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# EDPA Matters

**T**he Experiential Designers and Producers Association is excited to celebrate its 65th year with members who represent more than 300 companies across 18 countries, and we are proud to be a leading voice within our industry. The EDPA was founded in 1954 by a progressive group of individuals within the exhibit and design industry who wanted to grow relationships and form new partnerships. In these early days, EDPA mostly comprised entrepreneurial exhibit company owners. Many of them started out as carpenters or designers, and few had formal business training. Fortunately, the industry grew quickly, and so did these companies.

Over the years, our service offerings have changed just as quickly as the industry has evolved. For example, in 2017, EDPA (formerly known as the Exhibit Designers and Producers Association) was renamed the Experiential Designers and Producers Association to better represent a broader industry. Today, our members combine marketing, design, and production leadership to help organizations create effective face-to-face customer experiences and environments for trade shows, events, corporate environments, museums, and more.

EDPA's mission remains focused on advancing the interests of its members. Each year, the association drives the industry forward through research, networking and education, advocacy, and good works.

## Research

EDPA teams up with members and outside resources to deliver information that's essential to remaining relevant and competitive. For example, the Annual Compensation Survey takes an aggregate look at compensation trends, and the Annual Economic Survey predicts shifts in the industry. The association also partners with the Center for Exhibition Industry Research to provide a wealth of research studies to EDPA members.

## Networking and Education

When EDPA members get together, competitive concerns are put aside, allowing the association to focus on helping

one another succeed. Most notably, the annual Access and Engage conferences bring members together in environments that facilitate learning and networking. Furthermore, the EDPA's online membership portal and directory allow members to connect directly, while regional chapter events offer access to additional networking, educational, and philanthropic activities.

## Advocacy

EDPA remains committed to addressing issues that matter and ensuring a successful future for all members. Through its annual participation in Exhibitions Day in Washington, DC, EDPA encourages face-to-face engagement with political leaders on Capitol Hill, giving a voice to our industry. To build a strong foundation of new talent, the association provides ongoing support to programs at Bemidji State University and the Fashion Institute of Technology through its University Affiliation program.

## Good Works

Formed in 2001, the EDPA Foundation has a long legacy of providing support for industry members and their families through financial assistance during crises, as well as scholarships for creative thinkers and leaders. Since its inception, it has amassed 51 grantors, grown its endowment to more than \$900,000, awarded nearly 100 scholarships to students of industry families, and provided financial and emotional support to more than 150 industry families during times of hardship.

Our industry continues to change in ways that will impact us all. For 65 years, EDPA and its members have been leading the change and participating in the dialogue that shapes and prepares us for the future. If you are not an EDPA member, speak with our members and hear for yourself why EDPA Matters. **E**



**Dasher Lowe**, EDPA executive director, is responsible for delivering value to members and growing the EDPA through recruitment and new initiatives. Previously, he led the OgilvyOne team in Chicago, where he oversaw customer engagement across all Ogilvy clients.





### ABOUT THE EDPA

Founded in 1954, the Experiential Designers and Producers Association (EDPA) is recognized internationally and serves thousands of professional members representing more than 300 corporations across 18 countries. Each year, the EDPA drives industry education programs and professional networking events through our regional chapters. We also bring together members and thought leaders from around the world to Access, the only industry association meeting and event of its kind. Access provides a platform for EDPA members and prospective members alike to share and engage in programs and play at a professional conference unlike any other.

### MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the EDPA is to advance the interests of members engaged in the design, production, and service of exhibits, events, and experiential environments. The success and integrity of our industry will be enhanced through advocacy, communication, education, and good works. The EDPA is the network for leaders in the customer experience industry, and its members combine marketing, design, and production leadership to help organizations create effective face-to-face customer experiences and environments for trade shows, events, corporate environments, museums, retailers, education, and entertainment. For more information, visit [www.edpa.com](http://www.edpa.com).

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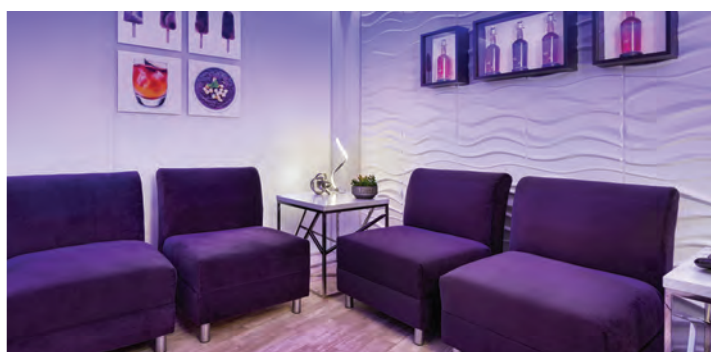


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# In the Beginning

In its 65 years, the Experiential Designers and Producers Association has altered its name and transformed its offerings, but what hasn't changed is its commitment to advancing the cause of face-to-face marketing.

*By Charles Pappas*

When the Experiential Designers and Producers Association (EDPA) was founded in 1954, it was not only a different time but also a different world — one of revolutionary debuts and radical changes. The first nuclear-powered submarine, the USS Nautilus, launched; the initial issue of Sports Illustrated magazine appeared on newsstands; and the first sub-four-minute mile was run by Roger Bannister. The background music for the year was courtesy of Bill Haley and His Comets, whose song, “Rock Around the Clock,” provided the anthem for the fomenting youth rebellion, while ground breaking began for a place called Disneyland.

Like the country itself, the exhibition industry was in a state of flux no less far-reaching. Future president Ronald Reagan served as grand marshal for the Chicago Auto Show, where attendees marveled at the new streamlined Studebaker. Attendees at the National Photo Show focused on Polaroid's instant-picture Land Camera Model 95A. In the meantime, at the 1954 National Association of Music Merchants expo, the Fender Stratocaster electric guitar was launched, priced to sell at \$249.50.

## Origin Story

In these formative years, the majority of exhibit-house owners were designers or carpenters who caught the entrepreneurial itch. Skilled as they were in their trades, however, few possessed the necessary business expertise to truly succeed. Out of their mutual need to learn how to be exhibit-industry experts, shrewd business owners, and savvy industry leaders, the EDPA was



born. But just as pressing to these pioneers as business-management issues were concerns about fair competition, work rules, and marketing. Only the strength in numbers that comes from a dedicated association could surmount the challenges they knew about — and, more importantly, the ones they didn't.

In 1956, the EDPA elected its first president, Norman Hadley. Hadley, whose Buffalo, NY-based company Hadley Exhibits Inc. has worked on projects as diverse as the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History and the Rosa Parks Museum, focused heavily on exhibit designer and fabricator challenges. Leaving an imprint on two or three major issues set the tone for subsequent presidents who followed. Harold Averick,



president from 1960 to 1961, was influential in the formation of the Medical Exhibitors Association, which later evolved into the Healthcare Convention and Exhibitors Association. He also masterminded the first of many EDPA economic surveys that charted the industry's fiscal health throughout the years. Averick's immediate successor, Clarence Murphy, worked on unifying trade show suppliers, while Rudy Speerschneider, in his 1968 to 1969 stint as president, helped kick-start the Exhibit Institute Conference devoted to exhibit design and marketing.

The makeup of EDPA leadership in its first decade generally reflected the demographics of the country back then, when 26 percent of the nation's population was packed into the Northeast, compared to a meager 13

percent for the entire West. That balance began to shift in 1964, when Clifford McKay, hailing from Ohio, became the first president from outside the Northeast region. The geographic growth in the 1960s and 1970s was mirrored in EDPA's own expansion into numerous other issues as diverse as installation and dismantle and promotional marketing. However, the recession that walloped the country between 1973 and 1975, with its crippling double-digit inflation and unemployment, did not detour around the exhibition industry nor the EDPA. By 1977, the association's finances were shaky enough to jeopardize the organization's long-term future. What saved it was the group's defining all-for-one and one-for-all spirit that managed to triumph over potential calamity when



each member company pitched in, contributing \$2,000 to revive the organization and get it back on its feet.

The swift return to solvency enabled EDPA to meet the go-go years of the 1980s head on. Developing and expanding at an almost exponential velocity, the association recognized the need to recruit increasingly specialized segments of the industry into its ranks. Its membership now welcomed account executives, project managers, freight-shipping experts, and portable/modular specialists, among many others, all of which demonstrated not only the increasing importance of the exhibition industry but also its budding sophistication, leaving its ho-hum image of manual labor far behind.

### Leaders of the Pack

If the changes of the previous decades had seemed rapid, those of the next few would appear to move at lightning speed. Expositions such as Comdex, CeBIT, and the annual International Consumer Electronics Show signaled the importance of face-to-face marketing to the burgeoning computer, information, and telecommunication sectors. Accordingly, EDPA's leaders took a telescopic view of their own industry, grasping how the organization would need to expand in breadth and depth to embrace an era of seismic, ceaseless change.

