

PACKET FABLE · ILLUSTRATED FIELD GUIDE SAMPLE

Small systems. Clear stories.

Visual experiments for people building software and small businesses.

THE RESULT IS UNKNOWN

TIMEOUT
≠
FAILED WORK

Original educational pilot. A short sample, not a completed KDP book or a product currently for sale. Prepared with AI assistance and local code. No company incident or customer outcome is claimed.

A reply can disappear after the work succeeds.



The retry lab illustrates how the same missing reply can lead to two different outcomes. Compare a new request with a retry carrying a stable operation ID.

The implementation matters

The included server example commits the local order and replay result in one SQLite transaction. It rejects a repeated ID when its payload changes. External effects need their own durable coordination.

Technical reference: docs.stripe.com/api/idempotent_requests. Original illustration and experiment.

Run it. Then make it fail.

```
python3 order_lab.py  
python3 -m unittest discover -s tests -v
```

1. Lose a committed response, then retry.
2. Send sixteen concurrent duplicate requests.
3. Change the payload while keeping the ID.
4. Replay from a fresh process.
5. Fail while recording the replay result.
6. Create two distinct logical purchases.

Python 3.10+ with standard SQLite. No account, API key or network access needed. The tests cover the example's behavior, not production readiness or a real payment integration.

A small price cut can consume a large part of the contribution.

BEFORE: $\$100 - \$70 = \$30$

AFTER: $\$80 - \$70 = \$10$

$$\begin{aligned} 3 \times \$10 \\ = 1 \times \$30 \end{aligned}$$

The price falls by 20%. With variable costs unchanged, contribution per sale falls by two-thirds. Three sales are needed to match the original \$30 contribution.

Constructed arithmetic example. Contribution is revenue minus variable costs, not net profit. Fixed costs, taxes, changing demand and other business effects are outside this illustration.

Before the next promotion.

Original price: _____

Discounted price: _____

Variable cost per sale: _____

Original contribution: _____

Discounted contribution: _____

Sales needed to match the original contribution: original contribution ÷
discounted contribution.

If the discounted contribution is zero or negative, more sales do not recover the
original positive contribution under these assumptions.

General arithmetic worksheet, not a recommendation for a particular business or investment.

Learn what people want next.

Possible next experiments: stale caches, runaway agent loops, subscription costs and decisions that compound. Each should have an original story and a concrete example.

Proposed collection

Visual notes, runnable examples and worksheets could become a \$39 bundle. That is an untested offer, not an active listing or a forecast.

Book route

This sample is not KDP-ready. A full edition needs a coherent manuscript, editing, print-layout and cover checks, and the required AI-generated-content declaration.

Working brand: Packet Fable. No endorsement by Stripe, Amazon or any social platform. Brand handles and trademark availability remain unverified.