



Environmental Sustainability at the MPI Professional Education Conference 2008

People Planet & Profit:

It's about what you say, and how you say it.

EVENT AT A GLANCE

Meeting Professionals
International Professional
Education Conference

February 2 - 5, 2008
George R. Brown
Convention Center

2328 delegates
273 exhibitors

Meeting Professionals International's approach to corporate responsibility prioritizes the Three P's: People, Planet and Profit. MPI is striving to balance each of these in how it approaches our global events, from the World Education Congress and Professional Education Conference in North America to the European and Gulf Meetings and Events Conferences. We try to make good decisions that benefit our stake-holders, the environment and the bottom line. We recognize that we are on a journey toward sustainability that evolves one step at a time with each meeting we hold.

At this year's Professional Education Conference we have tried to demonstrate that being green is not just about what you say, but how you say it. MPI has integrated a depth of environmental and social sustainability into the conference that is unprecedented:

- **Opening Keynote.** Tim Sanders provided the Opening General Session Keynote, providing delegates with ideas and inspiration to save the world through meetings.
- **Green Café.** Numerous delegates stopped by the Green Café in "Unconference Alley" to pose questions and facilitate discussions about green meetings. Roundtable discussions focused on carbon offsetting, new green meeting standards for APEX, how suppliers can best help planners meet green goals, and how we move green meetings beyond mere recycling.
- **Corporate Social Responsibility Learning Track.** MPI offered 7 breakout sessions focused on corporate social responsibility (CSR), with topics ranging from making the business case, to benchmarking, standards and certification, contract language and liabilities, and on-site problem solving for green meetings.
- **Community Service.** MPI supported two projects at the Professional Education Conference North America, including a site visit to SEARCH, Houston's homeless shelter, and an art project for The Foundation for Hospital Art PaintFest®.

In addition, MPI has attempted to grow our corporate social responsibility initiative that began at the World Education Congress in Montreal. We have had much success in introducing new practices, and continuing to benchmark our performance, which is outlined in the following report. This has not been without its challenges, however, as we learn the ability of destinations to accommodate our green requests varies. Moving forward we are identifying ways we can train staff and introduce systems that will better prepare us and our host destinations to meet different by meeting sustainably. We want to invoke the power of meetings to change the world.

Community Service at The Professional Education Conference North America

MPI's Professional Education Conference North America supported two community projects in Houston. Founded in 1989, SEARCH provides services for the homeless in the Houston community, serving more than 10,000 men, women and children each year. Thirty-five participants visited the SEARCH facility in downtown Houston and participated in various "hands-on" projects such as painting the SEARCH building, power-washing their sidewalks, sorting and organizing donated items and making sack lunches for distribution to Houston's homeless (photo left). The Foundation for Hospital Art also provided a volunteer art station at The Professional Education Conference. The Foundation is a non-profit organization whose mission is to involve patients and volunteers around the world in using art to transform hospitals and nursing homes into soft, comforting places for healing. Over 30,000 paintings have been completed by volunteers and donated to hospitals since 1975. At the PaintFest® located in the Global Village, participants painted pre-drawn, color-coded designs on canvas. All the artwork was donated at no cost to hospitals in need (photo right).



Green Meeting Game

Students from Champlain College worked through MPI's Professional Education Conference to create two games to assist meeting professionals in the planning process. One of the gamelets focused on how to make meetings more environmentally and socially responsible. The quiz-style game sees the planner choose the best solutions to reduce the environmental impact of their event, many of the choices requiring a balance between economic, social and environmental objectives. The *Meet Different: Go Green* game can be accessed at www.mpiweb.org/cms/mpiweb/pec2008.



EVENT REPORTS

In order to help MPI understand and track the environmental performance of their conferences Meeting Strategies Worldwide has prepared the following post-event reports. These reports have been created using the MeetGreen[®]

Calculator. Practices included in and measured by the Calculator reflect leadership-level green meeting practices that exceed Convention Industry Council green guidelines and US Environmental Protection Agency procurement policy. Each practice is weighted according to the positive environmental impact of a decision made.

Minimum points are achieved for intention while maximum points are awarded for measurable action. For example, requesting recycling at the convention center receives minimum points, while tracking and achieving a high recycling diversion rate would receive maximum points.

The following reports show the percentage of total points possible achieved by the Professional Education Conference. Having tracked two conferences for MPI, Meeting Strategies Worldwide is pleased to provide MPI with the following comparative illustration of its overall environmental achievements in each of the following eight areas of conference management:

1. Destination Selection
2. Accommodation Selection
3. Transportation Selection
4. Meeting & Venue Selection
5. Food and Beverage
6. Exhibition Services
7. Communications & Marketing
8. On-site Office

Conference Summary Report

The Conference Summary Report shows the environmental performance of the Professional Education Conference Houston compared to the World Education Congress Montreal in each area assessed. As is indicated by the graph, MPI's Professional Education Conference 2008 improved significantly in the area of communications and marketing, reflecting the pro-active measures taken by MPI staff to reduce paper use, educate and engage attendees, and purchase greener registration and promotional products. Transportation scores also greatly improved by requesting greener shuttling options and providing a carbon offset.

