



GREENING THE MPI WORLD EDUCATION CONGRESS A LA MONTREAL

A Case Study

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Meetings Strategies Worldwide

MPI AND SUSTAINABILITY

MPI is embracing the triple bottom line of people, planet and profit and is passionate about being sustainable in its meetings and events and socially responsible citizens of the world. In July 2007, MPI became signatories to the United Nations (UN) Global Compact and a member of a global community of thousands of organizations who have voluntarily agreed to work to advance ten universal principles in the areas of human rights, labor, the environment and anticorruption.

As an expression of its commitment to the UN Global Compact, MPI is reviewing how these principles can be reflected in its meeting and events practices. The World Education Congress à la Montréal (WEC) represents MPI's first formal effort to implement sustainable values into meeting practices. The conference experienced much success in terms of recycling, reducing paper waste and forging environmentally-conscious business partnerships. MPI views these as preliminary steps down a "greener" path for meetings and events in future.

WHAT IS THE GLOBAL COMPACT?

In an address to the World Economic Forum on Jan. 31, 1999, the former Secretary-General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, challenged business leaders to join an international initiative – the Global Compact – that would bring companies together with UN agencies, labor and civil society to support universal environmental and social principles. The Global Compact's operational phase was launched at UN Headquarters in New York on July 26, 2000. Today, thousands of companies from all regions of the world, international labor and civil society organizations are engaged in the Global Compact, working to advance ten universal principles in the areas of human rights, labor, the environment and anti-corruption.

Through the power of collective action, the Global Compact seeks to promote responsible corporate citizenship so that businesses can be part of the solution to the challenges of globalization. In this way, the private sector – in partnership with other social actors – can help realize the Secretary-General's vision: a more sustainable and inclusive global economy. For further information please visit www.unglobalcompact.org.

STARTING THE JOURNEY

MPI viewed the World Education Congress à la Montréal as the starting point in a long-term process to align its meetings and events with the principles of the UN Global Compact. The purpose of this report is to highlight MPI's efforts to establish environmental practices in 2007, and present recommendations for future MPI meetings and events. MPI worked in partnership with vendors at the 2007 WEC to pursue energy efficiency, water conservation, air and water quality, waste minimization and environmental purchasing in the following ways.

Energy Efficiency

Dim the lights, please. Lighting was only used in the convention hall as necessary and reduced during set-up and tear-down. The conference venue schedules environmental controls and lighting to reflect client demands and operating hours in order to be energy efficient.

Water & Air Quality

There is such a thing as a free ride! Over 3,600 MPI attendees at WEC received bus passes to encourage them to explore Montreal using mass transit and help reduce local air pollution.

Growing fresh air. MPI's tree-planting community service project contributed to air quality and a greener tomorrow for Montréal. In addition, all WEC materials were printed with vegetable-based inks, minimizing atmospheric release of Volatile Organic Compounds from synthetic inks.

Water Conservation

Lowering the flow. Eight of the 12 host hotels had water conserving plumbing features in their guest rooms, including low-flow toilets and showerheads. The conference venue also employs low-flow fixtures and controls irrigation to minimize water use.

Waste Minimization

Office and communication practices save trees and water by reducing paper waste. MPI demonstrated a willingness to innovate with new technologies and approaches that add value to the face-to-face meeting experience while reducing its environmental impact. Audience response technology for session evaluations, digital signage at session rooms and the provision of CD's with session handouts reduced paper. In addition, exhibitor kits were only available online and fewer printed materials were provided in registration bags. The conference materials that were provided were printed on recycled paper while exhibitor booth signs were only made upon request. No paper products were used during the Opening and Closing Receptions.

Recycling at the Palais des congrès de Montréal. The conference venue recycled paper, plastic, cardboard glass, and cans. In total 90% of the waste produced by the conference was diverted from landfills. This includes:

- 1,380 kg compost (17.5%)
- 396.5 kg metals, glass, plastic (5.1%)
- 5,323.5 kg paper/cardboard (67.9%)

The venue also worked with suppliers to ensure re-use of pallets and crates and recycling of office printing cartridges. In addition to the conference venue, seven of the host hotels participate in recycling programs.

Eating green. To reduce waste in food service methods, the conference center used porcelain dishes during functions and in concessions; served milk, creamer, and sugar in bulk instead of individual packets; gave leftover food to local food banks; and composted food waste. More than 1,380 kg of organic waste was composted. Re-useable silk plants and colored linens were used for table decorations, avoiding the use of cut flowers. Delegates were also asked to indicate which meals they would be attending to reduce food waste. Water coolers were available throughout convention center for filling reusable water bottles. Providing water in this way is estimated to have avoided use of 28,000 plastic bottles.

Environmental Purchasing

Buying Earth-Friendly. The conference center used non-toxic and environmentally-friendly housekeeping products, and recycled content paper and bathroom tissues. In addition, conference apparel for many on-site MPI staff was made from eco-friendly bamboo.

Economic Indicators

The Palais provided blue boxes for recycling, however there was a cost for both recycling and compost services. In the future, MPI should negotiate for these to be provided at no cost, as in many situations, recycling does provide cost savings or neutrality for conference venues.

Commitment to Change, Community & Conservation

Plant a tree. MPI partnered with local and provincial agencies in Montreal to plant 20 trees as part of a community service project associated with the WEC. The trees were planted in an area that bridges downtown with a residential area of Montreal.