

# NEWS

## Audits Gain Momentum in the U.K. with AEO Approval of BPA

By Hil Anderson, *senior editor*

Shelton, CT – Building on a goal to make attendance audits a standard practice of exhibition organizers, Britain's Association of Exhibition Organizers (AEO) gave its stamp of approval to BPA Worldwide to audit events in the United Kingdom.

"Including BPA as a recognized audit provider is part of our commitment to provide event organizers and exhibitors with reliable data on which to base their marketing and purchasing decisions," said AEO Director Hillary Lawson

The AEO "Code of Practice" requires a certified audit for all shows in Great Britain larger than 2,000 net square meters (about 21,527 square feet) of exhibit space.

BPA is one of three firms certified by the EEIAC to conduct audits of trade

shows. The other two are Exhibit Surveys and VERIS Consulting, Inc.

### Why Audits are Particularly Important Overseas

Interest in audits is also on the increase in overseas markets, particularly among major shows that are seeking recognition as "international" events in order to gain either a subsidy from the host government or recognition from the UFI, according to Glenn Hansen, BPA's president & CEO. Audits can provide important characteristics of the attendee base and confirm that an "international" show will live up to its billing and reach the desired audience.



Glenn Hansen

### A Jump in Demand

The EEIAC said that both audits and commitments by shows to be audited climbed to 49 last year. This is up more than 50% from the 30 events in 2005, the first year that the Exhibition & Events Industry Audit Commission (EEIAC) certified audits. "While the number of audited events is small right now, sup-

port from industry organizations, such as the IAEE (International Association of Exhibitions & Events), is creating a positive momentum of growth in appreciation for the importance of verified attendance data," said Vinnie Polito of Reed Exhibitions, who is a member of the EEIAC board. The wealth of information that can be gleaned about attendees makes audits a potent marketing tool that will help cost-conscious exhibitors realize the value of participating in a trade show.

"The demand for reliable measurement is unbelievably high from the corporate side, whether it be for trade shows, print media or online," said Skip Cox, president of Exhibit Surveys, Inc. "Without sound data, you can't have a sound measurement, which is what advertisers and exhibitors are looking for."

Hansen said BPA was adding employees in anticipation of a further increase in audit requests.

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