Buying On Margin Definition Us History



Buying on Margin Definition: A U.S. History of Risky Rewards

The roar of the 1920s stock market, the devastating crash of 1929, and the subsequent Great Depression – these are all inextricably linked to a financial practice known as "buying on margin." Understanding this concept isn't just about dusty history books; it's crucial for navigating today's investment landscape. This comprehensive guide delves into the definition of buying on margin, its role in shaping U.S. economic history, and its continued relevance in modern finance. We'll uncover the risks and rewards, helping you grasp the intricacies of this powerful – and potentially perilous – investment strategy.

What is Buying on Margin? A Clear Definition

Buying on margin, in its simplest form, is borrowing money from a broker to purchase stocks or other securities. Instead of paying the full price upfront, investors use a portion of their own funds as collateral (the margin) and borrow the rest. Think of it like a down payment on a house – you put down some money, and the bank loans you the remainder. The broker holds the purchased securities as collateral, ensuring repayment of the loan. The percentage of the purchase price that the investor

pays upfront is called the initial margin requirement, and this is regulated by governing bodies like the Federal Reserve.

The Allure and the Danger: Early U.S. History of Margin Trading

The practice of buying on margin isn't a recent invention. While its modern form emerged with the development of sophisticated financial markets, the underlying concept – leveraging borrowed funds for investments – has existed for centuries. In the early days of the U.S. stock market, margin trading was less regulated, leading to both periods of unprecedented growth and catastrophic collapses. The late 19th and early 20th centuries saw instances of speculative bubbles fueled by easy access to credit, creating a volatile environment prone to boom and bust cycles.

The Roaring Twenties and the Great Crash: A Case Study in Margin's Impact

The 1920s witnessed a surge in margin trading, contributing significantly to the "Roaring Twenties" boom. Easy credit and a belief in perpetually rising stock prices encouraged widespread speculation. Investors, emboldened by seemingly limitless gains, borrowed heavily to purchase stocks, driving prices to unsustainable levels. This unsustainable expansion fueled the speculative bubble that ultimately burst in 1929, leading to the infamous stock market crash. The crash exposed the fragility of the system built on high levels of margin debt. As stock prices plummeted, many investors were wiped out, unable to meet margin calls – demands from brokers to deposit more funds to cover losses. This triggered a cascade of selling, further accelerating the decline and contributing significantly to the Great Depression.

Post-Crash Regulations and the Evolution of Margin Trading

The devastating consequences of the 1929 crash led to significant reforms in the financial system, including stricter regulations on margin trading. The Securities Exchange Act of 1934 established the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), which implemented rules to limit the amount of debt investors could use to purchase securities. These regulations aimed to prevent excessive speculation and stabilize the markets. However, the inherent risks of margin trading remained, and its use continued, albeit with tighter controls.

Margin Trading in the Modern Era: Risks and Rewards

Today, buying on margin is still a common practice, albeit with safeguards in place. Brokers and exchanges closely monitor margin accounts, issuing margin calls when the value of the collateral falls below a certain threshold. While margin trading can amplify profits during market upturns, it can also magnify losses during downturns. It's crucial for investors to understand their risk tolerance and only use margin when they have a strong understanding of the market and their investment strategy.

Understanding Margin Calls and Avoiding Financial Ruin

A margin call is a demand from a broker for the investor to deposit additional funds into their margin account to bring the account back to the required minimum margin level. Failure to meet a margin call can result in the broker liquidating (selling) the investor's assets to cover the debt, often leading to significant losses. Thorough understanding of margin requirements, risk management strategies, and diversification are essential to avoid such situations.

Conclusion: Navigating the Complexities of Margin

Buying on margin, though a powerful tool, carries inherent risks. Its role in shaping U.S. economic history underscores the importance of understanding its complexities and managing risk effectively. By carefully considering the potential rewards and the equally significant potential for losses, investors can utilize margin trading responsibly and make informed decisions. Remember, thorough research, a well-defined investment strategy, and a clear understanding of your risk tolerance are paramount when venturing into the world of margin trading.

