Retailer Handbook

(Policies, Guidelines, and Recommendations)

Thank you for your interest in Pop-Up Gen Con! This program is designed to bring some of the magic of Gen Con to retail stores, giving your customers the opportunity to play and purchase new games as they are being released at Gen Con in Indianapolis. It is also meant as opportunity to help increase your sales!

This document is designed to give you the ins and outs for hosting Pop-Up Gen Con: the policies, guidelines, and recommendations to help you run an effective event and make it a success for you and your customers.

Terms & Agreement

By choosing to organize and run a Pop-Up Gen Con, you affirm that:

You have familiarized yourself with, understand, and will comply with all the terms and requirements in this document, as well as any further guidance, information, or instructions, whether written or oral, given to you by Gen Con, LLC.

Running a Pop-Up Gen Con event does not make you an employee, volunteer, or contractor of Gen Con LLC.

You understand and agree that you are solely responsible for running Pop-Up Gen Con event on your own premises, at your own expense, in a first-class, professional manner. You hereby release, indemnify, defend, and hold harmless Gen Con LLC and its officers, directors, distributors, employees, agents, successors, and assigns from and against any and all claims, losses, or liabilities arising out of or relating to any negligent act or omission relating to the Program or your breach of any warranty or obligation relating to the Program.

Table of Contents

Dates & Deadlines

All dates are for the 2021 calendar year, unless otherwise noted.

Key Reference Dates	
Gen Con Convention in Indianapolis	September 16-19
Retailer Application Period	March 22 (approximately) – May 3
Participating Publisher List	TBD
Marketing Materials	Approx. 6-8 weeks prior to convention
Games Rules	Approx. 4-6 weeks prior to convention
Additional Registration/Badge Request	Approx. 4-6 weeks prior to convention
Product Kit Shipment Date	Two (2) weeks prior to convention
Pop-Up Gen Con	September 18

Links & Contact Information

Links	
Website	www.gencon.com
Pop-Up Gen Con - Attendee facing webpage	www.gencon.com/pop-up
Pop-Up Gen Con - Retailer facing webpage	www.gencon.com/pop_up_host
Pop-Up Gen Con FAQ	https://gencon.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/categories/360004981691-Pop-Up-Gen-Con
Email (for Retailer use only)	popupgencon@gencon.com
Retailer Forum (only for approved Retailers)	https://www.gencon.com/forums/67-pop-up-gen-con-hosts-2021.

1. RETAILER APPLICATION PROCESS

1. Retailer must submit an interest application by the Retailer Application deadline.
2. Applications will be reviewed; retailers will be notified of status.
3. Once notified, our distribution partner (Alliance Game Distributors ("Alliance") will send retailers information regarding payments. All payments will be handled through the distributors.
4. Once payment is received, retailer is now an official "Pop-Up Gen Con Host".

A. Accounts

Retailer must be/or plan to be a client of Alliance Game Distributors.

Retailer must have a Gen Con account (on www.gencon.com).

- Your Gen Con account provides access to all things needed to host Pop-Up Gen Con including your store information, ability to view attendee registrations, download attendee lists, check-in attendees to your event, register walk-in attendees, and the ability for attendees to buy badges for your event.

- If you already have an account in the Gen Con system, you do not need to create a new one.

2. RETAILER OPTIONS

For 2021, we are offering more flexibility for participation allowing stores to tailor their Pop-Up Gen Con event offerings based on the current COVID-19 health guidelines in your area.

A. Event Options

Retailers can choose any of the following three options that will best work for your situation.

1. Demo Only
- Provide demos of the specific games provided to attendees.
- Purchase of the Demo Kit
- Attendee registration is required

2. Demos & Events
- Host events (game play) of the games provided to attendees. This can happen along with demos.
- Purchase of the Demo Kit
- Attendee registration is required

3. Sales Only
- Only do product sales. Not able to host any type of event/demo.
- Purchase of Sales Kit
- Attendee registration is *not* required

B. Product Kits
- Pricing is still being determined and is dependent upon the final number of games provided.
- There will be 8-10 publishers participating in Pop-Up Gen Con.

