

Ace Hardware Sets Record For Attendance At Spring 2023 Convention

Nearly 12,000 Attended Ace Hardware Convention in San Antonio

Ace Hardware, the largest retailer-owned hardware cooperative in the world with more than 5,600 locally owned and operated stores, broke its own record for attendance at its recent in-person convention held March 14-16 in San Antonio, Texas. The event brought together over 4,800 Ace retailers representing 3,355 stores. With total attendance over 11,800 for the entire show, the numbers reflect the importance Ace Hardware places on in-person relationship building and the enthusiasm Ace retailers have for the brand after 2 consecutive years of historic, record-breaking sales.

The San Antonio Convention kicked off with the general session meeting on Tuesday morning, where Ace executives shared their vision and gave retailers details on the new programs and initiatives designed to drive business in 2023. Over 4,000 retailers were in attendance, giving their full attention to new strategies for increased efficiency, including Planogram Change Management. This game-changing tool helps Ace retailers start operationalizing product resets. Ace stores who piloted the program cut their time spent on resets in half, improved sell through and maximized overall profitability. Ace also outlined plans for one of its biggest growth drivers in 2023: outdoor power equipment. Ace has a clear path to achieve its sales goals in this category, starting with its expanded relationship with STIHL. Ace's retail strategy includes partnering with high quality brands like STIHL that customers demand, backed by industry-leading customer service available at Ace.

"It was a great show. Probably one of the best so far!" said Mike Kokesh, Owner, Gopher Ace Hardware. "I'm a member of the Twin Cities group of retailers, and while we may all be independent store owners, it feels we are one big Ace family. Our group stuck together, discussed business, laughed, and we bonded unlike any time before. Ace has made it so easy to buy, it's become less about purchasing and more about building relationships. What I can't get sitting at a desk is the interaction with other retailers, corporate and vendors you can only experience at this show."

While the goal of Ace Hardware's semi-annual conventions is to allow its teams to plan their business, take advantage of margin-building buying opportunities and give vendors a chance to showcase and sell their products, the true purpose is to build the valuable relationships that drive passion for the Ace brand. Ace Hardware puts value in the importance of personal interactions with customers and the communities it serves. As a co-op retailer, the mission of Ace Hardware is to provide products, services and operational methods that improve the store model for its Retailers. Ace Hardware believes live conventions foster an essential opportunity to stay connected during this time of unprecedented growth in the company.

"The availability of various Ace teams is one of my biggest reasons for attending," said Bobby Heuser, President, Heuser Ace Hardware. "Chatting in-person with folks from Ace Retail Training, Ace Healthcare, and Ace Bankcard Processing gave me the opportunity to gain clarification on these programs and gain important contacts for if I need additional help in the future."

As part of the Spring Convention, retailers took part in over 50 live and virtual retailer training sessions. There were 2,700 attendees at the training sessions – tying last year's record attendance.

With over 1,200 vendors in attendance, the San Antonio show allowed Ace Retailers the opportunity to plan their retail product mix and experience vendor demonstrations of the latest trending products. Big news at the show included an expanded lineup of tools and accessories from Stihl outdoor power equipment. While Ace has always been strong in the grilling category, the company is especially proud of its growing selection of outdoor griddles from many new and established players in the category including Blackstone, Weber and Traeger.

"Our convention is always a unique combination of illuminating new products and programs that help make us more efficient and competitive," said Craig Smith, Owner, Fairfax Ace Hardware. "I also look forward to the networking opportunities that really help to strengthen our businesses."

Ace Hardware continues to build on its success, adding 232 new worldwide retail locations in 2022. Industry-leading support, including in-person events like the convention in San Antonio, make Ace Hardware a popular choice for business owners looking for new opportunities. Ace secured a spot in the Top 10 franchise business opportunities in the world for 2023 according to Entrepreneur Magazine's Franchise 500, one of the most highly sought-after honors in the franchise industry. For more information, or to find your local Ace Hardware location, visit [online](#), or on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

About Ace Hardware

Ace Hardware is the largest retailer-owned hardware cooperative in the world with more than 5,700 locally owned and operated hardware stores in approximately 70 countries. Headquartered in Oak Brook, Ill., Ace and its subsidiaries operate an expansive network of distribution centers in the U.S. and have distribution capabilities in Ningbo, China; and Santa Catarina, Mexico. Since 1924, Ace has become a part of local communities around the world and known as the place with the helpful hardware folks. In 2022, Ace ranked “Highest in Customer Satisfaction with Home Improvement Retail Stores” according to J.D. Power, 15 out of the last 16 years. For more information, visit [acehardware.com](https://www.acehardware.com) or newsroom.acehardware.com.

<https://newsroom.acehardware.com/2023-03-20-Ace-Hardware-Sets-Record-For-Attendance-At-Spring-2023-Convention>