

Using TAO as a training application in a retail setting:  
Nam Dae Mun Farmers Market discovers how TAO can help with employee training for their rapidly growing grocery company



**Nam Dae Mun Farmers Market seeks to improve cashier training at multiple Atlanta-area grocery stores**

Korean-owned Nam Dae Mun Farmers Market focuses on products from around the world, with stores offering groceries and fresh produce from Asia, Europe, Africa

and South America. They currently have five stores within a 20-mile radius of Atlanta, Georgia, and plan to expand to ten over the next two years.

It has been difficult for NDM to train and retain skilled cashiers because of the complex product selection (especially international produce). Of 550 employees, 30% are cashiers with an average tenure of only four to five months. The turn over ratio is high.

CHALLENGE

**To successfully train a steady flow of 10 to 15 new cashiers at each store to work with a complex PLU system in a busy commercial environment**

In order to perform their job effectively, it is necessary for cashiers to learn the PLU (Price-Look-Up) codes for every item in the store, especially produce – which can add up to 130 PLUs for any given season.

Prior to incorporating TAO’s testing technology, the typical training approach involved sending employees to the produce section during business hours with a “cheat sheet” in hand to match and memorize PLU codes. This approach proved ineffective because of constant

interruptions from customers. Additionally, bottom line business was impacted because struggling new cashiers training “in the lane” were taking too long to ring up each customer.

Under these conditions, the training process took an untenable four to six weeks for both full and part time workers.

The NDM management team realized it would need to find a virtual approach to training, utilizing pictorial support rather than continuing to train in a real world environment with constant interruptions. This would be necessary in order to speed up the training process, and stop taking up valuable time on the cash registers and slowing down customer check-out.

## SOLUTION

### Why TAO

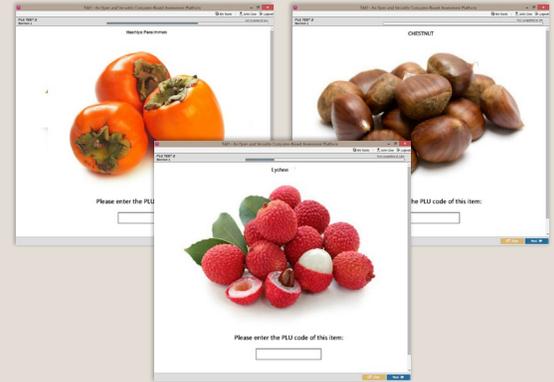
When their Google search for helpful applications turned up TAO, they at first thought it would be inapplicable as it seemed to be geared to academic environments rather than business training. But when they looked more carefully and saw the potential for easily creating individual test items with original graphics, they realized they had found something useful.

NDM were particularly pleased to see that TAO is web-based and would allow for virtual, computer-based training, which would eliminate many of their difficulties.

With the help of TAO's Professional Services, NDM developed roughly 250 questions for a cashiers' test, each of which incorporates product pictures to be matched with code, thus alleviating the necessity of walking through the produce section with sheet in hand.

Utilizing a pre-test/post-test approach, they are able to use TAO for both training and testing. New cashiers are introduced to TAO immediately after employee orientation, so they can start learning the PLUs on screen. After a week of training, cashiers take a pre-test and print out all the questions they answered wrong. Then with the printed answer sheets in hand, they visit the produce department to look at the actual produce and review the PLUs before repeating the test. Only when they score 90% or better do they start working on the cash registers. On average, new employees spend a couple of hours each day going through the training questions. This approach has greatly reduced the time required to bring new employees up to speed, without negatively impacting day-to-day operations.

NDM has also begun to implement customer service training with TAO, which will include a video component and allow them to teach their reps how to respond in various customer service scenarios.



## RESULTS

By using TAO as a web-based training program, NDM has made it possible for new employees to be fully prepared before they step behind the cash register, thus improving waiting times for customers. The NDM team anticipates further applications of the TAO technology to improve customer service and employee retention as well.



We chose to work with TAO because we were excited to find a web-based technology that fit our needs," reports Peter Lee, an HR administrator with NDM. "We quickly saw the potential for TAO to help us in a variety of ways. We already have made plans to use TAO to train not only cashiers, but customer service reps as well.