Demo Kit
Includes:
- One copy of each of the publisher games being released during Gen Con Indy.
- Pop-Up Gen Con badges and lanyards.

Sales Kit – Purchase a limited supply of any of the games being offered.

3. MARKETING

Retailer will have access to the digital marketing assets for use in promoting their Pop-Up Gen Con event. You can print these for your own signage and/or use for your website/social media promotions. Gen Con will notify you when this these are available.

Additional marketing materials provided by Alliance, such as back light signs, may be shipped separately from the product kits.

Gen Con will promote, via our email newsletters and social media, the Pop-Up Gen Con program itself along with key milestones such as the list of official hosts, registration opening, games being offered, etc.

Gen Con refers to participating retail stores as a "Pop-Up Gen Con Host" or "Official Host". Please use this branding when communicating with your customers. You can also use the following format: Pop-Up Gen Con at (*insert name of your store*).

A. <u>Pop-Up Gen Con Website Page</u>

Approved official Pop-Up Gen Con retail locations will be listed on www.gencon.com/pop-up.

Listing will contain store details (that you provided on your application), location information, including map/direction functionality. Attendees will be able to register for from the page as well when the time comes.

Your store will have a specific gencon.com URL that you can use in your marketing/promotion efforts.

4. POLICIES & REQUIREMENTS

Retailers must meet these requests in order to be considered for and be accepted to participate in the Pop-Up Gen Con program.

Pop-Up Gen Con must be hosted for (at least) one (1) day during the Gen Con convention. The primary day for Pop-up Gen Con is Saturday of the Gen Con Convention.

It is up to individual retailer discretion to host additional days (Thursday, Friday, and/or Sunday) to accommodate demos, full play game sessions, tournaments, companion events, sales, etc.

A. <u>Store</u>

Sales

Retailers cannot charge more than the five-dollar ($5) rate to attendees of Pop-Up Gen Con.

Retailers cannot sell the items provided (e.g. badges, lanyard, etc.) separately.

Cash sales for registration/badges is prohibited.

Demo product should not be sold during the primary day of Pop-Up Gen Con.

Product sales prior to Pop-Up Gen Con are prohibited.

Product Sales
Sales Kits will be available to allow you to sell games to your Pop-Up Gen Con attendees. You will need to work directly with Alliance on purchasing the Sales Kit.

Not all games in the Demo Kit may be available in the Sales Kit and there will be a limited amount of any one specific game.

Pop-Up Gen Con games must ONLY be sold during your Pop-Up Gen Con event.

Any product remaining after Pop-Up Gen Con can be sold in-store following the end of the Gen Con convention.

Product Display
Stores are encouraged to set up a consolidated display for Pop-Up Gen Con products.

Technology/Computer
Access to a computer with internet connection is needed to check in attendees to your Pop-Up Gen Con event.
Attendee check-in can either be done through the computer or by a printed check list with computer input later.
Retailers can export (via .csv file) a list of attendees to your Pop-Up Gen Con event.

Hours
Hours of Pop-Up Gen Con are up to the individual retailer.
All activity surrounding Pop-Up Gen Con should take place from regular store opening time to regular closing time.
It is up to the individual retailer discretion to extend store hours.

Staff
Retailers must have appropriate staff on hand during Pop-Up Gen Con to run demos of the games.

Staff used to run events must familiarize themselves with the Pop-Up Gen Con game offerings rules and game play prior to the event. Learning while demoing is not appropriate.

B. Demos, Events
Publisher partners are committed to providing games rules (in digital form) no less than two weeks prior to the event. Gen Con will also work with publisher partners on providing as much demo resources as possible which may include guided games instructions, video tutorials, etc.
- Retailers will be notified where and when rules are available.