Presidents Donald Fairweather and Thomas Knott raised awareness of museum design as an exhibit component beyond the narrow definition of trade shows and emphasized the nascent modular-exhibit system network in the United States, respectively. The often-neglected niches of fabrics, freight, lighting, graphics, audiovisual, furniture, and even measurement and training services rightly shed their images as second-tier components and emerged as innovative elements in exhibition design and execution. These changes would allow exhibits to step into their own, light years beyond any lingering perception of them as nothing more than bland pipe and drape installations. Instead, they were architectural structures that could be as brilliant as they were temporary.

### Seeing the Future

Just as the exhibition industry maintained its meteoric growth in the 1990s and the 21st century — signified by the number of U.S. convention centers tripling between 1980 and 1996 — the EDPA flourished with equal dazzle. It brought greater awareness to exhibit systems while it nurtured educational issues and debuted its premiere exhibit at EuroShop, the massive retail-industry trade fair. The so-called “good old boys’ club” that admittedly ran EDPA witnessed the permanent fracture in its glass ceiling when Ingrid Boyd became the first female president in 1990, a breakthrough heralding subsequent presidents of her gender, including Sue Renner and Gwen Parsons, and later a run of four women presidents between 2009 and 2018. The seismic changes to the organization were fundamental as well. What might once have been a nuts-

and-bolts assemblage initiated its first college-level designer training in tandem with Auburn University and steered the movement to adopt what was then known as the Underwriters Laboratories’ 2301 standards for safety in exhibit design.

Even with its pacesetting leadership, EDPA did not take a competitive zero-sum approach to the industry, one where its gains would

be seen as a competitor’s loss. Instead, it played a Johnny Appleseed role, encouraging, supporting, and even championing the growth of more than 20 major associations without which the exhibition industry might be unrecognizable. This stellar roster includes the Center for Exhibition Industry Research, the International Association for Exhibition Management, the International Association of Exhibitions and Events, the Exhibit and Event Marketers Association, and even the International Federation of Exhibition and Event Services.

### Building Blocks

Trailblazing as the presidents were during EDPA’s 65 years, they didn’t build the association by themselves. Laboring behind the scenes to effect changes in the industry and push it forward was a who’s who of trade show icons, including Hazel Hayes, Fred Kitzing, Bill





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Haney, Clay Wilkening, Paul Willett, Rich Johnson, Dick Swanby, and Buck and Don Freeman. The seeds planted by these illustrious individuals — among dozens of others toiling selflessly — reaped results when the 20th century wound to a close and the 21st century dawned.

Just as the exhibit industry has grown with shows whose markets may have been unimaginable 65 years ago — witness the Smart Cards Expo, Electronic Cigarette Convention, and Cannabis World Congress and Business Expo, to name just a few — the EDPA branched into efforts that would have been mind-boggling to its founders. Even its original name, the Exhibit Designers and Producers Association, bowed to the times when the organization changed it in 2017 to one that embodies the marketing zeitgeist of the age — the Experiential Designers and Producers Association. Today, it boasts 300 corporate members hailing from 18 countries and regional chapters with an agenda embracing pioneering design, innovative technology, and philanthropic efforts. Meanwhile, the association's certification program, compensation survey, and university affiliation programs at Bemidji State University in Minnesota and the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York all combine to provide education, leadership, and networking opportunities.

Would trade shows have become the promotional powerhouse they are if EDPA had never existed? According to past EDPA president Larry Kulchawik, formerly of Derse Inc., the trade show component of the marketing mix might never have risen to its current state without the passion of the association and the movers and shakers within the creative side of the industry. "EDPA lives on with pride knowing that its members each played a role to push for industry recognition and the power of face-to-face marketing through trade shows and events," says Kulchawik, who served as EDPA president in 1997. "Of the 22 associations that make up the conventions, meetings, and events segments of the \$97 billion industry, EDPA is a shining light that focuses on the core reasons, designs, and strategies for trade shows and events to deliver an experience worth remembering to grow sales and awareness for exhibitors."

There is no crystal ball that can predict what the future may bring during the association's next 65 years, nor what the experiential-design industry will look like in the year 2084. But one thing is certain: When EDPA's future members look back someday, they'll savor their past with the same sense of triumph and pride their predecessors did. Because the EDPA is here to stay. **E**





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Since it was created in 2001, the EDPA Foundation, which is led by executives from all segments of the trade show and events industry, has developed “a legacy of giving” to help sustain the industry and support its workers. The foundation accomplishes its mission through a three-part approach to giving: financial assistance to industry members and their families during crises (which it calls the Good Works program), scholarships for those looking to continue their education, and support for institutions that provide exhibit design programs. “The foundation is the heart and soul of the industry,” says David Walens, chair of the foundation and president of Exploring Inc. “It is the charity arm of the association that is uniquely focused on the people in our industry.”

While the foundation has been supporting the industry since it was founded, it really matured around 2013 when Bill Haney, former CEO and current chairman at Derse Inc., became the foundation’s chair. Under Haney’s leadership, the EDPA Foundation brought a renewed focus to its mission and kick-started an endowment to ensure it would be able to continue providing support well into the future. In 2014, the board set an ambitious goal of raising \$1 million for the endowment through a grantor program, where exhibit houses and suppliers annually donate \$1,000, \$5,000, or \$10,000 per year based on the size of their organizations. To date, the program has amassed 51 grantors. As such, the endowment has swelled over the past five years, and it is forecasted to

reach the \$1 million mark by the end of 2019. “The endowment is so important because it ensures that we can continue helping industry families in need even during bad economic times,” Haney says. And for companies or individuals who want to support the foundation but might be unable to make sustaining contributions, the organization recently added a page to its website where individual, one-time donations can be made.

The board — which focuses on ensuring that 95 percent of all donations are funneled to the places they’re needed most — is thrilled to have almost reached the endowment goal because that means the foundation can allocate more funding to deserving recipients. “We can only achieve that rate of giving because the board and members at large volunteer a lot of time and hard work,” Haney says, noting that the EDPA Foundation uses no more than 5 percent of funds for overhead and other expenses.

#### Helping Hands

The most visible aspect of the EDPA Foundation’s efforts is its Good Works programs, which provide financial and emotional support to industry workers and their families that are going through crises. Through fundraising efforts, the foundation has provided more than \$1 million in assistance to those in need. The oldest and most recognizable of those fundraising events is

## EDPA Foundation Creates a Legacy of Giving

The EDPA Foundation’s three-pronged approach to giving — good works, scholarships, and support of higher-education programs — aims to sustain member workers in need and ensure the health of the trade show and events industry well into the future. *By Ben Barclay*





the Randy Smith Memorial Golf Classic (RSMGC) in Atlanta each fall, which began in 1995 after Randy Smith, a project manager with Atlanta-based exhibit house Ideas Inc., was killed in an automobile accident on his way home from a trade show. "I was astounded by the amount of support we were shown by the exhibit industry at large that first year," says Rich Johnson, senior account executive for Renaissance Management Inc. and co-founder/event director of the RSMGC.

All the money raised the first two years of the event went to help support Smith's wife and two young children. In 1997, the organizers of the RSMGC decided to open the giving to other industry families that were facing tragedies or insurmountable medical bills. Now in its 25th year, the RSMGC and its ancillary events, which include smaller golf and bowling tournaments around the nation, have helped more than 150 families.

Also known as "The Randy," RSMGC has had other benefits as well. "The climate in 1995 was fiercely competitive with a lot of hard feelings among competitors," Johnson says. "The event was a place for everyone to lay down their swords for a good cause, and that goodwill has carried over into the industry as well. I honestly believe we've all been a little kinder toward each other because of The Randy."

Although the RSMGC existed before the creation of the EDPA Foundation, the two organizations recognized each other as working toward the same goals for the same people. So beginning in 2013, the EDPA Foundation began investing in the golfing event — both financially and emotionally. "The growth of the RSMGC the past several years can be directly attributed to the mutually beneficial partnership we have with the EDPA Foundation," Johnson says. "We are entering our sixth year working with the foundation, and we couldn't be happier with the partnership we've created."

#### **Focused on the Future**

The foundation's two other giving initiatives focus on education. The EDPA Foundation began a scholarship program in 2004, to which exhibit- and event-industry professionals and their immediate family members can apply for financial assistance to continue their education. Since then, the foundation has provided 87 individuals with scholarships. Recipients have gone on to earn two- and four-year degrees in fields ranging from teaching and engineering to medicine and design. "It is our way to give back to the employees who work so hard in our industry," Walens says.

