

**TradeService**<sup>TM</sup>

A TRIMBLE COMPANY

Working with

**TRA-SER**<sup>®</sup>

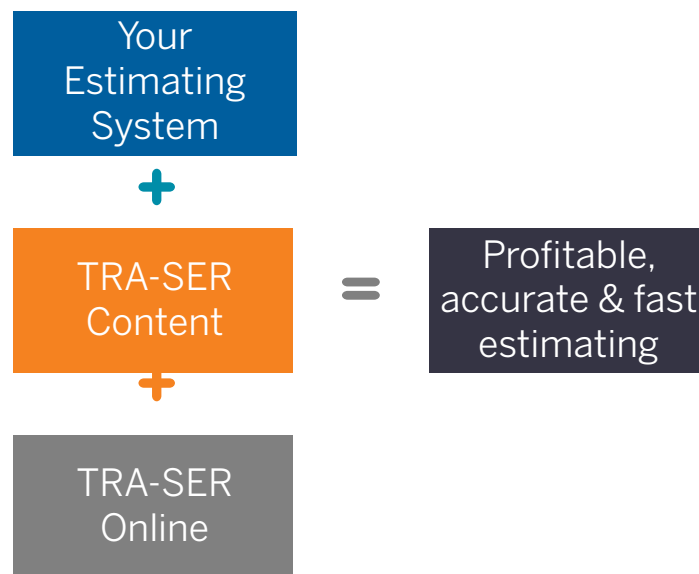
A key step to profitable  
estimating



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Trade Service is the leading specialist in product and pricing content services for the MEP industry. TRA-SER product content, when combined with an estimating program, provides you the most accurate method of estimating available in the market today.

Subscribers to TRA-SER not only get to update their estimating systems with the richest MEP product content set, but they also have access to an online information portal containing even more in-depth product and marketing information.



Those who use an estimating system in conjunction with a TRA-SER subscription see significant benefits when estimating through:

- accessing content directly from within their estimating program, saving time
- accessing additional product information through the TRA-SER online portal
- weekly content updates
- an enhanced ability to source products and information when they need them

# 1.

## Product Content within an Estimating System

Thousands of MEP Contractors (including 90% of the Top 50) across the US and Canada use TRA-SER content in conjunction with estimating and procurement software today. They elect to use TRA-SER as a content source simply because it is the leading specialist in product and pricing content services for the Electrical, HVAC and Plumbing Sectors providing:

- A single source of accurate, up-to-date manufacturers' product and trade price content
- Over 6,900,000 items from hundreds of manufacturers
- Over 3.5 million issued price changes each year with over 560,000 new items added
- Ability to exchange content with supply chain trading partners
- Years of experience from the largest team in the industry, backed by sophisticated content management systems
- A single source of content supply ensures consistency of pricing from a trusted source

Our customers tell us that this helps them to save time, improve accuracy and present more professional and winning estimates time and time again.

### Descriptions & Indexes

TRA-SER content also contains product descriptions, manufacturer and commodity indexes meaning you can find products in the database using standard search functions.

### Supplier Pricing

TRA-SER contains a free tool that lets contractors receive nearly instantaneous pricing directly from their favorite suppliers. Named Supplier Xchange, this tool has revolutionized the process of obtaining company-specific quotes from multiple suppliers without the usual hassle and waiting that more traditional methods can cause. Using Supplier Xchange benefits contractors greatly, allowing them to get real prices on thousands of material items in a matter of a few seconds. These prices can be loaded directly into the estimating system, saving rework and possible errors.

### Labor Installation Guides

TRA-SER content can include industry standard labor norms for a significant proportion of the products listed in the electrical version. This content, supplied by a subscription to the NECA MLU, can help you quickly and easily estimate installation time for a project. Most estimating systems have a provision for you to add your own times to augment and customize the content imported from TRA-SER to allow for site factors within a particular estimate, enabling you to build a labor content set that reflects your own business activities.



This system has increased our accuracy and the volume of work we can get out of our estimating department. I would recommend this system to any company that wants to benefit in the way we have.

**Joe Ivy, Estimating Manager  
Custom Automated Controls**

### Product Content Updates

Our in-house team of 185 dedicated members work directly with manufacturers to source and update product information on an ongoing basis. These updates are available real-time and can be imported directly into your estimating system ready for immediate use by you and your team.