Retailers must run demos of the games provided in your kit. Demos can be scheduled or can run as interested attendees become available. Demos should be run throughout the day(s) of Pop-Up Gen Con.

5. GENERAL

A. Forums
Approved Pop-Up Gen Con retailers are granted access to the Pop-Up Gen Con retailer-only forum on gencon.com. This is a great way to share information, feedback, best practices etc. with other participating Pop-Up Gen Con retailers.

Forums will include links to the digital assets, game rules, and any other documentation.

Forums are moderated, although for direct questions please email us.

B. Gen Con TV Twitch Livestream

Gen Con livestreams from the convention in Indianapolis during Pop-Up Gen Con. It is encouraged that retailers show the livestream of Gen Con TV during the Pop-Up Gen Con event, giving attendees a chance to feel the connection to the Gen Con in Indianapolis.

Streams run Thursday-Sunday with several channels featuring a wide variety of programming. Channels are *:

- o **Gen Con Studio**: This channel features a daily series of publisher/designer interviews and demos of games, including many of the games featured in Pop-Up Gen Con. (www.twitch.tv/genconstudio)
- o **Gen Con Live Games**: Our main channel featuring live play sessions of notable games, often with notable players. (www.twitch.tv/gencontv)
- o **Gen Con Main Stage**: Features marquee events from Gen Con, including the always-popular Costume Contest. (www.twitch.tv/genconmainstage)

  * Channels and content are subject to change.

Sponsors may run streaming demos of the games (on the Gen Con Studio channel) that you received in your kit. You may want to show these sessions in your store as part of Pop-Up Gen Con.

The livestream schedule will be posted at www.twitch.tv/gencontv; note this can change up to the week before the convention.

6. ATTENDEE REGISTRATION

All Pop-Up Gen Con attendees are required to create an account (or use their existing account) on www.gencon.com to purchase a registration for Pop-Up Gen Con.

Registration for participation in Pop-Up Gen Con can only be done through www.gencon.com. Retailer cannot sell registrations directly from your store account.

Attendee registration is five dollars ($5); price includes badge and lanyard.

A. Attendee Check-In

Check-in is done the day of the Pop-Up Gen Con.

Please check ID or ask the attendee to show their receipt for purchase which was emailed to them upon purchase completion.

The commemorative badges and lanyards are to be distributed to registered attendees (only) as they check in to the Pop-Up Gen Con event.

Any unclaimed badges may be distributed (for free) after Pop-Up Gen Con.

Check-In Attendees *with* a Computer
1. Sign in to www.gencon.com with retailer (Primary Contact) account for your store.
2. Select "My Pop-Up Events" from your personal menu or go to www.gencon.com/my_popup_events.
3. Check each person off as attended by clicking the "Pending" link next to the attendee's name.
   - o After clicking the link, it will change to "Attended". Retailer may then give attendee their badge, pin, and lanyard.

Check-In Attendees *without* a Computer
1. Export and print out a .csv file of your list of attendees by clicking "Export" just above your attendee list.
2. Check them off on the printed paper as they arrive.
3. After the event, log into your store's account to mark each attendee as "Attended."

B. <u>Badges</u>

Purchasing a registration for Pop-Up Gen Con will entitle the attendee to receive a Pop-Up Gen Con commemorative badge and lanyard.

Badge holders are to receive priority seating at Pop-Up Gen Con demos/events.

Each Pop-Up Gen Con store will have an initial registration limit of thirty (30) attendees. You may request additional registrations/badges from Gen Con (in increments of 10 qty).

C. <u>Walk-Ins</u>

Depending on availability, walk-in attendees may be able to purchase a registration at the day of the event.

Any unsold badges may be used for walk-ins.

Walk-in attendees must register to participate. Direct walk-in attendees to a computer or mobile phone to self-register and complete a purchase on gencon.com.

Retailers may facilitate walk-in registrations by providing access to a computer with a new browser or window (suggest using private/incognito mode to avoid conflicts with other logged in users, e.g. you).

