

# **Standards for Conducting Business-to-Consumer Exhibition & Event Audits**

**A Document of the Exhibition and Event Industry  
Audit Commission**



# Standards for Conducting Business-to-Consumer Exhibition & Event Audits

## EEIAC Rules and Regulations Committee

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### STANDARDS:

#### 1.0 GENERAL

At minimum the audit shall include a validation of total audited attendance (as listed under 5.4 of this document) and may at the organizer's discretion verify basic demographics used to qualify the target audience within the market segment the event represents.

#### 2.0 AUDIT ORGANIZATION

The firm or organization conducting the audit of an event shall be an independent third party firm or organization not that is in no way affiliated with the event organizer except as the auditor of the event. The audit organization must be approved by the Exhibition and Event Audit Commission. Approval shall be granted to those companies provided that they meet the following criteria:

- a) Provide a completed Application to the EEIAC. The application will be mailed upon request or available at the designated EEIAC website
- b) Submit a fully executed DECLARATION OF CONFORMITY WITH THE AUDIT STANDARDS OF THE EXHIBITION AND EVENT INDUSTRY AUDIT COMMISSION. A copy of the Declaration will be provided to any company upon written request to: ADDRESS TO BE DETERMINED. A copy of the declaration may also be found at the EEIAC website.
- c) Submission of a Statement of Methodology detailing the proposed audit methodology. The EEIAC will provide Non-Disclosure Agreements to an audit organization as requested by the auditing organization.

#### 3.0 AUDIT PROCESS

The firm or organization shall adhere to the following standards for the audit process:

##### 3.1.1

Prior to the exhibition or event:

- review the box office procedures,
- review gate admission policy,
- verify , the starting numbers for all classification tickets with the box office vendor or person in charge
- review the advance ticket policy to ensure the validity of the process for collecting and validating attendance. This will include, but is not limited to:
  - receiving a copy of all types of admission tickets, VIP tickets, discount coupons, exhibitor badges,
  - and reviewing any and all registration forms that may be used as entry into the event.
  - verifying that the box office seller of admission tickets is independent from the gate entrance ticket taker.

##### 3.1.2

If registration is required, then prior to the exhibition or event:

- review the advance and on-site registration system to ensure the validity of the process for collecting registration data. This will include, but is not limited to:
  - review the registration form and fields, registration categories
  - review all processes for registering and verifying visitors.

##### 3.2

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After the event, the show management shall provide the auditors with a clean (“de-duped”) electronic database of all exhibitors and their personnel working the show, entertainers, media representatives and all others that are to be counted as attendees.

### 3.3

No admission category can be audited and counted unless it is included in a ticket count or in a database (i.e., exhibitors, booth personnel, performers, educators, etc.) provided by the organizer.

### 3.4

Organizer shall submit summation reports of all attendee statistics. If exhibit space data is to be audited (**optional**), summation reports for this shall also be provided.

### 3.5

The testing and validation of the claimed attendance (see section 3.2) shall at minimum include:

#### 3.5.1

A review of the entire database of all exhibitors and their personnel working the show, entertainers, media representatives and all others to check for duplicate records, etc.

#### 3.5.2

A tabulation of all records in the electronic database of claimed attendees for:

- attendance verification
- on-site performance verification

#### 3.5.3

A comparison of the auditor’s tabulations (above) to the summation of the same data as provided by the show organizer with an analysis provided of the resulting variances.

#### 3.5.4

Testing of the database of claimed attendees to validate actual attendance:

- The testing shall be based on a representative sample of all attendees within each major category being audited (i.e., exhibitors, booth personnel, performers, educators, etc.).
- Samples shall be of a size to ensure the accuracy of each attendee category being audited, and if necessary, to make statistically reliable adjustments to attendance figures in each category.
- The primary test of the database will include contacting the sample(s) by phone, email, mail, fax or a combination of these methods to verify that they attended and that the information that is to be reported in the audit statement is correct.