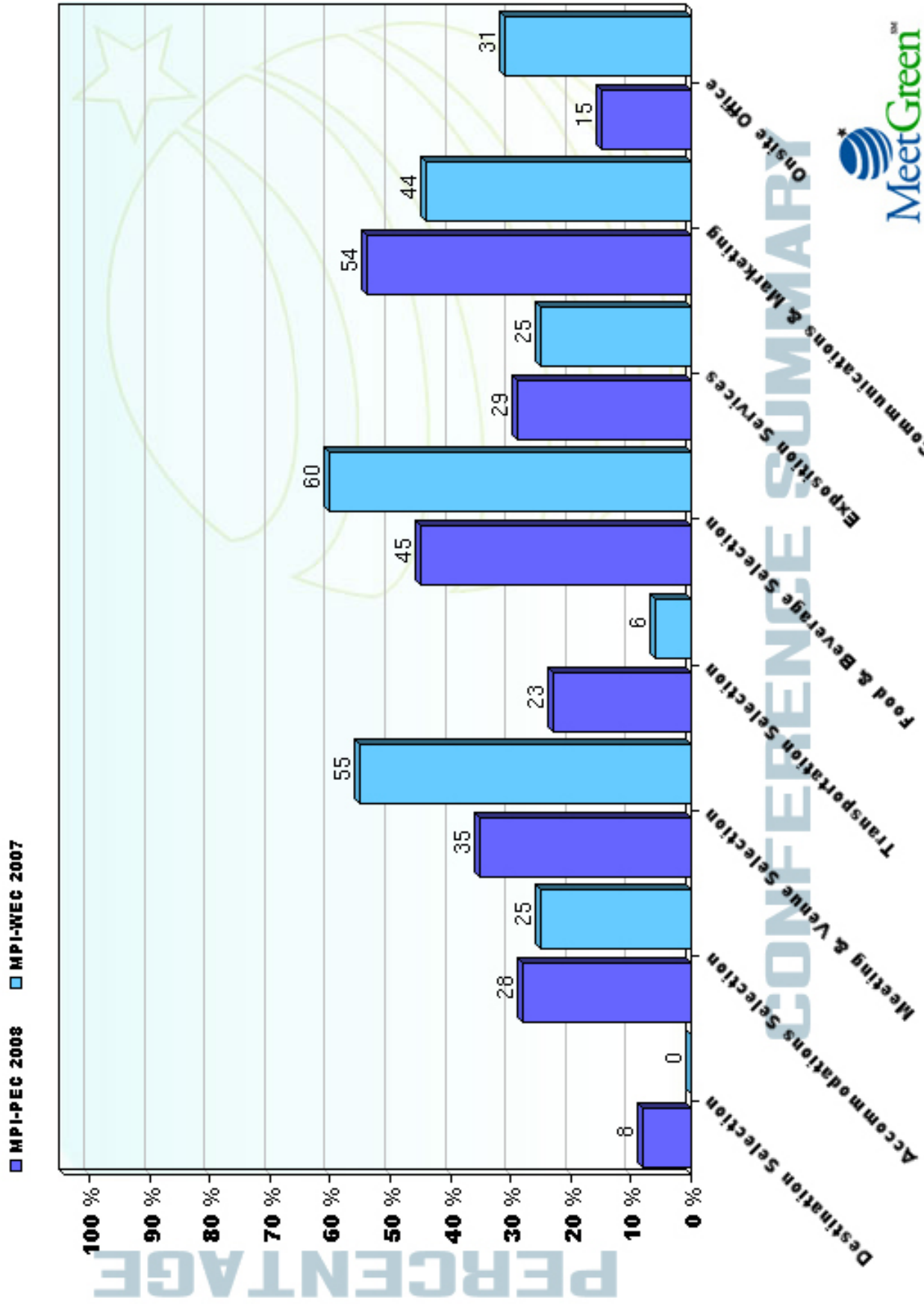
The conference improved slightly in the areas of destination selection, exhibits and accommodation selection. This improvement reflects the positive engagement of the Houston hotels in new sustainability initiatives for the purpose of MPI's Professional Education Conference as well as improved reporting by properties when compared to Montreal. Exhibition production improved slightly as a result of requesting exhibitors to limit handouts. Destination Selection scores also improved, resulting from the provision of information on green suppliers from the convention and visitor's bureau.