Once customers have completed their registration, their name will appear in your store's attendee list and you can check them in. Be sure to provide them with a badge and lanyard.

It is up to individual retailer discretion to allow customers to participate in Pop-Up Gen Con as "guests" (i.e. not registering). Guests are not counted towards store attendance numbers. Priority should be given to those who have registered; guests should not be given a badge or lanyard.

7. DIVERSITY, EQUITY, and INCLUSION

Gen Con is committed to making everyone feel welcome at all our events including our in-person convention in Indianapolis, participating with Gen Con Online, and/or at a Pop-Up Gen Con.

Making your customers feel safe, included, and welcomed in your store helps to create community and store loyalty. While these are values your store may intrinsically have, putting them "on display" helps to reinforce them. Here are some things you can do in your space to help set expectations for you, your employees, and your customers.

Core Values
- Post these somewhere where everyone can see. A simple statement such as "All people have value here" will lead people to feel protected and safe and let them know how they will be treated when in your space.

Recognition
- Name tags, if you use them for your staff, include their pronouns.
- Acknowledge the indigenous peoples land your store is on. If you don't know, here is a resource website - native-land.ca.

Inclusion
- Post "signs" such as a rainbow flag to show support.
- If you have a single-seat bathroom, make the sign gender diverse. Using a "meeple" is subtle and on theme.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

In this section are recommendations for running Pop-Up Gen Con and running events at Pop-Up Gen Con. There is no obligation to adopt any of these ideas, they are merely suggestions for your consideration.

A. <u>Events</u>

Events are the heart of Gen Con. Gen Con is known as the "Best Four Days in Gaming" in part because of the thousands of events that occur during the convention. Events are any specific activity that occurs at Gen Con, including demos, full play through of games, tournaments, and non-gaming ("companion") events.

Demos

Short play introductions of games. A way to give a sense of the game mechanics without committing to fully run game. Demos can last anywhere from 15-60 minutes, depending on the game; follow the publishers' suggestions for timing, if available.

We recommend you establish space in your store to continuously run at least two concurrent demo sessions, for as many games and customers as you can reasonably schedule.

Demos are the heart of Pop-Up Gen Con and should be the basis for your Pop-Up Gen Con event.

Full Play

Any game that is played through its entirety. Full play can be the games received in your kits and/or games from your store/library.

Consider having additional dedicated space/tables for customers who want to take a deeper dive with a game with a full play experience.

Tournaments

If you wish to host any kind of tournament or head-to-head competition for any of the games during Pop-Up Gen Con, you may do so as space and timing allow.

Non-Gaming/Companion Events

Activities that aren't game specific, but game/gamer related.

The most successful Pop-Up Gen Cons in 2019, in terms of positive customer feedback, were those that included companion events. It is understood that staffing may be limited, but we strongly encourage you to consider adding companion event(s) to your Pop-Up Gen Con to give it a real convention feel. Be creative! You know your customers best so come up with something that will appeal to them.

Here are some companion event suggestions:

Costume Contest: A simple activity to run that will increase the ambiance and social media engagement of your event tenfold. You can run a complicated contest if you have the staff to do so but we recommend keeping it simple.

Encourage attendees to dress in costume. Have a Best Dressed or Best Costume 1st and 2nd place categories, include an adult and child category. Staff can determine the winner(s). Provide an award/prize to winners or to encourage people to come in costume. It's up to you. Promote them on our social media, etc.

Miniatures Paint and Take: If you have the space and some active interested painters at your store, it would be worthwhile to set aside some paint and miniatures, along with an experienced painter to provide tips and tricks for a paint and take area. Soliciting minis from companies you have relationships with to get supplies, or reach out to local gamers looking to thin their backlog.

Plan more paint and take events; an intro to painting class would be a great way to get adults and kids into the store and interested in the hobby. A very popular and easy to run additional event is speed painting, where a group is given a certain amount of time, usually an hour or 45 minutes, to all paint the same mini, and are judged at the end. This is a great spectator event, which generally has a lot of interest at Gen Con, and simple requires one person to watch the time, a set of minis, and a few judges at the end.

