



AI Does Not Set Prices at McDonald's

There's been inaccurate reporting about how menu prices are set at McDonald's. So let's set the record straight.

AI does not set the price of a Big Mac or any other menu item. It does not change prices. And it does not determine what an individual customer pays.

McDonald's does not use dynamic pricing.

McDonald's provides franchisees with tools, resources, research and recommendations to help them make informed decisions.

Franchisees independently set menu prices at their restaurants.

Here are the facts.

❌ Fiction

AI sets menu prices at McDonald's.

✅ Fact

It does not.

McDonald's pricing recommendation tool provides restaurant-specific recommendations. It does not set or change prices. Franchisees decide what prices to charge and whether to use the recommendations available to them.

The bottom line: The tool provides information. People make the final pricing decisions.

❌ Fiction

McDonald's uses technology to determine how much an individual customer is willing to pay.

✅ Fact

We do not.

McDonald's pricing recommendation tool does not set prices based on an individual customer's willingness to pay and does not set prices for individual customers. The tool focuses on restaurant level market dynamics that change by geographic location and other conditions.

❌ Fiction

McDonald's uses dynamic pricing.

✅ Fact

We do not.

McDonald's pricing recommendation tool does not set prices based on an individual customer's willingness to pay and does not set prices for individual customers. It does not change prices in real-time or at different hours during the day.

❌ Fiction

Using data and analytics to inform pricing is unusual or controversial.

✅ Fact

It is a standard business practice.

Businesses have long considered factors such as local costs, customer demand, competition and economic conditions when making pricing decisions. Pricing recommendation tools and analytics have been used across industries for decades to help businesses make more informed decisions.

That matters at McDonald's because local conditions can vary significantly across our global network of over 46,000 restaurants. A restaurant at a major transportation hub can operate in a very different environment from one in a suburban neighborhood or small town. Even restaurants only a few miles apart can face different local market conditions.

❌ Fiction

McDonald's dictates the prices franchisees must charge.

✅ Fact

Franchisees independently set their menu prices.

McDonald's can provide franchisees with tools, resources, research and recommendations, and we encourage them to focus on delivering value for customers. But a recommendation is exactly that: **a recommendation, not a mandate**. Franchisees are not required to accept a pricing recommendation.

❌ Fiction

McDonald's franchisee value standards are simply about policing prices.

✅ Fact

Value is about much more than price.

McDonald's has a value standard for franchisees that is designed to reinforce accountability for delivering the experience and value customers expect from McDonald's. The assessments are holistic. Price is one consideration among many aspects of the customer experience that shape whether customers believe they received good value.

What hasn't changed

McDonald's has been helping franchisees build successful businesses for more than 70 years. We provide our franchisees with tools and insights that can help them make informed business decisions, while they independently determine their menu prices.

AI does not set McDonald's menu prices. Franchisees do.

And our shared focus remains straightforward: **deliver great value for customers and operate successful restaurants.**