The final facet of the EDPA Foundation's giving focuses on supporting institutions that help prepare young professionals



## RANDY SMITH MEMORIAL GOLF CLASSIC

“ The Randy Smith Memorial Golf Classic organization has been a **true blessing** to my family. The board of directors, donors, and members of the exhibit industry are some of the most generous and gracious human beings you will ever meet. The gift from the organization helps my special-needs son with his medical bills and equipment needs. We are forever grateful! ”



— Irish Bender, executive assistant, human resources, MC<sup>2</sup>

## COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS

“ Most of my family has worked in the trade show industry for many years, both on and off the show floor. I am attending the University of Nevada Las Vegas for history and Asian studies and will be graduating with my bachelor’s degree this December. The EDPA scholarship helped me pay my tuition, which allowed me to put more of my attention on my education and gave me the **opportunity** to study in China in 2017. ”

— Anthony Peerenboom, student, University of Nevada Las Vegas



## UNIVERSITY AFFILIATION

“ EDPA sponsored Bemidji State University’s booth at EXHIBITORLIVE, where we students could **network** and sell our best products — ourselves. In fact, it’s where I met my first employer. ”



— Phoebe Lee Mathius, 3-D designer, Exhibit Inc.

to hit the ground running when they first land jobs at exhibit houses and event-related companies. In 2007, the EDPA Foundation began working with the Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT) in Manhattan to develop a three-semester-long master’s program in exhibit and experience design. The foundation curates the program’s academic curriculum while FIT delivers the content and confers the degree.

In addition to its affiliation with FIT, the foundation supports Bemidji State University (BSU) in Minnesota, which offers an undergraduate degree in exhibit design. The foundation provides both institutions with financing to distribute scholarships of their own to students in their programs. Furthermore, foundation members lend their expertise to the programs by conducting educational seminars and evaluating the students’ portfolios, which provides industry insiders the opportunity to meet and assess the young talent and vice versa.

Beginning in 2010, Randal Acker, president of Exhibitor Media Group, EDPA committee member, and adjunct professor at BSU, saw an opportunity for the foundation to further support those students by adding an EDPA-sponsored booth at EXHIBITORLIVE. At the show, students from both FIT and BSU take turns staffing the exhibit, providing them the opportunity to create connections with exhibit houses looking to hire new designers. Students are also provided rare behind-the-scenes tours and orientations with company executives for a deep dive into the industry. “It’s a way to make our next generation of designers visible, as well as provide them a firsthand account of the inner workings of the trade show world,” Acker says. And the foundation’s efforts are paying off, as many of the graduates have been hired into industry firms.

For nearly two decades, the EDPA Foundation, along with the RSMGC, has transformed into the most important charitable arm of the industry, creating a legacy of giving that seems certain to grow. “The future of the EDPA Foundation is incredibly bright,” Walens says. “As the endowment matures, it will allow us to continue our ‘good works’ in perpetuity.” **E**

*For additional information about the EDPA Foundation’s charitable initiatives — and how you can get involved or donate — visit [www.edpa.com](http://www.edpa.com) or email David Walens, president of Exploring Inc., at [dwalens@exploring.com](mailto:dwalens@exploring.com)*



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# Access 2019

**A**ccess is the Experiential Designer and Producers Association's annual conference, which focuses on creating branded experiences and environments for memorable face-to-face engagement. The program offers something for everyone involved in the design and production of exhibits and other experiential-marketing campaigns, including product specialists, designers, sales and marketing teams, C-level managers, and more. Each year, the event combines relevant content and stellar keynote speakers with unparalleled networking opportunities. The 2019 Access conference will take place at the J.W. Marriott Starr Pass in Tucson, AZ, Dec. 4 – 6.

## Outdoor Excursions

In addition to the event's annual EDPA Golf Open Scramble, each Access conference offers optional opening-day networking events that take attendees outside the ballroom and into the great outdoors. Past activities have included fishing excursions, ecological tours, and more, providing participants with a casual opportunity to connect with new colleagues, reinforce existing relationships, and start off the conference on the right foot. This year, organizers are also planning a tennis tournament.



Join the celebration at our  
annual EDPA Access meeting

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J.W. Marriott Starr Pass in Tucson, AZ

Register at [edpa.com/access](http://edpa.com/access)

## Receptions and Galas

The annual Welcome Reception is like a family reunion for the experiential design industry, as longtime attendees reconnect and newcomers forge new friendships. Access also hosts a black-tie-optional Presidents Gala, which follows the aptly titled Not-So-Silent Auction that raises funds for the EDPA Foundation. The gala is a celebration of what EDPA and its members have accomplished throughout the year and includes an unforgettable dinner, the presentation of EDPA's prestigious awards, and addresses by both the association's outgoing and incoming presidents.

## Forums and Educational Sessions

Each Access conference includes a number of discussion forums that address the issues that are most important to members, including everything from experiential

engagement and design thinking to management-related challenges. Additional educational content presented at Access runs the gamut from the annual State of the Industry Interactive Data Session (which sheds light on the economic health of the experiential design industry using insights from the Center for Exhibition Industry Research Index, as well as member surveys) to breakout sessions on design trends, international exhibiting, and more. Access is also known for hosting insightful and inspiring keynote speakers who discuss a wide range of topics, such as experiential learning, sound design, employee engagement, the science of creativity, and emerging technologies.

## Supplier Showcase

EDPA members do business with other EDPA members, and the Supplier Showcase enables companies to spotlight their new product and service offerings in a relaxed exhibit hall that helps them reconnect with clients and start conversations with new prospects. With both snack breaks and lunches held within the Supplier Showcase area, the space becomes a hub of engagement and the birthplace of many fruitful business partnerships.

## Chapter Challenge

Each Access conference ends with the annual Chapter Challenge, where members show support for their respective regional chapters by participating in lighthearted team activities. Whether you're an active chapter participant or just a passive cheerleader, there's plenty of fun (and cocktails) to go around.

*For more information on Access 2019, visit [www.edpa.com/access](http://www.edpa.com/access).*



1954-2019



## ***Congratulations***

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# Fighting the Good Fight

Through partnerships with other industry organizations and its own internal efforts, EDPA is tackling the issues and championing the causes most relevant to its members. *By Brian Dukerschein*

In addition to its many education and networking events, the Experiential Designers and Producers Association addresses its mission to advance the interests of its members by advocating on their behalf regarding issues ranging from infrastructure funding to developing the next generation of industry leaders. “Since its inception in 1954, EDPA’s membership — as well as its mission — has grown considerably, and our advocacy efforts have expanded far beyond the expectations of our founders,” says Chris Griffin, president of Crew Inc. and chair of EDPA’s Advocacy and Future Workforce Committee. Here, then, is a summary of the EDPA’s recent advocacy endeavors.

## Global Exhibitions Day

On June 5, more than 120 delegates from several industry organizations met in Washington, DC, for the fourth annual Global Exhibitions Day, coordinated by the Global Association of the Exhibition Industry (UFI) and the International Association of Exhibitions and Events (IAEE). The contingent, which included the largest number of EDPA members to date, met with lawmakers on Capitol Hill to discuss a number of industry concerns.

During these face-to-face meetings with national leaders, EDPA reps and their peers advocated for investing in the country’s dated and congested transportation infrastructure, including airports and highways, which has been a growing challenge in facilitating trade shows from coast to coast. Additional meetings revolved around



**A large contingent of EDPA members went to Washington, DC, to meet with lawmakers and discuss industry concerns during the fourth annual Global Exhibitions Day.**

securing support for H.R. 1996 (the Secure Travel Partnership Act) and H.R. 2187 (the JOLT Act of 2019), two bills intended to stimulate international business travel to the United States by updating existing legislation and strengthening programs designed to bolster inbound global visitors.

One such program in jeopardy is Brand USA, which promotes the United States overseas as a business and tourist destination.

Despite the fact that the program is financed at no cost to taxpayers and, per an Oxford Economics Ltd. study, has generated a high return on investment, President Trump’s budget proposal calls for eliminating all of its funding. “Programs such as Brand USA are vital to everyone in our industry: exhibit producers, show organizers, and exhibiting companies,” Griffin says. “If international travel to the U.S. is stymied, we’ll all feel the pinch.”

## New SOC Code

Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) codes are used by the Department of Labor’s Bureau of Labor Statistics to categorize myriad occupations and track changes in median pay, number of workers in the industry, job outlooks, and other employment data. This information is vital for industry associations, as it allows them to monitor the size, stability, and incomes of their workforce on a national scale. SOC codes are also used for everything from job postings and industry recruitment to helping high-school guidance counselors recommend career paths to graduating students.



## Honor Roll

During Access 2019, EDPA will present its five prestigious annual awards along with the new International Collaboration Award. Nominations are made exclusively by EDPA members, and the Eddie Award is the only prize open to nonmembers in the industry.



### Ambassador Award

The Ambassador Award acknowledges an individual for outstanding service or contributions to EDPA and the industry as a whole. Honorees are EDPA member who have gone above and beyond to promote the association.



### Chapter of the Year

This award recognizes an outstanding chapter for its diligence in promoting EDPA. Entrants are evaluated on several criteria, such as membership, programming, fundraising, student assistance, and creativity.



### Eddie Award

The Eddie Award celebrates outstanding creative achievement for self-promotion within the experiential/event industry across five categories, including small exhibits, larger exhibits, and end-to-end customer experiences.



### Hazel Hays Award

The highest honor bestowed by EDPA, the Hazel Hays Award celebrates a member for outstanding individual contributions to the experiential/exhibit industry.