***Seminars/Panel*s:** Chances are, your store has regulars that have some connection to the gaming industry. They may have a game published themselves, whether on their own, through Kickstarter, or via an actual company. If you've identified these people, reach out to them about running a panel or seminar. If you haven't identified these people among your attendees, you can put out a call for them on your social media. Topics that would likely be popular among your attendees would be:

- How to Sell Your Game: Host would explain the nuts and bolts of using self-funding, using a crowd-based funding such as Kickstarter, and the process of presenting your design to established companies.
- Becoming a First Time GM: Established experienced GMs provide tips and tricks to help anyone become a   GM.
- Fundamentals of Game Design: Game Designers discuss how they begin the process of creating and refining a new game design.

Again, these are just suggestions that you can make; if someone offers to host a seminar/panel related to gaming, and you can accommodate them, do so.

Podcasts: It's likely that someone that frequents your store runs or is a part of a podcast or twitch stream about gaming. Ask them to host a seminar or workshop on podcasting or a live podcast during your Pop-Up Gen Con event.

Gamer Flea Market/ Trade Table: Offering a table for gamers to buy/sell used items may seem counterintuitive to sales, however, it's a great way to draw new people to your store. Some stores provide this as a free service; some stores will ring these through their cash register as consignment sales, taking 10-20 percent commission. Some will make it a donation/pay what you want table for charity. Any of these options would be fine with Gen Con.

Game Designer Playtesting: With the rapid growth of board games, and aspiring Board Game designers, run a playtesting event for aspiring designers. You may also have a local Meetup group that tests game prototypes. Encourage them to host something at your Pop-Up Gen Con event.

B. <u>Scheduled Events</u>

Demos, full play sessions, and/or companion events that are scheduled for a specific date/time and where attendees can sign up to participate.

Although not required, we strongly recommend you consider scheduling actual events, allowing your Pop-Up Gen Con attendees to sign up for at least some events in advance. Reserving a

seat at a specific time for a specific event is a core mechanism of how Gen Con operates and will help give your event that Gen Con feel.

There are several different ways you can schedule events with your attendees. If your store already has an online method for registering events, it's fine to use that. If you don't, it's also fine to post signup sheets and let people sign up manually. Other options include using online scheduling tools is fine too.

Be sure and post your schedule in advance, in your store, on your website, etc. It's a great way to get people interested.

Gen Con is updating our event registration system to include specific Pop-Up Gen Con events. This functionality won't be available this year but will be in the future. In the meantime, a simple clip board sign-up will work!

C. Staff

The more events you run, the more successful your Pop-Up Gen Con will be, and we recognize this may require additional people to run those events. Look to your staff to help run demos and if you need additional support, reach out to local gaming groups. If you have a group that meets weekly at your game store, ask them to help.

Additionally, there are third-party companies that run events on behalf of publishers, that may be willing to run events at your store. One of the largest companies of this type is Envoy. You're welcome to reach out to any group you feel would be able to run events that would be a good fit for your Pop-Up Gen Con.

D. Awards/Prizes

We encourage you to offer prizes for any events you run. Additional prizes we suggest could be free play passes should your store use them, or store credit/discount coupons. You could also award tickets for prize drawings, giving away demo copies of the games you received (but only after Pop-Up Gen Con).

Note that Gen Con nor its publisher or distribution partners can provide any additional prize support at this time.

E. Marketing

It goes without saying that the more you market the more you generate interest and eventually sales. Use all available resources and means at your disposal. Be creative!

Gen Con will promote Pop-Up Gen Con, but you know your community and customers best.

F. Product Display

A good display is a great way to generate interest in your Pop-Up Gen Con event. If you have a window display available, dedicate a section for this.

Build intrigue by revealing a different publisher's game every day leading up to your event.

Create a "Staff Pick" notation which can go a long way to increasing sales.