Industry standard labor norms from TRA-SER can help #estimate installation time for projects #TradeService

## 2.

### Work with TRA-SER's Online Portal

TRA-SER offers additional capability through its online portal in addition to what is provided by the powerful content integration within the estimating system. TRA-SER's online application contains additional, in-depth product content which supplements the core product and price content directly accessible from within the estimating program. The application is powerful yet simple to use and can have significant additional benefits to your business.

#### Increase Productivity

Working with consistently structured additional product content accessed through the internet provides a demonstrable increase in productivity. Using a single access point through which you and your team can obtain most of your additional technical materials reduces time spent searching across multiple printed catalogs and manufacturers' websites. Furthermore, the structured way in which content is presented through TRA-SER means it is very quick and easy to put your hands on the content you need for a given product, at precisely the point when you need to make the decision. All this means it is easier to create high quality estimates in shorter timeframes.

#### Improve Decision Making

The additional content provided through TRA-SER's online application can make significant improvements to decision-making during the estimating process and this in turn may improve profitability. Benefits may include waste reduction (as a result of improved product selection)

and reduced installation problems (due to advanced warning of fitting requirements etc).

### Support Value Engineering Activities

The additional information provided through TRA-SER can also be used to support Value Engineering activities. It is easy to compare and contrast the technical specifications of products when the information is presented to you in a clear and consistent way as it is through the TRA-SER online portal.

TRA-SER gives you a single, central point of access to additional product information beyond the content delivered directly into your estimating system. This content may include:



Product content accessed through a single portal provides increased #estimating productivity #TradeService

### Catalog Pages, Technical Data Sheets & MSDS

The product pages hold technical information directly useful to you as an estimator, especially when making decisions about items you use less commonly, or those with complex additional features and specifications. These are held as downloadable documents and may include, among other possibilities, Technical Data Sheets, Catalog Pages, Installation Instructions, Maintenance Instruction or Safety Data Sheets.

Having access to technical data sheets is not only beneficial to you when selecting the right product, but it also has potential to impact on your profitability in other ways. For example, the content provides a ready means of compiling submittal documents and O&M content for your clients.

### Product Images

The individual product page displays one or more images of each product. These can be very useful in helping to identify specific components if you do not have a product code available, for example, when replacing broken items and refurbishing existing installations.

### Manufacturer Information

You can find and view manufacturer company information including links to their website. Having a single location where you can access major manufacturers' information directly from product listings can again save time and effort.

### Alternative Items

When obtaining prices directly from your suppliers, you may utilize the alternates feature which will return pricing on items similar to the product you requested. This is helpful when your supplier may be out of stock on an item, or does not carry that particular item.



# 3.

## Keep Up-To-Date With TRA-SER

There is an inherent value in working with up-to-date information in a format that all estimators will understand. Estimators used to keeping their own manual pricing databases will know first-hand how difficult this can be. A TRA-SER content subscription integrated with an estimating system helps you to overcome the main difficulties you will inevitably face when keeping your own content up-to-date.

*“Over 3.5 million issued price changes each year with 560,000 new items added.”*

At Trade Service we don't use third parties to source our content for us as we believe that the way to create and protect accurate content is through direct interaction with those that make the products themselves. Over the years we have built close working relationships with the major MEP product manufacturers and as a result are able to keep-up with the changes they are making to their businesses and product lines in a timely fashion.



Even if frequently used item prices are up-to-date, what about lesser used items? #estimating #TradeService



### Rapid Reliable Update of Product Content

In 85+ years of providing content services Trade Service has never missed an update. Every customer who subscribes to TRA-SER has the opportunity to download and use our constantly updated product content. Over 3.5 million product and price changes are issued and over 560,000 new items are added each year. Changes issued are not restricted to price changes and may include catalog number changes, descriptive changes, changes to the manufacturer's product range grouping and notification that a product has been delisted or set to price on application.

### Keep Less Frequently Used Product Content Up-to-Date

Even if you find it reasonably easy to keep your frequently used item prices up-to-date what about your less-frequently used items? Do you have the most recent content available for these when you need it?