### International Collaboration Award

The International Collaboration Award recognizes companies that, through their EDPA membership, have formed international partnerships to deliver outstanding work.



### Michael R. Westcott Designer of the Year

This award commends a designer who contributes his or her talents and personal time to enhancing the professional standards and innovation of experiential/exhibit designers.

Unfortunately, the existing SOC system isn't giving exhibit designers and producers a fair shake.

"Our industry is currently classified in the Accommodations grouping, along with hotels and the like, so that doesn't give us accurate information," Griffin says. "IAEE was instrumental in creating a new SOC code for Meeting, Convention, and Event Planners, which is a step in the right direction." As such, the EDPA is currently working alongside IAEE and other industry groups to lobby the Department of Labor to create a new SOC designation that will result in more accurate data and aid in attracting job seekers to the field.

### Future Workforce

The EDPA is committed to fostering the next generation of exhibit designers and producers by supporting budding talent. Affiliation programs are already in place at Bemidji State University in Minnesota and the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York. Through these programs, exhibit-design students are invited to EXHIBITORLIVE to present their portfolios to prospective employers, meet with EDPA members, and get a behind-the-scenes tour of the exhibit hall. Several EDPA members also participate in portfolio reviews on the college campuses and offer students internships and academic scholarships. The EDPA has even hosted competitions in which students submit proposals for the association's exhibits at global events such as EuroShop. "The EDPA's affiliation with Bemidji and FIT has been incredibly beneficial for both students and our members, many of whom hire recent graduates," Griffin says. "In fact, we're currently looking at expanding the program by bringing it to higher-education institutions in each of our chapters around the country."

Recognizing that the industry's labor demands extend far beyond exhibit design, the EDPA is also focusing on recruiting job seekers with varied skill sets. "Our members need workers at every level of their organizations, from forklift operators and carpenters to drafters and installation supervisors," Griffin says. "There are so many job opportunities in our industry, and the EDPA will be reaching out to trade schools to make sure that students know our members have positions that need to be filled." ■

*For more information about the EDPA's advocacy initiatives, contact Chris Griffin, Advocacy and Future Workforce Committee chair, at [cgriffin@crewxp.com](mailto:cgriffin@crewxp.com).*



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To all the people who have worked hard over these past 65 years to make the EDPA what it is today - **thank you.**



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# EDPA Certification Program: The Exhibit Industry's Stamp of Approval

**V**etting exhibit-industry suppliers is a little bit easier thanks to the Experiential Designers and Producers Association. Its EDPA Certification Program recognizes exhibit-industry organizations based on business integrity, capabilities, and operational practices, essentially providing the association's stamp of approval to those firms that pass muster. By employing this tool, exhibit managers can rest assured that certified companies have been fully vetted and vital information has been verified. Particularly during the request for proposal (RFP) process, this knowledge can then free up exhibit managers to focus a bit less on each company's good standing, office locations, international capabilities, etc., and a bit more on the design talent and range of production/fabrication services each firm brings to the table.

The EDPA Certification Program was established in 2014 in response to an industry survey that revealed exhibitors had a strong desire for more transparency and consistency during the RFP process. Many respondents indicated that they longed for a vetting practice that would validate company financials, location capabilities, etc., thereby allowing them to focus more on



**As of Sept. 1, 2019,  
the following firms have  
earned EDPA Certification.**

## 2020 Exhibits

Acer Exhibits & Events  
CenterPoint Marketing  
CEP Exhibits  
Elevation3D  
Exhibit Concepts  
ExpoDisplays  
Graphicolor Exhibits  
Group Delphi  
Hamilton Exhibits  
Hill & Partners  
Idea International  
Mirror Show Management  
Moose Exhibits  
ProExhibits

how agency deliverables met their needs. As a result of this initial study, the EDPA worked with Exhibit Surveys Inc. (now a division of Freeman) to query a small group of impactful brand and event managers as well as to query more than 100 such marketing professionals to determine which factors they most wanted authenticated via an objective third party. Given this directive, the association developed the EDPA Certification Program, which verifies applicant companies based on everything from disaster-recovery plans and post-show billing policies to confidentiality practices and senior management's level of experience. The primary goal of the program is to ensure that the right questions are being asked to assess potential partners, that vital information is not being withheld, and that an in-depth understanding of the capabilities and scale of each organization can be readily determined.

To be eligible for certification, applicants must be EDPA members in good standing and must submit a completed, comprehensive application along with substantial documentation. A third party, BPA iCompli Sustainability Assurance (a division of BPA Worldwide Inc.), then confirms the data submitted.



The certification process ensures that companies demonstrate and promote ethical business practices, exhibit- and event-industry experience and participation, operational methodology, fiscal responsibility, and environmental stewardship.

Assuming that the applicant meets the standards and practices approved by the EDPA, the firm is then certified. But once a company receives certification, it must apply for renewal every two years. This process involves additional verification documentation, such as business and credit-risk reports, customer score cards, insurance certificates, and more.

To better understand how an exhibitor might utilize this tool, consider this example. Let's say you're an exhibit manager that plans to issue RFPs for a new booth, and your procurement department demands that the RFP include questions about each responding firm's number of locations. More likely than not, however, these initial queries aren't followed by critical probes to determine exactly what each location offers. For instance, are all locations production facilities or are some merely sales offices? Do various locales offer only warehousing or graphic printing? Are some tiny offices and others massive operations? How many people are employed at each office, and what are their levels of experience? The EDPA Certification Program not only asks these questions but also verifies them via applicant-provided documentation such as floor plans, pictures, lease documentation, etc.

Exhibit managers, however, aren't the only benefactors. According to Michael McMahon, president and

## Eight-Step Certification Process

The certification process includes the following chronological steps. For a more detailed explanation and to start the application process, visit [www.edpa.com/join#certification](http://www.edpa.com/join#certification).

- 1 Membership** — To be eligible for certification, the applicant must be an EDPA member in good standing.
- 2 Initiation** — Applicants must contact EDPA's member services coordinator to obtain an active PDF application and remit the following fees: a \$500 application fee, and a \$2,000 certification fee for two locations (plus \$100 for each additional location).
- 3 Application** — After completing the application and gathering the necessary documentation, applicants need to submit all materials electronically directly to BPA iCompli Sustainability Assurance, a division of BPA Worldwide Inc.
- 4 Review** — BPA iCompli then reviews the application and documentation, a process that can take up to 30 days. The third-party organization may request additional information or clarification.
- 5 Certification Awarded** — If certification is awarded, the EDPA sends a certification letter to the recipient along with a press-release kit, which can aid the recipient's marketing efforts. The EDPA also lists the recipient company in its certification directory and notifies EXHIBITOR magazine, which periodically announces certified companies and identifies certified companies that advertise in its Find It – Marketplace.
- 6 Certification Denied** — If certification is not achieved, applicants have up to 30 days to respond, to provide any requested information or materials, and to pay an additional \$500 fee. If certification is denied at the end of the 30-day period, companies are then eligible to reapply and begin the process anew.
- 7 Renewal** — Certified companies must update and/or reapply for renewal every two years at a cost of \$1,500.
- 8 Transcript Release** — Once awarded certification, companies can request a copy of submitted application items (e.g., location info, customer score results, etc.) to distribute to potential clients or include in the request for proposal process. Such requests may require applicable fees.

## Data Requirements

**EDPA Certification applicants must provide all of the following data during the certification process.**

### Information to be Verified by a Third Party

- ☐ Locations
- ☐ Union Contracts
- ☐ Financial Status
- ☐ Years in Business
- ☐ Certificates of Insurance
- ☐ Client References

### Additional Information to be Reviewed

- ☐ Ownership
- ☐ Financial Stats/Audit Processes
- ☐ Confidentiality Policies
- ☐ Disaster-Recovery Plans
- ☐ Corporate Standards
- ☐ Social Media and Brochures
- ☐ Senior Management Experience
- ☐ Project/Account Management
- ☐ Organizational Structures
- ☐ Customer-Service Procedures
- ☐ Safety Standards
- ☐ Quality-Control Standards

### Data for Informational Purposes Only

*(Not used for certification evaluation)*

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tax ID                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Technology Investment        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business Type                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Production Investment        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Marketing Policy              | <input type="checkbox"/> Training Investment          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Legal Disclosure              | <input type="checkbox"/> Quality Certifications       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Industry Participation        | <input type="checkbox"/> Company/Staff Certifications |
| <input type="checkbox"/> General/Industry Education    | <input type="checkbox"/> Recycling Plan               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Awards/Recognition            | <input type="checkbox"/> Sustainability Program       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Minority-Owned Status         |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Internship Programs           |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Continuing-Education Programs |   |

CEO of Hill & Partners (an EDPA Certified firm), "Everyone wins when a program like this is implemented. Exhibit providers have a clear path to achieve certification through a number of performance criteria, and those brands that choose to work with certified companies can be confident there will be no surprises."

Once a firm earns its certification, it's able to display a logo reflecting its hard-earned designation on its website, in various marketing and promotional collateral, and so on. Furthermore, it can provide portions of its approved application to potential clients. In effect, certification assembles critical, often-requested company documentation in a central locale that can be easily distributed in a timely manner.

