

## Health Food Co-Op Grows with Catapult



Durango Natural Foods in Durango, CO, is currently in its 31st year as a not-for-profit whole foods cooperative on a mission to provide quality whole foods to the surrounding region. The health food store started out in a small alley with an old toolbox as its original cash register. Durango Natural Foods has been using Catapult for almost two years.

We recently spoke with general manager Pamela Beckard and front-end manager Evid Moore about how they're using Catapult to help manage their growing business.

**ECRS:** Tell us a little bit about your town and how your business works?

**Beckard:** Durango is a destination town. You know, it's not on the way to anywhere, which means that 75% of all the town's business comes from tourism.

Six rivers run through this town and we have a

popular ski mountain nearby. We do great business even with the competition of two other local health food stores in town. Five years ago we added an extra 1,000 square feet as well as a deli counter. Last year we did two million in sales and we have a store membership of 3,300. About 10,000 customers come through our store each month. We installed Catapult at a time when we were struggling, so initially we used only its basic point-of-sale and reporting features. Now we have Catapult automating very specialized business processes for us.

**Moore:** We offer organically produced grocery and health foods, and our members get discounts through the co-op. We are expanding to include buying clubs so we can get the customer better costs. Durango Natural Foods is committed to the community. We are not-for-profit and very few co-ops as old as we are have that status. Our loyal customer base allows us to maintain a steadily growing sales volume from year to year. We have people who really believe in our philosophy, and that's what separates us from other local health foods stores. By helping us automate our day-to-day operations, Catapult plays an important role in helping us keep our customers happy.

**ECRS:** How did you decide on Catapult as the automation solution for your store?

**Moore:** It was a combination of the affordability of the complete system and wanting to find a solution that would let us automate a large number of operational procedures. Catapult was the newest and most cost-effective POS system we found.

**ECRS:** Will you comment on the customizable POS touch screen interface?

**Moore:** The touch screen interface is very straightforward and simple to use and the system is easy to learn. For example, Catapult is intuitive enough so that we have non-cashiers who sometimes fill in on the point of sale when we are short-handed. It takes very little time to get new cashiers up to speed with Catapult.

**Moore:** Catapult helps speed up our throughput at the point of sale. Since we installed the system two years ago, we don't see bottlenecks at the registers any more. It didn't take long for our employees to get used to the system, which helped cut down on training time substantially.

**ECRS:** What reports do you run on a regular basis?





**Moore:** I run the Cashier Activity reports, the Department Net Sales, the Financial Summary, and the Paid In/Out reports. Lately I've been running the Hourly Sales graph to find out when peak sales times occur. We use the Item History feature to track what is and isn't selling. Pamela (Beckard) is teaching our department managers how to optimize their product knowledge for buying, selling, and getting their margins up. Catapult provides the data she needs to accomplish this.

**Beckard:** All of Catapult's reports are clear and easy to read. I love the system. It makes our sales history much easier to use as a purchasing and replenishment tool.

**ECRS:** How has Catapult met your expectations of what it would mean to automate your store?

**Moore:** Because Catapult is such a powerful system, we are constantly learning new ways to use its rich feature set to automate our store operations. Recently I spent some time with the Catapult help file learning to print shelf tags and how to add the bar code onto the shelf tag. This was kind of an experiment for me and I was really proud of myself. You know we went from a completely manual system to this one and we are really glad to have Catapult for that reason alone.

**ECRS:** Would you recommend Catapult to other health food stores?

**Beckard:** Yes. We are very pleased with the system and would recommend it to any retailer looking to automate their store.