FAQs

- 1. What is the current initial margin requirement in the U.S.? The initial margin requirement is set by the Federal Reserve and is typically around 50%, meaning investors must put up at least 50% of the purchase price in cash. However, this can vary based on the specific security and broker.
- 2. Can I lose more money than I initially invested when buying on margin? Yes, absolutely. Because you're borrowing money, your potential losses can exceed your initial investment. This is one of the most significant risks associated with margin trading.
- 3. Are there any benefits to buying on margin besides potential profit amplification? While profit amplification is the primary benefit, some investors might use margin to diversify their portfolio more effectively within budget constraints, although it's crucial to weigh this against the increased risk.
- 4. How can I learn more about responsible margin trading? Consulting with a qualified financial advisor is highly recommended. They can help you assess your risk tolerance and develop a

responsible investment strategy incorporating margin trading, if appropriate. Your brokerage firm also provides educational resources on margin trading.

5. What are some alternative investment strategies to consider instead of margin trading? Consider dollar-cost averaging, investing in index funds, or diversifying your portfolio across various asset classes to reduce reliance on leveraged investments.

Buying on Margin: Definition, US History, and its Impact

Introduction:

Have you ever heard the term "buying on margin" and wondered what it means, especially within the context of US history? This practice, seemingly innocuous at first glance, has played a pivotal role in shaping American financial markets, leading to both spectacular booms and devastating busts. This comprehensive guide delves into the definition of buying on margin, traces its historical trajectory in the United States, and explores its significant consequences. We'll unpack the mechanics, examine its impact on major economic events, and uncover why understanding this concept remains crucial even today.

What is Buying on Margin? A Clear Definition

Buying on margin, in its simplest form, is borrowing money from a broker to purchase assets, primarily stocks. Instead of paying the full price upfront, investors leverage a percentage of their own funds (the margin) to control a larger position. The broker essentially acts as a lender, extending credit to facilitate the purchase. For example, if the margin requirement is 50%, an investor with \$10,000 can purchase \$20,000 worth of stock. This amplifies potential gains, as the percentage return on investment is magnified. However, it also significantly increases the risk.

Understanding Margin Requirements

Margin requirements are set by regulatory bodies like the Federal Reserve to mitigate risk. These requirements dictate the minimum percentage of the asset's value that an investor must cover with their own funds. Historically, margin requirements have fluctuated, often being raised during periods of market instability to curb excessive speculation.

Buying on Margin in US History: A Timeline of Boom and Bust

The practice of buying on margin has a long and often turbulent history in the United States. Its role in shaping economic cycles is undeniable:

The Roaring Twenties and the 1929 Crash:

The 1920s witnessed a surge in margin buying, fueling the rapid rise of the stock market. Loose credit policies and readily available loans encouraged speculative investment, creating an artificial sense of prosperity. The subsequent crash of 1929, often attributed to over-leveraged investors and a lack of regulation, serves as a stark warning about the dangers of excessive margin trading. The inability to meet margin calls (demands from brokers for additional funds to cover losses) triggered a chain reaction of forced selling, accelerating the market's decline and contributing to the Great Depression.

The Post-War Era and Subsequent Regulations:

Following the Great Depression, stricter regulations were implemented to prevent a recurrence of such devastating market collapses. The Securities Exchange Act of 1934 created the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), which established margin requirements and oversight of brokerage firms. These measures aimed to improve transparency and stability in the market, though margin trading continued, albeit under more controlled conditions.

The 1987 Black Monday and Beyond:

Despite the regulations, market volatility persisted. The Black Monday crash of 1987, although not solely attributed to margin trading, highlighted the potential for rapid and significant market declines, even under stricter regulatory frameworks. Subsequent decades have witnessed both periods of relatively stable growth fueled by margin trading and instances of market corrections, underscoring the inherent risk associated with leveraging investments.

