



*Association of International
Audiophile Publications*

Statement of Principles

(Revision 09-13-2021)

1. Members of the AIAP agree that they will not engage in review practices based upon “pay to play.” That is, there will be no *a priori* requirement that advertising with a member publication *must* be purchased by a review source *before* a review will be authorized.
2. Likewise, no promise of awards, special recognition, or special placement (for example, a cover image) shall be offered in exchange for advertising/marketing contracts. Such awards and special recognition must be earned by the quality, and on the merits, of the products themselves, and must *never* be for sale.
3. Member publications will not sell coverage (e.g., audio shows, interviews, etc.) in exchange for paid fees/advertising contracts. All coverage shall be based on true interest/merit.
4. Reviewers and their publications will not be allowed to negotiate to keep review samples as “compensation” for their reviews. Accommodation purchases after a review is completed is a well-known and accepted practice, generally representing purchase at wholesale pricing, and is allowable. Such accommodation transactions may be negotiated, but should be overseen by the editorial leadership of each publication. Guidelines should be established, if they are not already in place, to prevent the resale of such accommodation products at a profit, or too quickly (e.g., at least a year must pass before an accommodation product will be allowed to be resold). AIAP members shall oversee their reviewers, and require that they adhere to the ethical guidelines of the organization, or face discipline – up to and including termination of their association with that publication.
5. No form of *quid pro quo* will be allowed by AIAP members. This includes cases like the promise of a favorable review in exchange for product/money/other considerations, but also extends to any type of “this-for-that deal.” Member publications agree to oversee their contributors to make sure that they understand and accept that no “private understanding” will be allowed, nor will any member engage in any practice that corrupts the integrity of the publication or the review process.
6. The content and tone of audio reviews is the responsibility of the editorial leadership of AIAP member publications. Designers, manufacturers, distributors, dealers, and even audio shows must understand that they *may* receive advance copies of reviews/coverage, at the discretion and according to the individual policies of AIAP member publications, but that this is done only for the purpose of technical correction or fact checking. These parties will *not* be allowed to attempt to change or rewrite the content/conclusions of the review or coverage itself.

7. The offer by a manufacturer/company to provide transportation, accommodations, expenses, or any combination of these, for a special project or trip of real interest and benefit to audiophile readers...for example, a factory tour, an interview, video coverage, or an audio show...is allowable under our AIAP guidelines, provided that there is no *quid pro quo* involved, other than the coverage itself, that no promise or representation is made about the content of the coverage, and that editorial oversight is involved in setting up and administering the project. Such special cases must be understood to be based upon goodwill and the benefit that accrues to our readers worldwide. Editors agree to oversee these opportunities and educate their contributors as to where the boundaries are and the nature of their responsibilities.
8. Member publications will not allow themselves to act as a *de facto* marketing company for manufacturers, designers, distributors, or dealers. Friendly advice at no charge is one thing; being a hired consultant, publicly or secretly, is another.
9. No member of an AIAP publication will engage in, or allow its contributors to engage in, true conflicts of interest. For example, hardware reviewers should not be allowed to engage in hardware enterprises/paid consulting; reviewers should not be receiving additional outside income as “Influencers” on social media or the Internet; and reviewers should not be using their position with AIAP publications to forward or “leverage” their endeavors to gain position, compensation, or employment in the industry.
10. No AIAP members will use any content (including photographs or videos) that does not belong to them, or re-publish content without proper consent from the source publication/writer/artist. Formal content sharing relationships may be pursued as member publications see fit. AIAP members are, of course, free to pursue violations of their copyrights.
11. On the other hand, AIAP members understand that it is normal and desirable for there to be professional friendships that develop between audiophile designers, manufacturers, distributors, and dealers on the one hand, and audiophile editors/reviewers on the other. Given our shared passion for the audio arts, such friendly relationships are desirable, since the connection between audio producers and audio review publications is highly and obviously symbiotic. Both need each other, and audiophile readers worldwide benefit from the information and evaluations that flow from such productive relationships...especially since so many audiophiles have little-to-no access to high-end audio dealers/high-end audio shows. In order to operate in a friendly way without corrupting the integrity of the review process, AIAP members agree that conflicts of interest arising from such professional friendships are to be avoided. We will assure that proper editorial oversight is given over issues that might arise from these friendships. When in doubt, the general guideline that “Full disclosure equals no conflict of interest” should apply. For example, if a manufacturer sponsors a factory tour, that fact should be stated in a disclaimer attached to the tour report. If a designer contributes an essay on audio design, his or her position in the industry should be clearly stated as an introduction to the article...and so on. Transparency should rule in such matters, to avoid the appearance of corruption or undue interest being applied behind the scenes.
Apart from these guiding principles, AIAP members remain free to conduct their own business and internal operations as they see fit.