If not, this may come back to bite you, perhaps most painfully when you are at your most stretched and clients are asking for last minute changes. Not having the right prices at your fingertips when quick changes need to be made to estimates can cost you in terms of time and profit on the job.

### Business Continuity

You can be reassured that with Trade Service's strong heritage and relationships with manufacturers, TRA-SER will be there to support your content needs. Years of experience from the largest team in the industry is backed-up by sophisticated content management systems and as such provides a highly reliable service. Our close relationship with manufacturers means the database is constantly kept up-to-date with new products and prices.

4.

### Refurbish using TRA-SER

With construction profit margins so low, and prices for new equipment rising all the time, it can be very financially rewarding for your business to offer to refurbish rather than replace clients' existing equipment. TRA-SER can effectively and efficiently facilitate this activity where items remain live in our database.

#### **Refurbishment Using TRA-SER Reflects Well on you as a Company**

An MEP Contractor or Consultant who thinks of refurbishment before replacement will likely be considered a company that gives good value for the money. Typically we expect the total bill to be less if we refurbish not replace. We are likely to respect companies that look for ways to charge us less whilst giving us an equivalent result.

Companies who have the capability to offer refurbishment opportunities to their customers not only reduce their own costs but can provide their customers with reduced project cost.

#### **Refurbishment Using TRA-SER improves your Green Credentials**

Refurbishing equipment is better for the environment than replacing it. Routinely looking for the opportunity to refurbish existing equipment can become a selling point for your business that customers understand and respect.

5.

### Communicate with Trade Service

Electronic Commerce (E-Commerce) and BIM (Building Information Modelling) are both a reality that the MEP industry will need to get to grips with if it is to remain competitive. Both rely on the transfer and exchange of content between diverse computer systems both within and outside the organization.

The use of TRA-SER as a tool to facilitate uploading of actual price content through Supplier Xchange has already been mentioned above, however, the use of TRA-SER in the context of E-Commerce and BIM extends much further.

This process relies on synchronization of product content in all systems to work effectively. This has long been recognized in other sectors such as the retail sector which has invested heavily in the process of E-Commerce but still loses money through the inability of suppliers to provide content of the appropriate quality. This is now being solved by the emergence of independent agencies dedicated to the aggregating, enhancement and distribution of product content. If this sounds familiar it is because this is exactly what TRA-SER has been doing for many years putting the MEP sector in an advantageous position for the adoption of e-commerce and BIM.



# 6.

## Conclusion

TRA-SER is the market-leading content source for the MEP industry and provides access to the industry's most respected and complete product content source with additional information available on many listed products.

Over the last 85+ years thousands of customers have benefited from access to the content refined by Trade Service, both improving the way they work and increasing their business profits.

Using TRA-SER in combination with an estimating system, customers save time, improve accuracy and present more professional and winning estimates time and time again.

## 10 Facts about TRA-SER

1. There are **4 million items** available in the electrical database
2. There are **2.9 million items** available in the plumbing/mechanical database
3. TRA-SER content represents nearly **1,400 manufacturers**
4. **560,000 new items** were added during 2016
5. TRA-SER was created **32 years ago**
6. The Supplier Xchange tool is used to price over **\$2.2 billion-worth of materials a month**
7. Over **90% of the top 50 MEP Contractors** power their estimating systems with our content
8. There are **10 main commodity categories** listed in the electrical version, and 3 additional specific to the ICT/Low-Voltage industry
9. There are **16 main commodity categories** for the plumbing/mechanical version
10. Over **4,000 contractors** throughout the US and Canada use TRA-SER content





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## About Trade Service

Trade Service is the most reliable source of content for contractors, distributors, dealers and manufacturers in the MEP, ICT-Low Voltage, Office Products, and Automotive industries. We offer pricing for electrical and plumbing estimating systems, dealer and distributor content for ERP systems, services to help build e-commerce sites, software for creating submittals, advertising and analytics for manufacturers, and can build custom content for just about any business application available. The backbone of our products stem from the databases built from manufacturer-provided information that our team of content experts clean and standardize. When you receive the information, it is uniform and accurate which keeps your business systems flowing smoothly.

Trimble, our parent company since 2013, is leveraging Trade Service expertise to inject many of their Design-Build-Operate (DBO) technologies with our trusted content.

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