

Ace Hardware Introduces AI Assistant to Strengthen In-Store Service

'Hey ARMA' equips Ace's red-vested associates with real-time support to better serve customers

OAK BROOK, Ill., April 28, 2026 /PRNewswire/ -- Ace Hardware, the world's largest hardware cooperative, has launched 'Hey ARMA,' an AI-powered assistant designed to support its red-vested associates with real-time information and guidance in stores nationwide. Operated through a handheld device, Hey ARMA provides associates with quick access to product knowledge, project advice, and recommendations, so they can focus on solving customer problems and delivering even better in-store service.

"At Ace, we believe technology should make the customer experience better by helping our people do what they do best," said Andy Enright, Senior Vice President, Retail Strategy & Operations at Ace Hardware. "Hey ARMA gives our associates the information they need in the moment, so they can spend less time searching for answers and more time engaging with customers in a meaningful way."

Hey ARMA supports associates with a wide range of in-store scenarios, from product comparisons and project questions to helping customers with items they may have purchased elsewhere. By providing consistent, reliable information at the point of service, the tool helps associates respond with confidence while preserving the personal, neighborly experience Ace is known for.

Ace retailers are already putting Hey ARMA to work in their stores.

"After 78 years in the hardware business, Hey ARMA is one of the most impactful changes we've ever made to elevate the customer service experience," said Bill Wygal, owner of Bill's Ace Hardware, a two-store chain in California. "With the push of a button, our associates can quickly locate products, understand what they do, and confidently recommend the right solutions for our customers."

The technology is part of Ace's broader commitment to investing in frontline teams and embracing innovation that strengthens human service. Built as an internal tool, Hey ARMA is intentionally designed to stay in the background while team members remain front and center.

"Ace retailers have always set themselves apart through service, expertise, and trust," Enright added. "Our goal with Hey ARMA is to reinforce those strengths at scale, giving local store teams access to powerful tools while keeping the experience personal – another way we're delivering on our promise to be the most helpful hardware store on the planet."

Hey ARMA is currently active in more than 2,300 Ace Hardware stores, with continued expansion planned as part of Ace's long-term strategy to enhance the in-store experience through thoughtful, responsible use of technology.

About Ace Hardware

Ace Hardware is the largest hardware cooperative in the world, serving more than 8,800 locally owned and operated stores around the globe, while providing the best products, services, and operating methods to over 5,200 Ace retail stores in the United States. Ace Hardware's family of brands includes Ace Hardware, Emery Jensen Distribution, and independent retailers worldwide. Headquartered in Oak Brook, Illinois, Ace operates an expansive network of U.S. distribution centers, along with international capabilities in Ningbo, China, and Cuautitlán Izcalli, Mexico. Since 1924, Ace has been a part of local communities, known as the place with the helpful hardware folks. For more information, visit acehardware.com or newsroom.acehardware.com.

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