The Mechanics of Margin Trading: A Detailed Look

To fully grasp the implications of buying on margin, understanding the mechanics is essential.

Initial Margin vs. Maintenance Margin:

The initial margin is the minimum percentage of the asset's value that must be paid upfront. The maintenance margin represents the minimum equity an investor must maintain in their account. If the value of the assets falls, and the equity drops below the maintenance margin, the investor receives a margin call, requiring them to deposit additional funds to bring the equity back up to the required level. Failure to meet a margin call can lead to the forced liquidation of assets.

Interest and Fees:

Investors typically pay interest on the borrowed funds. Brokerage firms also often charge fees associated with margin accounts. These costs should be factored into the overall investment strategy, as they can significantly impact profitability.

The Risks and Rewards of Buying on Margin: A Balanced Perspective

While buying on margin can amplify profits, it equally magnifies losses. The potential for substantial losses is a significant drawback, particularly for inexperienced investors.

Amplified Gains and Losses:

The leverage inherent in margin trading significantly increases both potential gains and potential losses. A small percentage change in the asset's value can translate into a much larger percentage change in the investor's equity.

Margin Calls and Liquidation:

The threat of margin calls represents a constant pressure for leveraged investors. A sudden market downturn can trigger a margin call, forcing investors to either deposit more funds or liquidate assets at potentially unfavorable prices.

The Importance of Risk Management:

Successful margin trading necessitates meticulous risk management. Investors should carefully assess their risk tolerance, diversify their portfolio, and avoid over-leveraging their investments.

Conclusion: Navigating the Complexities of Margin Trading

Buying on margin has been a defining element of the US financial landscape, contributing to both periods of remarkable growth and devastating market crashes. Understanding its mechanics, historical impact, and inherent risks is crucial for anyone participating in the stock market. Responsible use of margin, coupled with thorough research and robust risk management strategies, can enhance investment returns, but ignoring the potential for significant losses can lead to financial ruin. Always proceed with caution and seek professional financial advice before engaging in margin trading.

FAQs:

- 1. Can I use margin trading for assets other than stocks? Yes, margin trading can be used for various assets, including options, futures contracts, and bonds, but the specific margin requirements and risks vary.
- 2. Are there tax implications associated with margin trading? Yes, interest paid on margin loans is generally tax-deductible, but specific regulations may vary depending on the circumstances. Consult a tax professional for personalized advice.
- 3. How do I open a margin account? You'll need to open a brokerage account and apply for margin trading privileges. Your broker will likely assess your financial situation and risk tolerance before approving your application.
- 4. What happens if I can't meet a margin call? Failure to meet a margin call may result in the forced liquidation of some or all of your assets to cover the shortfall. This can lead to significant losses.
- 5. Is margin trading suitable for all investors? No, margin trading is generally considered unsuitable for inexperienced investors with a low risk tolerance. It carries substantial risk and should only be undertaken by those who fully understand the potential consequences.

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meet the scope and sequence requirements of most introductory courses. The text provides a balanced approach to U.S. history, considering the people, events, and ideas that have shaped the United States from both the top down (politics, economics, diplomacy) and bottom up (eyewitness accounts, lived experience). U.S. History covers key forces that form the American experience, with particular attention to issues of race, class, and gender.

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for every kid who grew up on Brain Quest.

