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EXECUTIVE PLAYBOOK

30-day margin control playbook for industrial manufacturers

a practical next step for manufacturers
looking to regain control over pricing execution

the reality

margin loss is happening in plain sight



leaders need better pricing control

Industrial manufacturers are making more pricing decisions than they were even a few years ago. Prices are being adjusted continuously in response to cost pressure, competitive dynamics, supply chain disruption, and customer expectations, with many organizations making changes monthly or even weekly across large portions of the portfolio.

At the same time, margin performance has become harder to predict. Revenue may be stable or growing, yet margin continues to fluctuate across customers, regions, and product lines in ways that are difficult to fully explain. Leadership teams are asking why price increases are not offsetting cost changes, why similar customers receive different pricing outcomes, and why pricing execution varies so widely across the business.

For many manufacturers, the issue is not a lack of pricing activity, but a lack of consistent control over how pricing decisions are applied once they move into the field. That is where margin starts to erode, not through one major breakdown, but through hundreds of small decisions across contracts, channels, customer agreements, and day-to-day exceptions.

why action is urgent now

The pace of pricing in industrial manufacturing has accelerated significantly. Cost volatility, supply chain instability, competitive pressure, and shifting demand patterns are forcing organizations to respond faster than they did in the past. Industrial manufacturers are reacting quickly to market changes, but pricing execution often remains inconsistent across decentralized commercial environments.

As pricing decisions move faster through the organization, inconsistency becomes easier to introduce and harder to detect. One team responds differently than another, contract pricing is handled inconsistently across regions, and discounting expands without clear visibility into its cumulative impact on margin. Many manufacturers discover a meaningful gap between intended pricing strategy and realized pricing execution, particularly across contracts, channels, and customer agreements.



Over time, what starts as normal operational variability becomes embedded margin leakage that is difficult to trace back to a single source. This is why pricing has become an operational issue, not just a commercial one. The challenge is no longer deciding when prices should change, but ensuring pricing decisions are executed consistently across the business.

where control breaks down in industrial manufacturing

In many industrial environments, pricing execution spans direct sales teams, distributors, aftermarket parts, customer contracts, and regional business units, creating multiple points where pricing logic can diverge from how the business intended it to operate.

This is where inconsistency starts to build. Contract pricing does not always match executed pricing in the field, similar products are priced differently across channels or regions, and discounting and overrides become part of everyday operations, especially when teams are under pressure to move quickly or protect customer relationships.

Most of these decisions are not made with bad intent. They are practical responses to operational complexity, but they happen in fragmented environments that make consistency difficult to enforce. ERP systems are essential transaction platforms, but they

were never designed to govern pricing execution dynamically across contracts, channels, and customer-specific agreements. Over time, those gaps create an environment where pricing behavior becomes difficult to standardize and even harder to explain financially.



the shift


from pricing activity to pricing control

Most industrial manufacturers already understand how they want to price. They have price lists, discount structures, customer agreements, and margin expectations in place. What many organizations lack is a consistent way to apply that logic across the business, which is why pricing control has become increasingly important.

Manufacturers do not necessarily need more pricing sophistication. In many cases, they need more structure around how pricing decisions are executed, governed, and reinforced over time.

Organizations that improve pricing control tend to focus on the same core areas: increasing visibility into how pricing decisions are made, reducing inconsistency across teams and channels, introducing greater discipline around discounts and exceptions, and shortening the lag between cost changes and pricing response.

These changes are operational, but the impact reaches much further. Senior leaders increasingly view pricing control as a driver of operational resilience, commercial governance, financial predictability, and enterprise agility. Better execution improves margin predictability, reduces unnecessary variability, and gives leadership greater confidence in how pricing decisions affect business performance.



**execution matters
as much as strategy**

the 30-day path to regain control

Regaining control does not require a large-scale transformation effort. The first step is establishing more structure and consistency around how pricing decisions are executed today.

The first 30 days should focus on creating visibility, reducing fragmentation, and reinforcing pricing discipline across the business.



reduce complexity
increase control

week 1

expose the reality

week 2

define the guardrails

week 3

centralize execution

week 4

enforce and stabilize



baseline + visibility

Inventory all pricing sources including spreadsheets, ERP overrides, and offline logic

Identify where pricing decisions are actually being made across the business

Surface inconsistencies in discounting, overrides, and customer or product variation



outcome

Clear visibility into fragmentation and early identification of margin leakage

week 1 expose the reality

week 2 **define the guardrails**

week 3 centralize execution

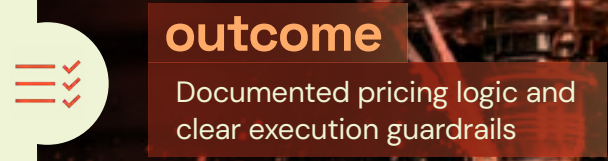
week 4 enforce and stabilize

structure and logic

Define rules, thresholds, and segmentation across customers, products, and regions

Translate pricing into structured logic across cost, markup, and discount layers

Identify where exceptions are required and where consistency must be enforced



outcome
Documented pricing logic and clear execution guardrails



system of record

Move pricing logic into a governed system

Replace spreadsheet-driven workflows

Route pricing decisions through defined logic rather than manual processes

Begin generating prices consistently from a shared framework



outcome

A single system of record and repeatable pricing execution



adoption and consistency

Increase the percentage of pricing executed within defined logic

Reduce reliance on manual overrides and side calculations

Monitor where rules are bypassed and where logic requires refinement

Reinforce consistent usage across teams



day 30 outcome

By the end of the first 30 days, pricing execution should be more centralized, more consistent, and easier to govern. Manual workarounds are reduced, pricing logic is applied more reliably, and the business has a clearer understanding of where margin risk still exists.



**the goal is not perfection.
the goal is control.**

what changes when pricing is under control

When pricing execution becomes more consistent, the impact tends to show up quickly across the business.

Cost changes are reflected in pricing more reliably, which reduces margin lag during volatile periods. Discounting becomes easier to monitor and manage because decisions follow clearer rules and approval patterns. Pricing behavior becomes more consistent across regions, channels, and customer groups, reducing unnecessary variability.

Just as importantly, leadership gains a more reliable view into financial performance. Margin movement becomes easier to explain because pricing decisions are more visible, structured, and traceable across the organization.

The market itself does not become less volatile. What changes is the organization's ability to respond with more consistency and discipline.



what this means for your business

Industrial manufacturers are not struggling because they lack pricing strategy. Most already understand how they want to respond to market conditions, cost pressure, and competitive dynamics.

The challenge is controlled execution.

As pricing activity increases, fragmented processes and inconsistent decision-making create greater exposure to margin leakage, customer friction, and unpredictable performance. Over time, these issues become embedded in day-to-day operations and harder to reverse.

Manufacturers with stronger pricing control respond to change with greater consistency and confidence. They reduce unnecessary variability, respond faster to market changes, and build greater operational resilience across the business.

The companies that perform best in this environment will not be the ones making the most pricing changes. They will be the ones executing pricing decisions with the most consistency and control, allowing them to protect margin more effectively, respond faster to market changes, and outperform competitors that continue to operate with fragmented pricing execution.



**market leaders don't just
change prices,
they control them**

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about zilliant

Zilliant helps B2B companies move from reactive pricing to controlled pricing execution. Pricing decisions are happening across the business every day, but without control they create hidden risk and margin leakage. Zilliant embeds AI-driven intelligence into governed workflows, enabling consistent execution, clear visibility, and faster response to change. The result is stronger margin protection and greater control over pricing performance. Learn more at zilliant.com.