Scores for all other areas of meeting management, however, did decline. This reflects the higher baseline of environmental practice in Montreal and particularly at the Palais de Congres when compared to the George R. Brown Convention Center.

Total Conference Comparison Report

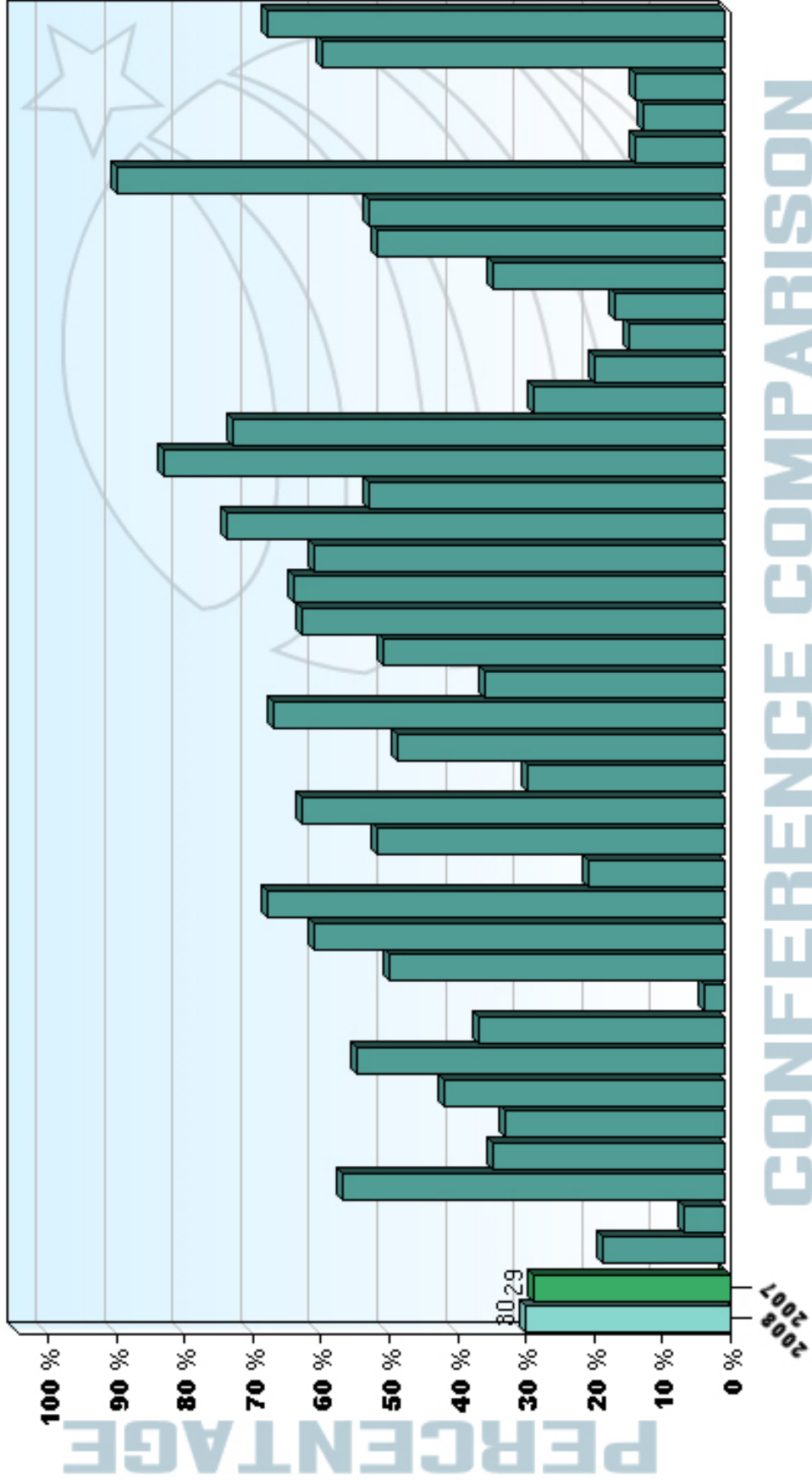
This chart illustrates how the Professional Education Conference Houston and World Education Congress Montreal compare to all conferences tracked by Meeting Strategies Worldwide in terms of total environmental performance. The Professional Education Conference 2008 received a slightly higher score than the World Education Congress 2007. The score represents the percentage of total possible points earned in all meeting categories.

Conference Summary Report



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Total Conference Comparison Report



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Category Summary Reports

The Conference Summary Report illustrates the total MeetGreen[®] scores in each of the eight categories of meeting management assessed by Meeting Strategies Worldwide. The score represents a percentage of total points possible in each category. Following is a detailed analysis of practices implemented at MPI's Professional Education Conference as well as recommendations for how scores can be improved in each area.

