



Why Our GM Development Services?

Columinate's consultants/instructors are experts and leaders in their subject matter.

We help your GM develop a network of expert resources that will be in place long after the classes are over.

We work with your co-op's actual documents and situations, as much as possible.

Our instructors will refer your GM to additional educational opportunities, many of which are available at a low or no cost.

Leaders in the co-op industry have long identified the challenge of finding General Managers with the skills to successfully lead a co-op. Even the best candidate in a board's qualified candidate pool likely lacks some of the skills necessary to lead and manage a successful food co-op.

Columinate's experienced team of grocery retail experts is well qualified to address this issue with our GM Development Program. Our program focuses on the core grocery management skills your GM will need to successfully lead your co-op. Columinate's GM Development Program will support your GM's efforts to become the leader your co-op envisions.

"After working 20 years for a major Northeastern grocery chain, I entered the co-op world. Considering my inexperience on this side of the equation, my work and my training through Columinate has been vital.

This program will be tailored to your needs. I was a little soft on the financial and marketing side, so much of my training was centered on that. You may be stronger in those areas and want assistance elsewhere. That's one of the beautiful programs about a program like this: the flexibility."

–Netse Lytle, GM at Wild Oats Market

Course Offerings

The following courses are offered in the key operational areas of a co-op food store.

We will conduct an initial skills assessment to determine which classes would offer the greatest return on investment for both the co-op and the GM. A co-op may select as many classes as they would like.

Grocery Industry Mentor and Development Facilitator Program

The Mentor/Facilitator is a consultant with a track record of successfully leading co-ops and training leadership teams in co-ops. They coordinate with the instructors, support successful completion, act as a mentor for the candidate, complete the final evaluation, and write the final report. The program includes calls with your GM and the availability for e-mails to address any issues that arise during the coursework.

Achieving Financial Metrics

Understanding what your co-op's financial targets should be and how to successfully achieve them is essential to a fiscally sustainable operation. This module includes understanding the tools and processes to successfully achieving the financial metrics in sales, gross margin, labor, and net profit. Long-term financial health strategies for liquidity, solvency, and reinvestment are also included in this module.

Pricing and Margin Tools in the Point of Sales Systems

Our experience has shown the POS system is often neglected or poorly understood, causing fiscal damage that leadership is unaware of. This module gives an overview of the POS system, processes needed to maintain pricing, gross margin integrity, and the ability to know when improvements are necessary.

Accounting and Financial Document Literacy

A strong understanding of financial statements, accounting procedures, and the ability to monitor and evaluate fiscal results is a critical GM skill in the long-term success of a co-op. This module provides a solid foundation on cash accountability, accounting processes, inventory, financial document literacy, and financial reporting.

Marketing

The ability to understand available marketing tools and how to successfully apply them is a critical skill. This module focuses on understanding your co-op's marketing needs, social media management, and external communication.

Human Resources

The Human Resources module focuses on the following areas:

- **Legal framework for HR:** Federal, state and common law affecting hiring, firing, compensation, equitable treatment, and workplace health and safety
- **Record-keeping:** Architecture, security, retention and access for personnel-related documents
- **Conflict resolution systems:** Open door, grievances, harassment, discrimination, misconduct, and investigations
- **Highlights of specific areas:** Pay scale and pay increases, corrective action, and performance evaluations.

Board Relations and Governance

In food co-ops, understanding governance, reporting, and communication with boards will go a long way in supporting a strong relationship between the GM and the board of directors. This module includes building board relationships and understanding policy governance.

Co-op Culture, Diversity and Engaging Stakeholders

This module is the connective tissue that brings all of the others together. We explore the way cooperative culture helps a General Manager bring all of the relationships within their co-op together. We'll share ideas from leading cooperators and explore ongoing conversations about increasing and strengthening diversity, equity and inclusion.

Interested in GM Development?

Contact jeaniewells@columinate.coop to learn how we can support your organization. [Visit our website](#) to learn about all of our retail grocery programs, including management on contract services and GM search support.