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buying on margin definition us history: Beggar Thy Neighbor Charles R. Geisst, 2013-04-15 The practice of charging interest on loans has been controversial since it was first mentioned in early recorded history. Lending is a powerful economic tool, vital to the development of society but it can also lead to disaster if left unregulated. Prohibitions against excessive interest, or usury, have been found in almost all societies since antiquity. Whether loans were made in kind or in cash, creditors often were accused of beggar-thy-neighbor exploitation when their lending terms put borrowers at risk of ruin. While the concept of usury reflects transcendent notions of fairness, its definition has varied over time and place: Roman law distinguished between simple and compound interest, the medieval church banned interest altogether, and even Adam Smith favored a ceiling on interest. But in spite of these limits, the advantages and temptations of lending prompted financial innovations from margin investing and adjustable-rate mortgages to credit cards and microlending. In Beggar Thy Neighbor, financial historian Charles R. Geisst tracks the changing perceptions of usury and debt from the time of Cicero to the most recent financial crises. This comprehensive economic history looks at humanity's attempts to curb the abuse of debt while reaping the benefits of credit. Beggar Thy Neighbor examines the major debt revolutions of the past, demonstrating that extensive leverage and debt were behind most financial market crashes from the Renaissance to the present day. Geisst argues that usury prohibitions, as part of the natural law tradition in Western and Islamic societies, continue to play a key role in banking regulation despite modern advances in finance. From the Roman Empire to the recent Dodd-Frank financial reforms, usury ceilings still occupy a central place in notions of free markets and economic justice.

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indirect influence of the Monetary History would be difficult to overstate."—Ben S. Bernanke, Nobel Prize-winning economist and former chair of the U.S. Federal Reserve From Nobel Prize-winning economist Milton Friedman and his celebrated colleague Anna Jacobson Schwartz, one of the most important economics books of the twentieth century—the landmark work that rewrote the story of the Great Depression and the understanding of monetary policy Milton Friedman and Anna Jacobson Schwartz's A Monetary History of the United States, 1867-1960 is one of the most influential economics books of the twentieth century. A landmark achievement, it marshaled massive historical data and sharp analytics to argue that monetary policy—steady control of the money supply—matters profoundly in the management of the nation's economy, especially in navigating serious economic fluctuations. One of the book's most important chapters, "The Great Contraction, 1929-33" addressed the central economic event of the twentieth century, the Great Depression. Friedman and Schwartz argued that the Federal Reserve could have stemmed the severity of the Depression, but failed to exercise its role of managing the monetary system and countering banking panics. The book served as a clarion call to the monetarist school of thought by emphasizing the importance of the money supply in the functioning of the economy—an idea that has come to shape the actions of central banks worldwide.

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entrepreneurs, who likely have little experience, to turn their businesses into the Googles, Facebooks, and Groupons of the world. This book explains the often-complex methods venture capitalists use to value companies and to get the most return on their investments, or ROI. This book is a must-have for any reader interested in the business world.

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buying on margin definition us history: Margin Trading from A to Z Michael T. Curley, 2008-03-11 Margin Trading from A to Z offers a step-by-step explanation of the mechanics of the margin account. Filled with in-depth insights and expert advice, this book uses a hands-on approach to show how a Regulation T Margin Call is arrived at; how it may be answered; and how an account looks once a call is issued and after the call is met. Other items covered by this detailed guide include minimum maintenance requirements, short selling, memorandum accounts, options, hedge funds, and portfolio margining. The book includes guiz questions and a comprehensive exam.

buying on margin definition us history: Making Medicines Affordable National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, Health and Medicine Division, Board on Health Care Services, Committee on Ensuring Patient Access to Affordable Drug Therapies, 2018-03-01 Thanks to remarkable advances in modern health care attributable to science, engineering, and medicine, it is now possible to cure or manage illnesses that were long deemed untreatable. At the same time, however, the United States is facing the vexing challenge of a seemingly uncontrolled rise in the cost of health care. Total medical expenditures are rapidly approaching 20 percent of the gross domestic product and are crowding out other priorities of national importance. The use of increasingly expensive prescription drugs is a significant part of this problem, making the cost of biopharmaceuticals a serious national concern with broad political implications. Especially with the highly visible and very large price increases for prescription drugs that have occurred in recent years, finding a way to make prescription medicinesâ€and health care at largeâ€more affordable for everyone has become a socioeconomic imperative. Affordability is a complex function of factors, including not just the prices of the drugs themselves, but also the details of an individual's insurance coverage and the number of medical conditions that an individual or family confronts. Therefore, any solution to the affordability issue will require considering all of these factors together. The current high and increasing costs of prescription drugsâ€coupled with the broader trends in overall health care costsâ€is unsustainable to society as a whole. Making Medicines Affordable examines patient access to affordable and effective therapies, with emphasis on drug pricing, inflation in the cost of drugs, and insurance design. This report explores structural and policy factors influencing drug pricing, drug access programs, the emerging role of comparative effectiveness assessments in payment policies, changing finances of medical practice with regard to drug costs and reimbursement, and measures to prevent drug shortages and foster continued innovation in drug development. It makes recommendations for policy actions that could address drug price trends, improve patient access to affordable and effective treatments, and encourage innovations that address significant needs in health care.

