



Ace Hardware  
www.acehardware.com  
Oak Brook, Illinois

## Business Profile

**Industry:** Retail  
**Products:** More than 65,000  
**Outlets:** 5,100 stores in 50 states,  
62 countries

What began as a small chain of stores established by a group of Chicago area retailers in 1924, has evolved into one of the nation's leading "helpful hardware" dealer-owned cooperatives.

1999 marked a milestone year for Ace Hardware—its 75 anniversary. Throughout the years, many things have changed. In three quarters of a century, Ace has grown into a global organization with more than 5,100 stores in 62 countries. Yet one thing has remained unchanged—Ace's commitment to deliver quality, friendly and helpful hardware service to consumers.

## DoubleVision Pro Remote Control Software Solution Snapshot

**Primary Use:**  
Remote control administration and provide support of widely distributed automation

**Hardware:**

- HP UNIX 9000 E Series
- HP 928 terminals,
- Printers and POS terminals

**Software:** UNIX

**Number of Seats:** 5,100

## CASE STUDY: DoubleVision Pro Lowers Ace Hardware's Support Costs as It Increases Remote Customer Support

*"With DoubleVision and a speakerphone, we can remotely demonstrate an application with excellent results. This amounts to significant savings, especially when the customer is in Guam or the Marshall Islands."*

—Forrest Wagner, Sales and Training Manager

Ace Hardware's strategic plan called for increasing wholesale sales by several billion dollars without doubling staff – this meant they would have to make their Computer and Network Systems work harder, faster, and smarter through automations. They were successful in their leveraging, but it took some effort. Ace Hardware chose Tridia's DoubleVision Pro, the top remote control administration and software support as the component to execute their plans for growth.

*"We identified technology as a key aspect of our strategic plan," says Forrest Wagner, sales and training manager for Ace's Systems Division. "DoubleVision software helps us become more effective with our current resources as well as help us make more efficient use of our technology."*

### Ace Grows Into A Multinational Giant

Ace Hardware is a dealer-owned cooperative that's headquartered in Oak Brook, IL, a Chicago suburb. It's comprised of more than 5,000 stores in all 50 states, U.S. territories and 55 countries. Presently, Ace dealers have retail sales of more than \$5 billion. Under Ace's strategic plan, these sales are projected to increase to more than \$16 billion in the next six years.

Ace's Systems Division was created more than 17 years ago as a service division for storeowners. Its mission was to build systems and create applications specifically designed to meet the needs of Ace dealers. Storeowners have the option to purchase Ace's automation systems, which are actively marketed to the stores and fully supported by Ace resources.

Ace's automation systems are centered upon HP UNIX 9000 E Series models, which include various HP 928 terminals, printers and POS terminals. New users receive a complete system that has been loaded and configured in Oak Brook, and are trained on a range of applications from general ledger and accounts receivable to inventory management and payroll. However, new users have many questions and it is *support* as well as *training* where DoubleVision Pro offers the *biggest* value to Ace.

## CASE STUDY: DoubleVision Pro Turns Downtime Into Uptime

*"With DoubleVision, when a new customer calls in for support, we can dial into their system to see exactly what they are doing at their terminal," says Jay Heubner, support manager for Ace's Systems Division. "The product then allows us to take control of their screen from Oak Brook and show them what to do as they follow along. Remote support with DoubleVision cut problem resolution times and provides more accurate responses with less frustration."*

*"In addition, we are hoping to cut down on redundant calls because users will see the solution on screen," says Heubner. "That way, they have a visual image of the solution, rather than just a verbal explanation. They also have the ability to do a screen print and save the solution for future reference, thus eliminating their need to call again on the same issue."*

DoubleVision Pro also cuts down on travel expenses incurred for training. Ace has field consultants across the country. The field consultants sell and support Ace's automation systems and perform initial training in their territories. Before DoubleVision remote administration and support, it has been necessary for the Oak Brook staff to travel to various stores for training. *"With DoubleVision and a speakerphone, we can remotely demonstrate an application with excellent results," says Wagner. "This amounts to significant savings, especially when the customer is in Guam or the Marshall Islands."*

## Dynamic DoubleVision

In making a decision to purchase DoubleVision Pro, the product evaluation process carried considerable weight. Michele Hitzel, team leader for Ace's Systems Division, coordinated the evaluation. Hitzel chose four retail beta test sites for the software. Beta testing discovered several areas that could be customized in order to maximize the benefits of DoubleVision for the Ace stores.

*"Tridia Corporation has been very open to working with us on adjusting or tailoring the product to meet the requirements of Ace Hardware," says Hitzel. "This responsiveness has been very important in our decision to recommend the product and will continue to play a meaningful role throughout our implementation of DoubleVision."*

Ace plans to include DoubleVision in every Ace automation system and to retrofit all current HP customers. *"We believe that DoubleVision offers many possibilities for us," says Heubner. "In fact, it may offer additional benefits that have not even occurred to us. For instance, the dealers themselves may have applications for the software that have nothing to do with support or training, such as monitoring a POS terminal at a checkout lane. We are excited about the many capabilities of DoubleVision."*

***"Remote support with DoubleVision cut problem resolution times and provides more accurate responses with less frustration."***

**—Jay Heubner, Support Manager  
Ace Hardware Corporation**

## DoubleVision Pro

**Remote Control  
Desktop Software**  
Providing UNIX / Linux  
Remote Control Support

### Benefits and Features

- Increased productivity
- Reduced travel costs
- Remote administration and viewing of user screens by administrators
- Full control of host keyboards with host user security
- Increased responsibility without growing staff
- Fast response to problems and resolutions
- Remote training of clients, students and new employees
- Remote demonstration of software to remote clients
- Live evaluation of software with immediate, expert assistance