Donna Shultz, president and CEO of Webster, NY-based Mirror Show Management, the very first experience-design agency to receive the designation, says that certification also acts as a sales-generation tool, affirming the firm's good standing with potential clients and possibly decreasing the amount of time clients spend researching company factors during the RFP process. "The EDPA Certification seal has given our organization tremendous credibility for brands seeking a trusted exhibit and event partner, and it has strengthened our position as an authority in the industry," Shultz says. **E**

*For more information about the requirements of the EDPA Certification Program and the full list of the 15 companies that have achieved certification to date, view the preceding sidebar or visit [www.edpa.com/join#certification](http://www.edpa.com/join#certification).*

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Robert Laarhoven taking the reigns as President from Larry Kulchawik in 1997. He was the first member from the modular systems division considered for the Presidency.

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In the early 1990s, Robert Laarhoven, now President of beMatrix® USA, and some other pioneers, worked with the EDPA Board of Directors to create a custom modular division. In 1997 Robert became the first national President from the systems world. The EDPA has held a special place in beMatrix®'s heart, even before there was a beMatrix®, and continues decades after that term as President, as Robert and beMatrix® both work hard to support the industry and the EDPA.

Congratulations. Here's to 65 more.



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**Lee Knight**

Founder & CEO

EXHIBITOR Media Group

1990 Recipient of the EDPA Hazel Hayes Award

# EDPA is Everywhere

In addition to EDPA's national events and member benefits, nine regional chapters — and a separate membership group for international firms — provide a wide range of educational and networking opportunities, thereby extending the value proposition to your own backyard.



UPPER MIDWEST CHAPTER

## ■ Upper Midwest Chapter

Serving Minnesota and parts of Wisconsin, Iowa, and Illinois, EDPA's Upper Midwest Chapter has roughly 25 member companies and hosts three primary events each year. The winter meeting, held in February at a member company's facility, showcases the work of exhibit-design students from Bemidji State University. Meanwhile, the chapter's spring and fall events often include networking, education, and tours of Twin Cities landmarks. What's more, the chapter's annual golf tournament celebrated its 50th anniversary this year. To learn more about this chapter, visit [www.umedpa.org](http://www.umedpa.org) or email chapter president Jennifer Hermanson, senior account manager, CenterPoint Marketing, at [jhermanson@centpoint.com](mailto:jhermanson@centpoint.com).

## ■ Southern California Chapter

Founded in 2012 and comprising members from Santa Barbara to San Diego, EDPA's Southern California Chapter attracts about 30 attendees to each of the four educational meetings it holds throughout the year. A growing and vibrant community for trade

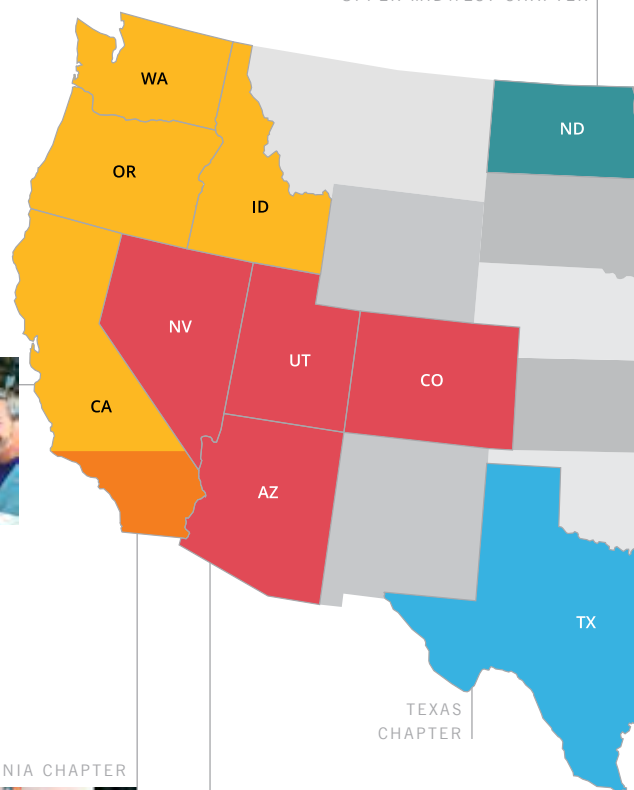


NORTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER

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LAS VEGAS CHAPTER



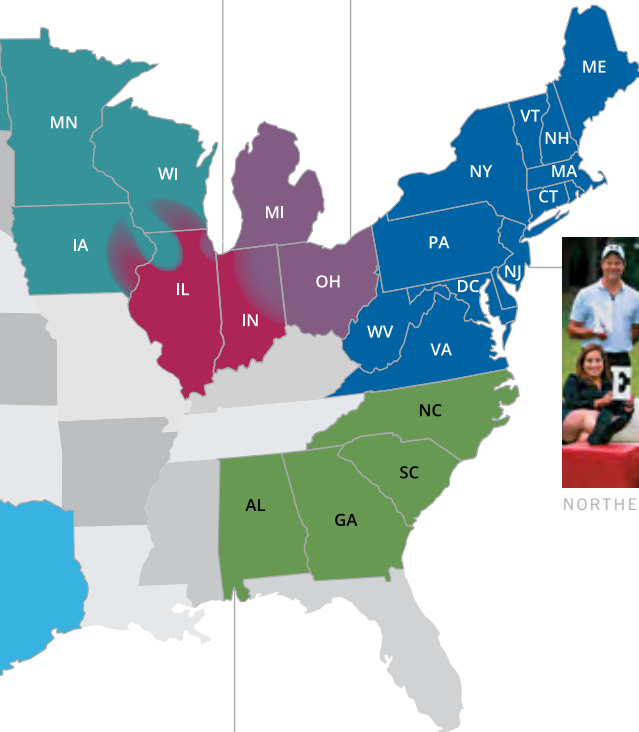




MIDWEST (CHICAGO) CHAPTER



GREAT LAKES CHAPTER



NORTHEAST CHAPTER

SOUTHEAST CHAPTER



show professionals based in the nation's largest market of exhibition builders and suppliers west of Chicago, this chapter holds an annual bowling tournament and hosted its first Randy Smith Memorial Golf Classic in April. To learn more about this chapter, visit [www.edpasocal.com](http://www.edpasocal.com) or email chapter president Vince Battaglia, president and CEO, The Tradeshow Calendar, at [vince@thetradeshowcalendar.com](mailto:vince@thetradeshowcalendar.com).

## ■ Las Vegas Chapter

Serving the city of Las Vegas and the Southwest region, the Las Vegas Chapter currently includes more than 20 member companies and recently obtained 501(c)(3) status. The recipient of the EDPA's 2018 Large Chapter of the Year award, it hosts a New Year kickoff mixer, the EDPA breakfast during *EXHIBITORLIVE*, an annual Earth Day picnic, regular outings to the city's minor league baseball stadium, and the Tim Provo Blood Drive every October. Members also organize a pair of annual food drives for low-income and homeless students and families, and the chapter's yearly Las Vegas Scholarship Golf Classic — which has raised more than \$20,000 two years in a row — donates all proceeds to the EDPA Foundation's scholarship program. To learn more about the Las Vegas Chapter, visit [www.edpalv.com](http://www.edpalv.com) or email chapter president Mike Sunseri, West Coast sales manager, Display Supply & Lighting Inc., at [edpalvc@gmail.com](mailto:edpalvc@gmail.com).

## ■ Northeast Chapter

The Northeast Chapter of EDPA has roughly 300 members and hosts events as far east as Rochester, NY, and as far south as New York City. Annual events include a kickoff cocktail reception at *EXHIBITORLIVE*; a Rally at the Alley bowling event, which raises money for industry members in need; a networking event at a Rochester Red Wings baseball game; a charity golf tournament; a chapter

meeting at EDPA Access; and a chapter event hosted at the Fashion Institute of Technology. The recipient of three consecutive Small Chapter of the Year awards, the Northeast Chapter hopes to expand its membership throughout the Mid-Atlantic region. To learn more about this chapter, visit [www.edpanortheast.com](http://www.edpanortheast.com) or email chapter president Michael Vallone, assistant creative director and senior exhibit designer, Hill & Partners, at [mvallone@hillpartners.com](mailto:mvallone@hillpartners.com).

### ■ Great Lakes Chapter

Primarily serving exhibit- and event-industry companies in Michigan, Indiana, Ohio, and Illinois, the Great Lakes Chapter was founded in 2019 and held a kickoff social that attracted 10 participants, as well as a membership drive in August. This young and motivated group of EDPA members is excited to make a difference on a local level and encourages exhibit houses and other industry suppliers to join them in the coming years. To learn more about this chapter, email chapter president Kevin Sacharski, director of account services, VizCom Media, at [kevin@vizcommedia.com](mailto:kevin@vizcommedia.com).