buying on margin definition us history: Down and Out in the Great Depression Robert S.

McElvaine, 2009-11-30 Down and Out in the Great Depression is a moving, revealing collection of letters by the forgotten men, women, and children who suffered through one of the greatest periods of hardship in American history. Sifting through some 15,000 letters from government and private sources, Robert McElvaine has culled nearly 200 communications that best show the problems, thoughts, and emotions of ordinary people during this time. Unlike views of Depression life from the bottom up that rely on recollections recorded several decades later, this book captures the daily anguish of people during the thirties. It puts the reader in direct contact with Depression victims, evoking a feeling of what it was like to live through this disaster. Following Franklin D. Roosevelt's inauguration, both the number of letters received by the White House and the percentage of them coming from the poor were unprecedented. The average number of daily communications jumped to between 5,000 and 8,000, a trend that continued throughout the Rosevelt administration. The White House staff for answering such letters--most of which were directed to FDR, Eleanor Roosevelt, or Harry Hopkins--quickly grew from one person to fifty. Mainly because of his radio talks, many felt they knew the president personally and could confide in him. They viewed the Roosevelts as parent figures, offering solace, help, and protection. Roosevelt himself valued the letters, perceiving them as a way to gauge public sentiment. The writers came from a number of different groups--middle-class people, blacks, rural residents, the elderly, and children. Their letters display emotional reactions to the Depression--despair, cynicism, and anger--and attitudes toward relief. In his extensive introduction, McElvaine sets the stage for the letters, discussing their significance and some of the themes that emerge from them. By preserving their original spelling, syntax, grammar, and capitalization, he conveys their full flavor. The Depression was far more than an economic collapse. It was the major personal event in the lives of tens of millions of Americans. McElvaine shows that, contrary to popular belief, many sufferers were not passive victims of history. Rather, he says, they were also actors and, to an extent, playwrights, producers, and directors as well, taking an active role in trying to deal with their plight and solve their problems. For this twenty-fifth anniversary edition, McElvaine provides a new foreword recounting the history of the book, its impact on the historiography of the Depression, and its continued importance today.

buying on margin definition us history: Tcl/Tk in a Nutshell Paul Raines, Jeff Tranter, 1999-03-25 The Tcl language and Tk graphical toolkit are simple and powerful building blocks for custom applications. The Tcl/Tk combination is increasingly popular because it lets you produce sophisticated graphical interfaces with a few easy commands, develop and change scripts quickly, and conveniently tie together existing utilities or programming libraries. One of the attractive features of Tcl/Tk is the wide variety of commands, many offering a wealth of options. Most of the things you'd like to do have been anticipated by the language's creator, John Ousterhout, or one of the developers of Tcl/Tk's many powerful extensions. Thus, you'll find that a command or option probably exists to provide just what you need. And that's why it's valuable to have a guick reference that briefly describes every command and option in the core Tcl/Tk distribution as well as the most popular extensions. Keep this book on your desk as you write scripts, and you'll be able to find almost instantly the particular option you need. Most chapters consist of alphabetical listings. Since Tk and mega-widget packages break down commands by widget, the chapters on these topics are organized by widget along with a section of core commands where appropriate. Contents include: Core Tcl and Tk commands and Tk widgets C interface (prototypes) Expect [incr Tcl] and [incr Tk] Tix TclX BLT Oratcl, SybTcl, and Tclodbc

