocery Mastermind Cohort**

January through December

A year with a team in your corner, tailoring the method to your store.

Explore the cohort