### ■ Texas Chapter

While not yet open to members, the youngest of EDPA's regional chapters will eventually serve exhibit- and event-industry companies throughout the Lone Star State. A trio of enthusiastic EDPA members is working hard on getting the newly formed Texas Chapter off the ground and hopes to welcome members by the end of 2019. To learn more about this chapter or volunteer your support, email [texasedpa@gmail.com](mailto:texasedpa@gmail.com).

### ■ Southeast Chapter

Founded in 2003 and serving exhibit- and event-related companies in Georgia, Alabama, South Carolina, and North Carolina, the EDPA's Southeast Chapter boasts

## EDPA International

Comprising members from exhibit- and event-related companies in nearly 20 countries, EDPA International focuses on collaborating with global associations, e.g. the International Federation of Exhibition and Event Services (IFES), the Event Supplier and Services Association (ESSA), and others, to foster the sharing of information on topics ranging from education to advocacy. Its members meet at events such as EDPA Access, EXHIBITORLIVE, and EuroShop to develop mutually beneficial partnerships. New this year, EDPA International will present the International Collaboration Award at EDPA Access to recognize the value of EDPA members that work together on global projects. For more info on EDPA International, email committee chair Jamie Zavoral-Brown, director of business development, North America, Bray Leino Events, at [jzavoral-brown@brayleino.co.uk](mailto:jzavoral-brown@brayleino.co.uk).

750 members and hosts two educational meetings and multiple fundraisers such as its annual Get Out of the Gutter bowling tournament, which benefits the Randy Smith Memorial. The chapter also participates in the United Way of Greater Atlanta's Shoebox Project, which helps fill shoeboxes with toiletries that are given to those in need throughout the Greater Atlanta area. To learn more about this chapter, email chapter president Sandra Braun, national accounts director, Nth Degree, at [sbraun@nthdegree.com](mailto:sbraun@nthdegree.com).

### ■ Midwest (Chicago) Chapter

The Midwest (Chicago) Chapter numbers 200 member companies, 10 board members, and 35 sponsor companies. Chapter members begin each year with an educational meeting that pulls in speakers from the previous year's Access conference so those who couldn't attend the national event can benefit from its content. The chapter also collaborates with other Chicagoland meetings and events associations to plan the annual Industry Xchange, which provides attendees with education and information on trends and issues facing the industry. Additionally, members participate in the Chicago Randy Charity Golf Outing and the Strikes and Scares charity bowling event. To learn more about this chapter, visit [www.edpamidwest.org](http://www.edpamidwest.org) or email chapter president Jackie Hake, president and creative director, Lighthouse Exhibits, at [jackie@lighthouseexhibits.com](mailto:jackie@lighthouseexhibits.com).

### ■ Northern California Chapter

Representing member companies north of Santa Barbara, CA, and in Idaho, Oregon, and Washington, the Northern California Chapter attracts around 40 participants to its annual meetings and events. Recurring activities include the NorCal EDPA Golf & Poker Tournament. For more information on this chapter, contact chapter president Melinda Stewart, owner of OnSite Exhibitor Service, at [melinda@exhibitorservice.com](mailto:melinda@exhibitorservice.com).





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"From all of us at ECI, we congratulate EDPA on 65 years of championing the trade show and experiential industry. It was a great honor to help advance the association's mission as the 2016 EDPA President. We share EDPA's focus on the prosperity of member businesses engaged in the design, production, service of exhibits, events and experiential environments. Here's to many more years of education, networking, and advocacy!"

**Kelli Glasser**  
President and CEO of Exhibit Concepts



[exhibitconcepts.com](http://exhibitconcepts.com)



Over the course of 65 years, the Experiential Designers and Producers Association has had dozens of leaders assume the role of president. EXHIBITOR sat down with current president Dave Flory of Cort Trade Show & Event Furnishings to discuss his start in the exhibit industry, the highlights of his year as EDPA president, and the challenges he anticipates the industry will have to grapple with in order to remain a vibrant and relevant marketing channel.

**EXHIBITOR Magazine:** What initially led you to a career in the exhibit and event industry?

**Dave Flory:** Cort had recently started a trade show division, and in 2002 we launched an event piece. My neighbor at the time was Jim Milanowski, a well-known designer in the industry. So I crossed the backyard and asked him, "Hey Jim, tell me about this trade show and events industry. Should I leave the commercial side of my business and get involved in it?" And he said, "Aw, man. It's so much fun. Yes, it's a really great place to be."

**EM:** Now that you've been in trade shows and events for 17 years, would you say his analysis was accurate?

**DF:** Well, he didn't tell me how much work it was going to be. But yes, it's a great industry to be a part of.

**EM:** Most exhibit houses and suppliers to the industry are at least familiar with the EDPA. So when you're speaking with nonmember companies, how do you convince them to consider joining the association?

**DF:** When I talk to companies about becoming members, they often ask, "Why would I want to join an organization filled with all of my competitors?" My message is that EDPA is a place where all of us lay down our swords. Clearly, we're all going after similar customer bases, but if you get involved in the organization, you're going to get more out of it than you put in. Our members are truly willing to share and help each other out, whether that means discussing trends or ways in which we can innovate as an industry. I think getting over the fear that you'd be giving up the secret to your success by sharing it with somebody else is far overshadowed by the good you're going to get as a member of the association.

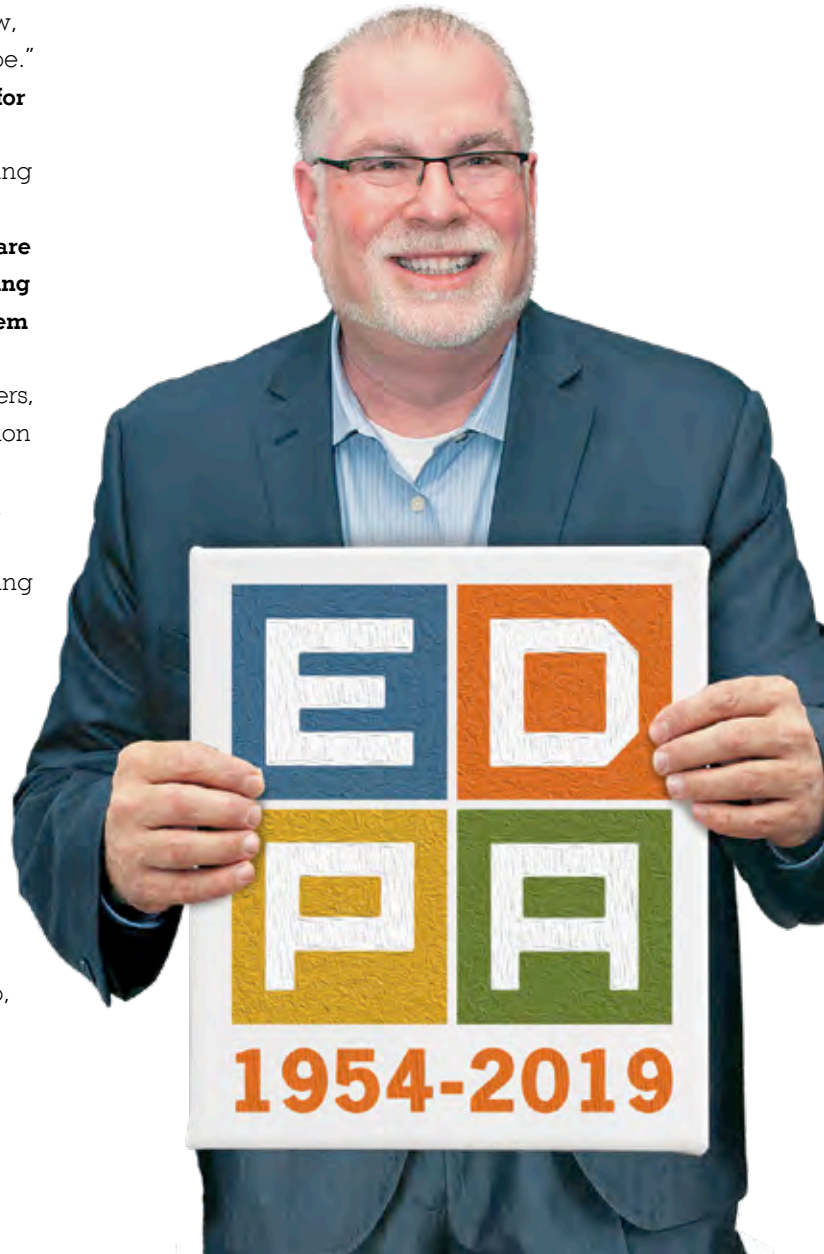
**EM:** Are there any other misconceptions about EDPA?

**DF:** The association has been around for 65 years, and initially it was kind of viewed as an old boys' club, as well as a place where just exhibit-house owners got together to work through business problems. For example, many of the early members were smaller

# A Presidential Perspective

An interview with the current president of the Experiential Designers and Producers Association, Dave Flory, director of eastern region sales for Cort Trade Show & Event Furnishings.