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areas of trading. Some tests are pencil-and-paper, others have you work with charts, but all prepare you to make crucial decisions. This Study Guide will: Quiz you on the essentials of trading-choosing the markets to trade, finding holes in the Efficient Market Theory, and overcoming common obstacles to success Make you aware of psychological blind spots that lead to losing Test your knowledge of charting and computerized indicators Explore trading systems, day-trading, and advanced concepts, such as Impulse trading and SafeZone stops Ask questions about money management, record-keeping, and managing time Challenge you with eight case studies where you choose entry and exit points and get graded for your performance The best trading strategies, techniques, and tools are only as good as your understanding of them. Pick up this Study Guide for Come Into My Trading Room: A Complete Guide to Trading and convert Dr. Elder's methods into your own powerful and profitable tools.

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buying on margin definition us history: *Bernanke and Greenspan* Ben Bernanke, Alan Greenspan, Roy F. Anderson, Kenneth Thompson, 2012 The Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City at Jackson Hole, Wyoming, organises annual conferences on the long-term economic growth and financial crisis of the United States. This book has compiled a decade of speeches held at these conferences by the chairmans: Bernanke and Greenspan.

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dedicated sections on: · Precautions for pregnant travelers, immunocompromised travelers, and travelers with disabilities · Special considerations for newly arrived adoptees, immigrants, and refugees · Practical tips for last-minute or resource-limited travelers · Advice for air crews, humanitarian workers, missionaries, and others who provide care and support overseas Authored by a team of the world's most esteemed travel medicine experts, the Yellow Book is an essential resource for travelers -- and the clinicians overseeing their care -- at home and abroad.

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their own S&P Sector. This separation from banks and financial institutions has attracted new investors, but REITs require an industry-specific knowledge that is neither intuitive nor readily accessible to newcomers—until now. Using straightforward language and simple example to illustrate important concepts, this book will enable any reader to quickly learn and understand the lexicon and valuation techniques used in REIT investing, providing a wealth of practical resources that streamline the learning process. The discussion explains terminology, metrics, and other key points, while examples illustrate the calculations used to evaluate opportunities. A comprehensive list of publicly-traded REITs provides key reference, giving you access to an important resource most investors and stockbrokers lack. REITs are companies that own or finance commercial rental properties, such as malls and apartment buildings. Despite historically high total returns relative to other investments, such as the Nasdag or S&P 500 index, most investors are unfamiliar with the REIT industry, and wary of investing without adequate background. This book gets you up to speed on the essentials of REIT investing so you can make more informed—and profitable—decisions. Understand REITs processes, mechanisms, and industry Calculate key metrics to identify suitable companies Access historical performance tables and industry-specific terminology Identify publicly-traded REITs guickly and easily REITs have consistently outperformed many more widely known investments. Over the past 15-year period, for example, REITs returned an average of 11% per year, better than all other asset classes. Since 2009, REITs have enjoyed positive returns; large cap stocks and cash are the only other classes that paralleled that record. Even in 2015, a 'year of fear' related to rising rates, REITs returned 2.4%, beating most all other asset classes. REITs have a long history (over fifty years) of performance, and have entered the big leagues. If you feel like you've been missing out, don't keep missing out. Prepare yourself, and your portfolio, to benefit from the demand for REITs that have followed the creation of a Real Estate GICS sector. The Intelligent REIT Investor gives you the information you need to invest wisely and manage your real estate risk effectively. By maintaining a tactical exposure in the brick and mortar asset class, investors should benefit from the information contained in The Intelligent REIT Investor. Join the REIT world and look forward to owning stocks that will help you to sleep well at night.

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