



June 18, 2021

## **STANDING READY TO GET BACK TO WORK!**

An Open Letter to our Event Industry Colleagues

Exhibit designers and producers and exhibit appointed contractors, our respective member communities experienced the greatest challenge of their professional careers during the COVID pandemic. Throughout the crisis, both EDPA and EACA have engaged in non-stop advocacy activity for our member companies and the industry at large.

Gratefully, we have reached the time when the industry is opening, and we can plan for the return of events. Yet, as we move forward, some questions are being raised.

One question is about the strength of the industry's workforce. We have heard show organizers question whether companies that design, build and install displays at trade shows may not have adequate labor resources. We can answer that question right now: EACA and EDPA member companies are ready to get back to work. The exhibitor community is looking forward to working with us again as their preferred suppliers.

EACA and EDPA members are concerned about new propositions designed to serve show management and general contractors at the expense of our communities. Recently, the International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC) and their Recon Show announced that exhibitors must accept their rental exhibit package offer. The general contractor will provide a rental exhibit and the set-up labor; exhibitors cannot bring their own displays or use their preferred service provider to set them up. This policy endangers the exhibitors' freedom of choice, and we strongly object.

The Exhibitor Advocacy Group also notes their concerns :*“The faction, The Exhibitor Advocacy Group is deeply concerned at the decision of ICSC and the implementation of their new exhibit floor policies. This Exhibitor Advocacy Group is comprised of exhibitors representing major corporations across multiple industries, as well as representatives from suppliers, labor unions, and general service contractors. These new policies of ICSC prevents exhibitors from choosing their preferred suppliers to handle not only show services but also exhibit design and construction. According to the show prospectus, only the general contractor, which is selected by ICSC not their exhibitors, is allowed to operate on the ICSC-Recon show floor.*

*Exhibiting companies seeking to create experiences and engage the Shopping Center market with the design and areas that reflect their own brand has now been eliminated. This greatly disrupts exhibitors' marketing and sales initiatives where exhibitors seek to create experiences and engage the market. This personalized marketing engagement becomes difficult, if not impossible, when every exhibit looks the same.*

*We also find it very disconcerting that the general contractor for this show has been allowed by ICSC to “rollout” their own new initiative “Flex Talent Pool” which basically means that exhibitors have to take the luck of the draw when it comes to show floor labor.*

*The Exhibitor Advocacy Group urges ICSC to reconsider this policy immediately so exhibitors can choose their own suppliers and not be forced to work within confines that have financial and brand-temper implications.”*

This type of policy, unfortunately, is not new. Similar ideas surfaced after an industry slowdown with the 2008 recession and post-9/11. Both times, exhibitors strongly voiced their objections.

EACA and EDPA are here ready and able to support the trade show industry and exhibitor community. Let's all get back to work. See you on the show floor!

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**Advocacy Chairman**  
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