

An open letter to the exhibit and event marketing ecosystem:

We agree that there is much to discuss in collaboration with all industry partners but in order to ensure corporations will continue to invest in trade events and support industry associations we need assistance from the other members of the event marketing ecosystem. Currently, there are conditions in the industry that impede the value exhibitors gain from face-to-face marketing events -- specifically conventions and trade shows. To better these conditions, we require:

1. **Predictable Investment Costs.** Exhibiting companies require access to information in a timely manner (before the space contract is signed), including accurate pricing to reduce variances between budget and actual costs, especially those related to overtime and special handling surcharges.
2. **EAC/EAB Board Development.** Establishment of recognized universal best practices for Exhibitor Advisory Committees/Boards to drive improvements to the event.
3. **Information verification.** Verified registration information linked to conference badges to allow accurate information on lead capture devices. To effectively market their presence at a show, exhibitors require access to information such as names, addresses, phone, fax, and email for effective use of the attend names captured in the exhibitor booths.
4. **Exhibitor Rights to Choose.** The right to use exhibitor appointed contractors without paying an unreasonable premiums. Discounts offered by a General Services Contractor (GSC) on services should be offered to exhibitor would extend to the exhibitor's appointed contractor. There should not be any offerings to exhibitors from the GSC or any GSC associated company tying exclusive services with discounts, rebates, or preferential treatment that would benefit one exhibitor over another and/or prevent a non-GSC vendor from the same offering. Preferential treatment could include: early move-in and move-out, reduced material handling, marshalling yard truck queuing, etc., which could ultimately favor one exhibitor over another.
5. **Third-party assured event attendance and demographic data.** This information will bring vital accountability to the industry as a whole. Other competing marketing channels are already providing this information to their buyers. Audited data helps assure the face-to-face investment in the budgets of corporate marketers rather than allowing those investment dollars to migrate towards other channels proactively providing investment justification.

6. **Non-competing exhibit hours with education/programs.** To provide maximum exposure of all exhibits, the majority of exposition hours should be scheduled to avoid conflicting with other programs. This allows exhibiting companies to manage their staffing effectively and allows staffers to attend educational programs to learn about their industry vertical.

Coming together to discuss issues and resolve matters that would be beneficial to **ALL** parties including all our customers, the conference attendees, is critical. As a group, it is essential to change the show service business model and culture to provide exhibitors with more control and predictability over their costs. A shift in models would allow effective investment in the event by company's exhibiting.

We recognize the right all members of the ecosystem to make a profit, otherwise no company or association would exist including exhibitors. Increased competitions for shares of marketing budgets are forcing event marketers to be more selective in how resources are allocated. What we require above will provide value for all parties and ultimately guide the industry in making adjustments that will guarantee its financial future and continued place in the marketing mix.

Sincerely,

Exhibitor Advocacy Committee