#### 3.5.5

Summation of audited data of attendees to yield total attendee counts of:

- Attendance categories as defined herein (see Sections 5.4 and 7.0), and
- responses provided by the attendees to demographic questions if applicable.

## 4.0 ADJUSTMENTS

Adjustments to attendance figures will be made (if required) based on the results of the above tests. Adjustments shall be reviewed with the event organizer, but the final decision to make adjustments rests with the auditing organization.

## **5.0 AUDIT REPORT CONTENTS**

The audit report shall include the following as a requirement unless otherwise noted:

- Cross tabulations of data are *optional*.
- If graphs are included, the text table from which the graph is based shall be shown.

### **5.1 Basic exhibition or event information:**

- **OFFICIAL NAME OF EVENT**
- **DATES OF EVENT**
- **LOCATION**
- **EVENT PRODUCER NAME**
- **FREQUENCY OF EVENT**
- **ADDRESS OF THE EVENT PRODUCER** to include:
  - mailing address
  - phone
  - fax
  - url
- **NAME AND DATE EVENT WAS ORIGINALLY ESTABLISHED**
- **NAME AND DATE AS IT IS CURRENTLY NAMED/BRANDED** (if changed)
- **LOCATION OF NEXT EVENT** (*optional*)
- **DATE OF NEXT EVENT** (*optional*)

### **5.2 STATEMENT OF MARKET SERVED**

- Brief, fact-based description of attendees, which may include attendees' known audited demographics germane to the event's theme.

### **5.3 ADMISSION POLICY AND FEES IF ANY**

- Brief description of admission categories
- Schedule of admission fees listed

### **5.4 AUDITED ATTENDANCE ANALYSIS**

5.4.1 Table of audited attendance figures by the following admission categories:

- PAID ATTENDEES
- DISCOUNT PAID ATTENDEES
- FREE ATTENDEES
- EXHIBITORS AND BOOTH PERSONNEL ATTENDEES (BADGED)
- SPEAKERS/EDUCATORS/ENTERTAINERS ATTENDEES (BADGED)
- MEDIA & ANALYSTS ATTENDEES (BADGED)
- VIP ATTENDEES
- SPONSORS & THEIR SUPPORT STAFF ATTENDEES (BADGED)
- CHILDREN UNDER A QUALIFYING AGE
- TOTAL

5.4.2 Attendees may only be counted in one admission category. In cases of multiple admission categories applying to one attendee, organizers, in agreement with the auditor, will need to select the most appropriate admission category.

### **5.5 FIVE-YEAR HISTORY OF AUDITED ATTENDANCE (OPTIONAL)**

This shall be in compliance with industry-accepted definitions (see Section 7.0) and shall report all categories as provided in Section 5.4. All certified audits, beginning with the current audit, shall be included in the five-year history regardless of the audit organization

performing the work. However, audits conducted prior to the issuing of these standards may be included, appropriately footnoted, at event organizers' option.

**5.6 AUDITED CLASSIFICATION OF ATTENDEES (OPTIONAL)** except where required to qualify the target audience defined in 5.2)

Shall, at the organizer's request, include the results of demographic questions audited and geographical distribution of attendees. Each table of results shall be based on total audited attendance, i.e., including attendees who did not provide an answer to each demographic question. Percentages reported shall be based on total attendees. Percentages may also be reported based on those who have answered the specific question.

**5.7 NET AND NET PAID EXHIBIT SPACE (OPTIONAL)**

*Optionally*, organizers can elect to audit and report their net (paid and free) exhibit space and net paid exhibit space (see Sections 6.0 and 7.0). If the data is audited, the reporting shall include the total number of exhibitors, total net exhibit space and total net paid exhibit space.

