Pricing your Ace store on purpose

Margin Master for Ace Hardware stores · a one-page look at what it does for your pricing · October 2026

The short version. Ace provides suggested retail pricing, nationally and by zone, and no single suggested level can be the right price for your store and your market. Only you can decide that. Margin Master turns that baseline into your own pricing strategy: built rule by rule, rounded where your customers expect it, measured by your sitting margin, and checked against Ace's MAP and IMAP, so the prices on your shelf are there on purpose.

1 No single suggested level fits every store

Ace provides a national **Retail**, **Level 1** and **Level 2**, plus zone-level suggested retails that differ from national on roughly 2,500 to 3,000 items. Any price suggestion should be considered in light of local, market-driven conditions: rural or urban, large or small, high or limited competition, primary departments or less dominant ones. Margin Master puts every suggested level beside your current price, item by item, and marks where your zone's suggestion differs with the Ace logo in the grid.

National	Your zone	Your market
Retail, Level 1, Level 2	Zone Retail, Zone Level 1 and 2	The price you decide, by department, class or item

2 Build your own pricing strategy

A Margin Master pricing strategy is a list of rules and business conditions. Selecting one of the provided suggested retails makes a great first rule; a second might move a department to another level or change its rounding scheme; a third drills down further.

- Beyond that, **SKU exceptions**, **custom groups**, **cost breaks** and more handle every item in the system.
- Items with **no suggested retail**, a lost profit opportunity in most stores, are priced on margin or a cost break.
- Change a rule once and every item it covers follows, at every Ace update.

3 Rounding: often overlooked

Rounding is one of the most powerful opportunities to improve margins. A simple change in rounding scheme can pick up **between 1 and 3 points** of sitting margin. Margin Master allows full customization of rounding schemes, and each strategy step can apply a different one.

$4.49 → **$4.59**	$6.29 → **$6.39**	Paint **.79**	Plumbing **.59**	Tools **.69**

Endings are examples; the gain is a typical-store range.

4 Sitting margin: the most important number

Sitting margin prices the last 12 months of sales at today's retail and today's replacement cost: the margin your shelf is built to earn right now, on the mix you actually sell. It is forward-looking, and it moves the moment a price does, which makes it the number to manage. Margin Master shows current and future sitting margin side by side, so every rule and every rounding scheme is measured by what it does to that number before a single price reaches the shelf.

Current **Sitting margin** → Future **Sitting margin**

Run it after every update and watch the trend, instead of waiting for the year-end numbers.

5 Ace Critical Pricing: MAP and IMAP, built in

Ace Hardware publishes minimum advertised prices (**MAP**) and internet minimum advertised prices (**IMAP**), and Margin Master keeps them beside cost and retail for every item. Margin Master easily implements the **Ace Critical Pricing** logic, so items don't miss MAP pricing or sell below cost:

Below Cost	Below MAP	Below IMAP
Items you would sell at a loss	Items priced under the minimum advertised price	Items priced under the internet minimum

The checks become part of your pricing strategy and are applied automatically every cycle, so every update is checked the same way. Ace recommends a weekly review, with a goal of fewer than 10 items flagged. You decide what runs.

Watch the video. This page goes with the Margin Master video “Pricing your Ace store on purpose”: marginmaster.com/training.

We're always happy to show you Margin Master on your own live point-of-sale data. Support: unlimited · free · U.S. based · support@retailersoft.com · marginmaster.com

Examples and ranges on this page are illustrations from typical stores, not a promise for any one store.