*By Travis Stanton*



companies, and if they were based on the East Coast, they needed someone on the West Coast who could help them serve their clients. Over time, that has expanded to where we now offer that same type of thing internationally, where U.S. companies can build relationships with EDPA International members. But one of the biggest changes is that our members aren't just smaller companies anymore. Many of those founding organizations are now very large companies, and many of them still participate in EDPA because the vision of what the association does these days is far greater. Now we're looking at how we can advocate on behalf of the industry as a whole and do more in terms of good works.

**EM: You mentioned the "old boys' club." How do you feel EDPA has changed, given the fact there are now more women in the industry, especially on the client side?**

**DF:** I think you can look at the leadership of EDPA over the last couple of years. It's no longer just a bunch of guys. EDPA has a lot of female members, including many entrepreneurial women who are running the business of exhibit houses. Plus, half of EDPA's Executive Council members are female, so I think it's just a lot more inclusive and diverse all around.

**EM: Is there a particular achievement that you hope will be your legacy when you pass on the title of EDPA president later this year?**

**DF:** Initially, I had hoped that my year would be about how we really put the new "E" — experiential — in EDPA, as we continue to transition from being the Exhibit Designers and Producers Association to the Experiential Designers and Producers Association. But that's really going to be a longer-term proposition. I think the stamp I've put on EDPA — and will continue to put on EDPA — is that we're developing the chapters into more vibrant, healthy units that ultimately make EDPA membership more valuable. Rather than just having a national conference once a year, there are now opportunities for people to interact with EDPA throughout the year in their regional chapters. So if I was going to name one thing as my primary contribution, that's something I've been really passionate about.

**EM: The EDPA is heavily involved with Bemidji State University and the Fashion Institute of Technology through its University Affiliation program. Why is that involvement so important to our industry?**

**DF:** Well, BSU and FIT are the two most well-founded and longstanding partnerships that EDPA has with

regard to educational organizations. The number of students who come out of those programs and into the industry is quite noteworthy. So part of our focus right now is expanding that. For example, we've been working with the Department of Labor, and we met with them at Global Exhibitions Day in hopes of not just looking at universities but also focusing on the trades. We want to make sure people are aware of this industry. If they're good with their hands and want to work in a shop, they should understand the opportunities that the trade show and events industry can afford them. Chris Griffin is heading our Future Workforce committee and is doing a great job working with our chapters to identify other schools in their regions. The goal is that all chapters will eventually have at least one school in their areas that

**"As an association, we will always be looking for more opportunities to help our members become better at what they do so that we can continue to grow the industry together."**

they can engage with in much the same way the Upper Midwest chapter engages with Bemidji State to develop a new generation of talent.

**EM: Aside from EDPA's annual Access event, individual chapter events, and the association's presence at EXHIBITORLIVE, what other touchpoints exist for members?**

**DF:** We've recently gone to a twice-a-year event format. Access is our big multiday conference, but we just executed the second year of our road-show event called Engage. Roughly 100 people gathered in Chicago for that one-day event this year. I think it's important for EDPA to bring content to where people can easily access it. For somebody to attend Access, it's not just the cost of getting there. It's also the cost of the hotel, your time out of the office, etc. So any time that we can go where our members are — and partner with other events, such as EXHIBITORLIVE, that are already bringing in a lot of people — we can provide members with additional content that adds to the value proposition.

**EM: Looking ahead to the EDPA's next 65 years, what do you think will be the biggest challenges for the exhibit and event industry, as well as the association itself?**

**DF:** My biggest concern is security and making sure that there are no barriers for people to attend trade shows and events, whether they're traveling from near or far. First, our borders need to be open enough, yet still balanced with safety and security concerns, that international attendees can come and consume U.S. events. This is a \$97 billion industry. It's very, very large, and I don't see it going away. But if companies from other countries can't easily exhibit at and attend American events, that's going to have an impact. Second, I worry that if our events aren't secure, some kind of catastrophic tragedy could happen at a trade show that would seriously hurt the industry as a whole.

For EDPA, I think the biggest challenge will be continuing to find new ways to bring value to companies

**"Being at the helm of an association that's been around for 65 years is quite an honor, and I'm proud to say our membership levels are at the highest they've been in the past five years."**

that will help them grow their business. As an association, we will always be looking for more opportunities to help our members become better at what they do so that we can continue to grow the industry together.

**EM:** I imagine that it takes a village to lead an organization such as EDPA. Who in your village do you need to thank for helping you make the most of this year?

**DF:** It really does take a village, and my village helped me not just make the most of this year, but really survive this year. Being able to call on the executive board and our past president, Donna Shultz from Mirror Show Management, has been invaluable. Donna did a great job of preparing me for this and setting the stage. Bringing on our own full-time employee, Dasher Lowe, has also been a godsend. The guy is tremendously organized, has a strong agency background, and really made the job of president much easier for me. I

also need to thank people like Dan Serebin, CFO of Derse, who has shared wonderful knowledge about how we need to handle the association financially and has taken the organization from not being profitable to having money in the bank. That's a pretty big milestone and one that the entire board has worked on over the past couple of years. Amy Sondrup at Access TCA has put a lot of work into getting our conferences set up, and she's just a tremendous volunteer. Amanda Helgemoe has taken over the regional chapters piece of EDPA that I led for so many years, and she's already taken that to the next level. Internationally, Jamie Zavoral-Brown recently represented the association in Athens at the International Federation of Exhibition and Event Services' World Summit, and she's doing a great job for our international members, which is a segment of the association that we want to continue growing. And Dan Cantor, CEO of Hamilton Exhibits, is our Executive Board member representing the EDPA Foundation. Dan has the knowledge of being an EDPA past president and presents to the board all the good works that the foundation is providing to our members.

This has been a year of transition for EDPA. It's been great to be in a position where I can lead an organization filled with professionals who have helped me hone my own leadership abilities. Being at the helm of an association that's been around for 65 years is quite an honor, and I'm proud to say that our membership levels are at the highest they've been in the past five years.

**EM:** OK, so imagine the tables are turned: You are now that backyard neighbor, and someone walks over and asks whether they should join the trade show industry. What would you say to them?

**DF:** I would tell them to roll up their sleeves. If you have a lot of energy, enjoy being occupied with something to do that makes a difference, and like to problem solve, this is a great industry. If you like the idea of being in show business — because that's what it is, and we make spectacular things happen all the time — this industry is for you. And if you want to be in an environment that is exciting and fun, yet a lot of hard work, the trade show and event industry is a perfect fit. **E**

**Dave Flory** is the current president of the Experiential Designers and Producers Association. He began his career at Cort Business Services Corp. (a Berkshire Hathaway company) in 1991 as an area sales supervisor in the Atlanta district. He joined the National Accounts group in 1994 as southeast national account executive, where he became an active leader in the International Facilities Management Association's Atlanta chapter, eventually serving as president and receiving the Affiliate Member of the Year award at IFMA Atlanta. Flory's current role at Cort is director of eastern region sales, as he oversees sales in that area for all trade show and event-related opportunities.





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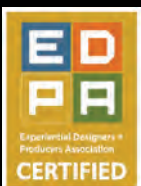
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# Heads of State

In its 65 years, EDPA has had more presidents than the United States, all serving their constituents with just as much drive and distinction. With the aid of past EDPA president Larry Kulchawik, we developed a roster of those association heads and the noteworthy accomplishments that defined their tenures.

*By Charles Pappas*

## **Norman Hadley** YEAR(S): 1956

The first of EDPA's nearly 50 leaders since 1954, Hadley, the founder of Hadley Exhibits Inc., emphasized exhibit designer and fabricator issues.

## **Harvey Steif** YEAR(S): 1957-1959

Steif was the first EDPA president to serve a two-year term as leader of the association.

## **Harold Averic** YEAR(S): 1960-1961

Instrumental in supporting the creation of the Medical Exhibitors Association, which later became the Healthcare Convention and Exhibitors Association, Averic also inaugurated the EDPA economic survey.

## **Clarence Murphy** YEAR(S): 1962-1963

Murphy pushed for organizational growth, as well as the unity of trade show suppliers at all levels.

## **Clifford McKay** YEAR(S): 1964-1965

Reflecting the expanding demographics of the EDPA in his era, McKay, hailing from Ohio Displays Inc., was the first president of the association based outside of the East Coast.

## **Rudy Speerschneider** YEAR(S): 1968-1969

One of three father/son combinations to serve as EDPA presidents at separate times, Speerschneider, the head of Display and Exhibit Co., helped found the Exhibit Institute conference in New York.

## **Sid Berman** YEAR(S): 1970-1971

Berman, the originator of BSI Exhibits, focused on designer-related issues during his tenure as EDPA president.

## **Robert Nagle** YEAR(S): 1972-1973

Nagle, then the head of Czarnowski Display Service Inc., pioneered the representation of installation and dismantle (I&D) as a specialty of the EDPA.

## **Charles Manne** YEAR(S): 1974-1975

Manne was instrumental in supporting the National Tradeshow Exhibitors Association, which later grew into the International Exhibitors Association.

