RSPA
www.GoRSPA.org

**RSPA Statement and Standards on Outboarding and Suitcasing at RetailNOW**

RSPA has a unique community that provides a one-of-a-kind value to all that take part. Our sponsors and exhibitors invest in our model. These investments create opportunity to extend the many ways we support our members. In order to maintain and expand on our impact, we must have high standards and consistent protocol.

We ask VARs and software providers attending RetailNOW to support our exhibitors and sponsors. Executives attend RetailNOW because the RSPA, a nonprofit trade association, has invested significant time and money in this event.

When a vendor company participates in our events, they are acting as a Seller or an Attendee. Those that invest in exhibit space and sponsorship are clearly Sellers and promoters of their offerings. Those that choose to be non-exhibitors or non-sponsors are acting as Attendees, seeking the knowledge and connections that are unique to the RetailNOW setting.

Our job is to honor the iconic RSPA brand, the investments made by our exhibiting companies, the investments made by our sponsors, and the investments made by all attendees.

**"Suitcasing" and "Outboarding"** are unethical business practices where non-exhibitors attempt to gain access to show attendees.

- Suitcasing refers to non-exhibiting companies or individuals who solicit show attendees in the aisles, lobby, hallways, and other nearby gathering places.
- Outboarding refers to companies or individuals who conduct meetings or product demonstrations at off-site locations (hotel hospitality suites or restaurants) during exhibit hall hours and encourage attendees to leave the show floor to spend time with them.

These activities hurt the show and undercut the investment of time, money, and personnel that exhibitors and sponsors make in RetailNOW. Without their participation, RetailNOW would not be "Where The Industry Meets." The funds from RetailNOW help RSPA provide valuable services to VAR and ISV members, educate the retail IT channel, and produce events like RetailNOW and Inspire.

There is a provision for a limited number of exhibitor registrations that can be provided to participants from partner organizations that will work in the exhibitor's booth during show floor hours. That participant is required to be an RSPA member in good standing. If you are considering partners working in your booth, please consult with your Member Services Manager for details and approval.

RetailNOW Suitcasing and Outboarding Policy

- Suitcasing and outboarding are prohibited.
- Access to the exhibit hall for vendor companies that are not exhibitors will be available only at a premium cost. This will ensure that those that do invest are positioned to get maximum return.

- RetailNOW exhibitors and sponsors are encouraged to protect their investment by reporting any instances of suitcasing or outboarding they witness to the RSPA.
- RSPA provides private "whisper suites" on the RetailNOW show floor for closed-door meetings and product demonstrations. These private meeting rooms have chairs, tables, access to food, refreshments, and power, and are available for purchase by contacting Membership@GoRSPA.org.
- Companies and individuals may not conduct meetings or product demonstrations off the RetailNOW show floor during exhibit hours. Companies and individuals who violate this policy will be assessed a fee 3x the price of a whisper suite.
- RSPA monitors the housing bookings at the official RetailNOW hotel and related properties. Any companies or individuals who attempt to circumvent this policy and/or book outside of the RetailNOW housing block can have their privileges revoked.
- The RSPA allows new RetailNOW attendees to purchase a conference pass to walk the show floor and attend education sessions, but those companies and individuals are not permitted to solicit show attendees.

Guidelines for Software Providers in Partner Booths

The core principle behind these guidelines: vendors who have a VAR/reseller channel and want to use RetailNOW to grow their VAR/reseller channel are required to purchase a RetailNOW booth.

Direct Independent Software Developers (DISDs) may display their product and work in an exhibitor partner's booth under the following conditions:

- They are an RSPA member in good standing, and
- They are attending RetailNOW to support their exhibitor partner, not to build their own VAR partner channel, and
- They do not display branded signage in the booth (RetailNOW booths may not be co-branded, subleased, or appear to be subleased), and
- They purchase (or their exhibitor partner purchases on their behalf) one RetailNOW pass.
    - Software providers working in an exhibitor partner's booth cannot utilize that exhibitor's complimentary RetailNOW passes.
    - Additional DISD staff beyond one pass will need to be reviewed and approved by RSPA.

DISDs are not eligible to purchase their own RetailNOW booth. They are required to upgrade to a Channel-Supported ISV membership to take advantage of that valuable RSPA member benefit of exhibiting and utilizing the RSPA to build their channel.

For Channel-Supported ISVs, their product can be displayed or demonstrated in a partner booth, but their staff cannot work in that booth and they cannot display branded signage in that booth. Staff of Channel-Supported ISVs are required to either purchase their own booth or purchase show passes at the Non-Exhibiting Vendor rate.

- Without this policy, the financial stability of the RSPA would be under threat.

- RetailNOW booths are the lifeblood of the association's revenue. If ISVs or other vendors were allowed to have staff and signage in partner exhibitor booths, nothing would prevent the following scenario (using 2026 booth rates):
    - A payment processor, vendor, or distributor could purchase a 20x30 booth in their name for $22,500 and then allow 12 of their Channel-Supported ISV partners to have staff and signage in the booth to recruit VARs.
    - The RSPA would receive only $22,500 in revenue instead of $55,800 from 12 separate 10x10 booths purchased by those ISVs, a revenue decrease of $33,300.
    - If just 6 vendor exhibitors followed that scenario at one RetailNOW, the RSPA would receive $199,800 less in booth revenue that year, jeopardizing the services the association provides to its members.

*Example #1:* A hardware manufacturer purchases a booth. They would like a DISD member to work their booth by demonstrating their software on the exhibitor's hardware. This is acceptable provided a show pass is purchased by/for the DISD.

*Example #2:* A hardware manufacturer purchases a booth. They would like a DISD member to work their booth by demonstrating their software on the exhibitor's hardware. The manufacturer purchases a pass for the DISD to attend the show. A banner displaying the DISD logo and website is erected in the booth. This is not acceptable. The sign would need to be removed to comply with these guidelines.

*Example #3:* A payment processor purchases a booth. They would like a DISD non-member to work their booth by demonstrating their software on the exhibitor's hardware. This is not acceptable. The DISD would need to join the association prior to RetailNOW and then purchase a show pass to comply with these guidelines.

*Example #4:* A distributor purchases a booth. They would like to demonstrate the software of a Channel-Supported ISV on the hardware of a vendor partner, but a staff member of the Channel-Supported ISV would not work the disty booth. This is acceptable.

*Example #5:* A distributor purchases a booth. They would like a Channel-Supported ISV to work their booth by demonstrating their software on the hardware of a vendor partner. This is not acceptable. The Channel-Supported ISV would need to purchase their own booth.

Thank you for understanding and thank you for your support of the RSPA. If you have any questions, please contact the RSPA Member Services Team at Membership@GoRSPA.org.