**5.8 ADDITIONAL DATA (OPTIONAL)**

*Optionally*, other information can be audited and included within the audit report but the information shall be census based and included within the attendee database and/or exhibitor database (i.e., not survey questions added to the audit testing procedure). Examples of this *optional* information are actual number of attendees from specific entities (e.g., Home Owners) or specific exhibitors represented on the exhibit floor.

**5.9 EXPLANATORY NOTES**

Shall include any notes approved by the auditor to provide further clarification to the audit or history of audits, (i.e. events canceled due to force majeure) and the following:

**5.9.1 DEMOGRAPHIC GATHERING FORM**

The form/questions used to gather attendee demographic information shall be included.

**5.9.2 STATEMENT OF VERIFICATION METHODOLOGY**

Description of the methods used to verify the number of unique individuals who actually attended the show shall be included.

**5.10 AUDITOR'S OPINION**

A statement of opinion by auditor as to accuracy of data shall be included.

**6.0 VERIFIED EXHIBIT SPACE (OPTIONAL)**

If organizer requests exhibit space and number of exhibitors to be audited, the organizer shall provide all exhibit space contracts for examination and testing at the event, final floor plan with dimensions of exhibits that is to exact scale, and the total number of exhibitors and net and net paid square feet of exhibit space used.

The audit organization shall:

- a. Sample exhibit space contracts and validate against actual space used on exhibit floor by those exhibitors.
- b. Calculate total space from floor plan and test against actual space on exhibit floor.

The audit would also include verification of payment for the space, if being claimed.

## **7.0 DEFINITIONS**

### **7.1 ADMISSION CATEGORIES**

Segmentation of all registrants for the event based on their role at the event. Includes: Paid Admission Attendees, Free Admission Attendees, Speakers, Media & Analysts, Exhibitors, Sponsors and Non-Exhibiting Sponsors & Their Support Staff.

### **7.2 ADVANCE ADMISSION**

The process by which individuals purchase advance admission from the event organizers or third party vendors, before the event opens, through phone, fax, mail, or online. These individuals shall be verified as having actually attended the event before they are called attendees.

### **7.3 ATTENDEE**

Any person regardless of admission category that can be verified as to attending that exhibition or event.

### **7.4 AUDIT**

A published independent third-party certified census of verified attendees conducted in accordance with industry-standard guidelines established by the Exhibition and Event Industry Audit Commission. The Audit MUST be published within 30 days of completion and available on the Auditor's website and the EEIAC website. In the event that the EEIAC website is unavailable for any reason, the Audit must be published on the Auditor's website for a minimum period of 2 years from the date of publication unless superseded by a more current audit unless superseded by a more current audit.

#### **7.4.1 CONDITIONAL AUDIT**

An Event Organizer may elect to designate an Audit as "Conditional" in the first year an event is audited using EEIAC Standards.

In order for Event Organizers to be able to test their systems and ensure that their ticket count, box office verification and database of exhibitors and their workers can hold up under an audit, can hold up under audit, Event Organizers shall have the option, only for the first audit of a particular event, to not make that audit public. If they choose to do so, the Event Organizer should so notify the Auditor, and should not publicize the fact that they have hired an Auditor. Once the audit is completed, the Event Organizer may elect to keep the audit private or at this point to release the audit publicly.

If the audit produces unsatisfactory results due to problems in the registration system, verification system, or database, and substantive changes are made to systems to indicate that the next event audit will be successful, the Auditor may allow a second non-public "Conditional" audit one year later. This trial period may not last more than two audits. If the initial audit is held back only due to the Organizer's dissatisfaction with the total attendance or demographic data, no second non-public audit will be permitted.

For any subsequent audits that are performed in a 3 year period following the Conditional Audit, results must be published according to Paragraph 7.4.

### **7.5 BOX OFFICE**

The area where admission tickets are sold and/or distributed. Typically at the entrance of the event. The box office can be a third party vendor or orchestrated by the organizer.