## **Jerome Lawton** YEAR(S): 1976

With previous leadership hailing mostly from exhibition-related backgrounds, Lawton was the first lawyer to serve as EDPA president.

## **Robert Firks** YEAR(S): 1977-1978

In addition to creating an exhibit-building-standards manual, Firks, the founder of Firks Exhibitions Inc., launched the Hazel Hays Award recognizing individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the experiential/exhibit industry.

## **Donald Fairweather** YEAR(S): 1979

General Exhibits and Display Co. owner Fairweather presented museum design as an exhibit-industry component that helped expand the EDPA's focus beyond trade shows and corporate events.

## **Thomas Knott** YEAR(S): 1980

The president of Exhibitgroup Giltspur Boston (since acquired by Global Experience Specialists Inc.), Knott was notable for being the first to distribute a modular exhibit system in the United States.

## **Robert Lange** YEAR(S): 1981

An electrical contractor by trade, Lange was the first president who was not an actual exhibit builder. He was also instrumental in attracting show contractors to join the ranks of EDPA.

## **Jan Spieczny** YEAR(S): 1982

During his term, Spieczny supported the creation of the Trade Show Bureau, which later evolved into the Center for Exhibition Industry Research.

## **Don Sparks** YEAR(S): 1983

In addition to replacing the EDPA executive director position with association management, Sparks, who established Sparks Marketing Corp., accentuated integrity in the organization and its leadership.

## **Don Stacey** YEAR(S): 1984, 1986

During his tenure, Stacey supported the needs of freight- and I&D-related companies within the trade show industry. In 1986, he became the first person to be elected EDPA president twice.

## **Moe Bell** YEAR(S): 1985

When Bell stepped into the organization's lead role, he became the initial EDPA president to represent suppliers based on the West Coast.

## **Don Stacey** YEAR(S): 1986

The first person to be re-elected as EDPA president, Stacey focused on establishing unity among members during his second term.

## **Dan Hartwig** YEAR(S): 1987

Hartwig prepared the first meaningful economic survey for exhibit-industry suppliers. In addition, the owner of Hartwig Exhibit and Display moved the association's management to Milwaukee.

## **Mark Nagle** YEAR(S): 1988

During his presidency, Nagle, the head of Czarnowski Display Service Inc., concentrated on uniting show contractors with exhibit builders.

## **Steve Berman** YEAR(S): 1989

Berman, the owner of BSI Exhibits, worked to expand the scope of membership involvement in EDPA activities during his term.

## **Ingrid Boyd** YEAR(S): 1990

After becoming the first-ever female president of the EDPA, Boyd introduced international exhibiting as a new component and brokered the initial connection with the International Federation of Exhibition and Event Services (IFES).

## **Gary Stewart** YEAR(S): 1991

A founder of Design South Inc., Stewart was noted for initiating EDPA-sponsored college-level exhibit-design training at Auburn University, as well as promoting the concept of "no spec" design.

## **Bruce Deckel** YEAR(S): 1992

Besides growing EDPA chapters around the country, Deckel, CEO of Deckel and Moneypenny Exhibits, helped extinguish the exhibitor-appointed-contractor fees initiated by show organizers.

## **Doug Zeigel** YEAR(S): 1993

In conjunction with marketing the value of EDPA membership, Zeigel of Art Guild Inc. also developed committees to spur member involvement.



## PAST PRESIDENTS

### **Jay Barnwell** YEAR(S): 1994

A principal figure with Design and Production Inc., Barnwell was instrumental in fundraising for EDPA initiatives and overseeing financial administration of the association. Barnwell also helped initiate a switch in EDPA's association management.

### **Ron Malliet** YEAR(S): 1995

Malliet, president of KMK Industries Inc., brought order to the EDPA meeting process and improved its bylaws to assist the membership process.

### **Skip Speerschneider** YEAR(S): 1996

Along with forming joint meetings with the International Association of Exhibitions and Events, Speerschneider, then with Display and Exhibit Co., also launched the Designer Symposium.

### **Larry Kulchawik** YEAR(S): 1997

In addition to leading the effort for the UL 2301 standards for safety in exhibit design, Kulchawik, then with Exhibitgroup/Giltspur (now owned by Global Experience Specialists Inc.), promoted international efforts and extended exhibit-design education, including Drexel University and the Fashion Institute of Technology.

### **Robert Laarhoven** YEAR(S): 1998

The founder of Laarhoven Portables and Graphics, Laarhoven fostered a greater awareness for system and modular exhibits as an integral component of the EDPA during his term.

### **Sue Renner** YEAR(S): 1999

During her tenure as EDPA president, Renner stimulated a greater awareness of I&D-related issues among the association's members.

### **Gene Winther** YEAR(S): 2000

Besides establishing the EDPA Ambassador Award, Expon Exhibits' Winther focused on increasing the value of association membership and facilitated the formation of the EDPA Foundation later in 2001, serving as the foundation's first president.

### **Dalton Jenkins** YEAR(S): 2001

Working for Omnigroup Inc. at the start of the century, Jenkins generated greater awareness for international issues during his term as president of the association. Jenkins was also known for urging EDPA members to consider joining the International Federation of Exhibition and Event Services (IFES).

### **Mark Brauer** YEAR(S): 2002

A vice president of sales and marketing for Interlock Structures Inc., Brauer spent his term jump-starting a number of new EDPA chapters.

### **Norm Friedrich** YEAR(S): 2003

President and CEO of Octanorm North America Inc., Friedrich brought greater awareness to exhibit systems and launched EDPA's Designer of the Year Award.

### **Gwen Parsons** YEAR(S): 2004

A senior vice president for Nomadic Display, Parsons promoted awareness for portable/modular systems as part of the overall exhibiting mix.

### **Mark Johnson** YEAR(S): 2005

Johnson drove growth for the EDPA's international chapter while also championing the association's first exhibit at EuroShop in Düsseldorf, Germany.

### **John Otton** YEAR(S): 2006

Otton, a vice president of sales and marketing for Allied Van Lines Inc., brought greater awareness to transportation issues for exhibit suppliers. He also raised the bar on speaker quality and the format of EDPA's annual meeting.

### **Derek Gentile** YEAR(S): 2007

To spur EDPA's growth, Gentile, the president and CEO of EEI Global Inc., highlighted design- and event-related issues during his term as president.

### **Marybeth Geiser** YEAR(S): 2008

While instrumental in fundraising for the EDPA Foundation, Geiser, the client team director with Hamilton Exhibits LLC, also introduced the Eddie Awards, which honor outstanding creative achievements for self-promotion in the industry.

### **Dan Cantor** YEAR(S): 2009

Contributing greatly to EDPA's financial management during the Great Recession, Cantor, Hamilton Exhibits LLC's CEO, also pushed the value of the economic survey to EDPA membership.

### **Rob Cohen** YEAR(S): 2010

With a background in law, Cohen, the vice president of Display Supply & Lighting Inc., brought greater awareness of exhibit lighting and safety.

### **John Rose** YEAR(S): 2011

President of JC Rose and Associates Inc. (now part of 2020 Exhibits Inc.), Rose brought a theater-design sensibility to exhibit architecture. He was

also instrumental in promoting international and educational issues during his term as president.

### **Cam Stevens** YEAR(S): 2012

The first Canadian head of EDPA, Stevens enhanced the value of its economic survey by adding additional components to the analysis. President and CEO of the eponymous Stevens E3, he drove exhibit-related education by forming the first educational road-show tour and reinforced the IFES/EDPA relationship by serving on the IFES board.

### **Justin Hersh** YEAR(S): 2013

Hersh, the CEO of Delphi Productions Inc. (Group Delphi), supported EDPA's academic exhibit-design programs and partnership advocacy with industry groups, especially the newly formed Exhibit and Event Marketers Association.

### **Jay Burkette** YEAR(S): 2014

The vice president of ExpoDisplays, Burkette supported EDPA's portable-modular contingent by promoting an annual modular exhibit survey. He also launched the EDPA Certification Program.

### **Robert Campbell** YEAR(S): 2015

Hailing from Uniplan GmbH & Co. KG in Germany, Campbell was the first overseas president of EDPA, bringing greater international credibility to the association during his term.

### **Kelli Glasser** YEAR(S): 2016

Glasser, president and CEO of Exhibit Concepts Inc., steered EDPA back to profitability after the Great Recession and led advocacy efforts, including the association's participation in Global Exhibitions Day in Washington, DC.

### **Gwen Hill** YEAR(S): 2017

Hill, the senior vice president for business development at ExhibitForce.com Inc., organized the association's first EDPA exhibitor advisory committee during her term.

### **Donna Shultz** YEAR(S): 2018

The president of Mirror Show Management, Shultz launched Engage, EDPA's annual midyear event, and developed the Executive Committee Dashboard for accurate data reporting and tracking.

### **Dave Flory** YEAR(S): 2019

Flory ushered the association into its 65th year while growing chapter involvement and advocating for more inclusion of the experiential industry.

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