### **7.6 CENSUS BASED**

A complete enumeration of a population (e.g. attendees, booth personnel). A census is differentiated from survey data that is based on collecting data from a sample of the population and extrapolating the information for that population.

**7.7 CERTIFIED AUDIT**

An audit performed according to these guidelines and sanctioned by the Exhibition and Event Audit Commission.

**7.8 CROSS TABULATIONS (OPTIONAL)**

Data tables, *optionally* included in an audit report, that show the results of one question in rows against the results of another question reported in columns.

**7.9 DUPLICATE RECORD**

The same individual appearing on the admission database more than once, whether in the same admission category or in multiple admission categories.

**7.10 EXHIBITOR**

A company that has purchased or otherwise negotiated to receive space provided by the event organizer to promote its product or service, and attended the event.

**7.11 EXHIBIT SPACE**

Exhibit space is measured in two formats; net and net paid. Net is the aggregate footprint of all square footage in the event including paid for, trade/barter and complimentary space, including meeting rooms. Net paid represents only space that is paid for.

**7.12 MEDIA & ANALYSTS**

Those who attend an event and are verified as being on-site at the show that are qualified as working for a media organization or for a company that specializes in analyzing the industry that the show represents.

These categories may be broken out separately at the option of the show organizer.

**7.13 NON-EXHIBITING SPONSORS**

Those organizations who have paid or bartered to receive promotion at an event but do not have exhibit space.

**7.14 QUALIFIED ATTENDEES**

*Optional* wording for those in attendance at an exhibition or event providing that a clear definition of qualification is provided in the "Statement of Event Objectives and Markets Served" (see Section 5.2) and verified by the auditor.

**7.15 QUALIFIED EXHIBITORS & THEIR SUPPORT STAFF, or,  
QUALIFIED SPONSORS & THEIR SUPPORT STAFF, or,  
QUALIFIED EXHIBITORS, NON-EXHIBITING SPONSORS & THEIR SUPPORT STAFF**

(Alternate versions, depending on types of exhibitors/sponsors applicable to specific event.)

Employees of exhibiting or sponsoring companies and their support staff who are registered for exhibitor badges in order to staff the exhibit/event.

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These registrants may or may not be verified by show management as to whether or not they actually attended the event. The audit report shall be specific on whether or not these registrants are verified participants, and whether or not this number is audited.

### **7.16 REPRESENTATIVE SAMPLE**

A sample selected for testing that is statistically representative of each category to be audited.

### **7.17 SUPPORT STAFF**

People who attend an event to provide services to exhibitors or non-exhibiting sponsors, whether employees of the exhibitor or sponsor or are hired specifically to provide services at the event. These attendees are included in the Exhibitor admission category.

### **7.18 SPEAKERS/EDUCATORS/ENTERTAINERS**

Those who speak educate or entertain for an event and are verified as being on-site at the show as a speaker, educator or entertainer in a controlled access educational program, a keynote or other information/entertaining session.

### **7.19 SPONSOR**

A company or association that is promoted as a sponsor of the event.

### **7.20 STAFF**

Employees of the event organizer, attending for the purpose of supporting the event, should not be included in any category of the audit report.

### **7.21 TOTAL**

Includes all audience groups that were at the event: attendees, exhibitors and support staff, media & analysts, and speakers. It does not include employees of the show management company or contractor companies who provide services to the show.

### **7.22 VALIDATION**

Attestation by the auditor that a claim is true.

### **7.23 VENDOR**

Individuals hired by the event organizer to support operations of the event, badged as such, shall not be included in any category of the audit report

### **7.24 VERIFICATION**

Confirmation that an issued badge was claimed or used at the event by an exhibitor, VIP ticket was counted, box office admissions were reconciled, etc.

### **7.25 VERIFIED ATTENDEES**

Exhibition and Event attendees whose attendance at the event was confirmed in accordance with industry standards established by the Exhibition and Event Audit Commission.

The event audit report shall disclose the methodology used to verify attendance.