Destination Selection

Choosing a green destination can make a huge difference in how easy greening a meeting can be. Green meetings should generally consider two aspects of the destination:

1. How close the city is to attendees' place of residence to reduce travel, and
2. The presence of vendors and venues that can accommodate environmental practices.

Choosing a destination close to attendees reduces the overall travel burden and emissions associated with the conference. Green destinations also tend to be home to venues and accommodations that already have green practices in place.

Best Practices:

- The Houston CVB has researched and provided information on the green practices of meeting vendors in the city. In addition the CVB has inventoried green community services and attractions in Houston, including the presence of a mounted patrol unit provided by the Houston Police Department. This information has been permanently placed on their web site and was provided to MPI.

Recommendations:

- Include green criteria in the RFP for future MPI meetings and make destination selections with this criteria in mind.
- Consider destinations that have walkable meeting neighborhoods or good,

convenient transit systems that link the venue and hotels with the airport.

- Consider the provision of municipal recycling as a decision making factor.

Meeting & Venue Selection

Green aspects of a meeting venue include both construction features and operating practices. Although green features can be identified through a certification that assesses green building or operating features (such as LEED, GreenSeal or ISO 14000/14001), on-site event practices need to be verified to ensure energy efficiency, water conservation, air and water quality and waste minimization through recycling programs. Selecting a venue that has established environmental policies or is willing to work with event organizers to implement policies is a key aspect of an event greening initiative.

Best Practices:

- The City of Houston Energy Management purchased Renewable Energy Credits (RECs) in the name of MPI for the energy consumed during the Professional Education Conference at the George R. Brown Convention Center (GRBCC). The money generated by the sale of RECs goes to existing renewable energy facilities. The additional revenue stream provides a financial incentive for developers to build more renewable energy projects. The Center is in the process of transferring to 100% wind generated power. Purchase of REC's was publicised using meter boards.
- GRBCC provided additional recycling receptacles for paper, plastic and aluminum, which was able to divert 2107 pounds of recyclables from landfill.
- Lighting and HVAC was managed by the facility's "Watt Stopper" software which is set according to occupancy schedules in order to minimize energy use.
- In addition to the meeting specific practices indicated above the GRBCC has also:
 - Participated in the "Green Lights Program" which upgraded fluorescent lights to electronic ballasts and high

efficiency bulbs.

- Uses motion sensors for lights, sinks and flush valves, which save energy and water.
- Improved insulation and added a white surface to the building to reflect sunlight and heat.
- Installed capacitors on electrical switch gear to reduce energy consumption for heavy loads.
- Replaced original boilers with new and more energy efficient boilers.
- Replaced original cooling towers with new high efficiency towers.
- Replaced the carpet and re-cycled the old carpet by providing it to other city departments for use at their facilities.

Recommendations:

- Include specific environmental language in the contracts with the conference venue which outline expected practices and measurables that should be tracked during the event.
- While recycling bins were provided diversion was only 4%. Diversion could be improved by providing staff training, better positioning bins, and providing better sorting mechanisms back of house.

Accommodations Selection

Much like meeting venues, accommodation providers are able to participate in environmental practices by promoting energy efficiency, water conservation, waste minimization, and air and water quality on both a building design and operational level.

Inventorying prospective hotels' environmental practices and contracting for compliance with requests for towel and sheet reuse, amenity donation, and in-suite recycling are a few of the practices considered under this section.

Best Practices:

- Six of the eight host hotels operated a towel and sheet re-use program.
- Five of the eight host hotels operated a paper recycling program.
- The Hilton America's Houston is in the process of applying for Green Seal certification and therefore developing extensive environmental practices under the leadership of their green team, some of which were in place for the Professional Education Conference. The Hilton's efforts were communicated to guests through an in-room note.
- Room drops provided by hotels were done with social and environmental responsibility in mind, providing edible gifts and sustainably produced soaps at check -in.
- The environmental practices of each property are itemized in the appendix.

Recommendations:

- Each hotel did have a few environmental practices in place, however the breadth of green programs varied greatly and was practiced inconsistently. Contracting for a minimum set of environmental practices will help to avoid this issue in future.



Participants sign up for the "Green Cafe".

Food & Beverage

Food and beverage has a complex and broad environmental footprint. Caterers are able to consider various ways to promote water conservation by not pre-filling water glasses, support environmental purchasing by sourcing local and organic food, and reduce waste by avoiding packaging and disposables, providing food in bulk and composting or donating un-used food.

Best Practices:

- Attendees received a re-useable water bottle and refreshment stations with water coolers were available throughout the Convention Center.
- Aramark did attempt to source organic and locally grown food products, however selection was limited locally and organic options were price-sensitive.
- Compostable service ware was used, with the exception of spoons.
- Aramark does donate left-over food to the Star of Hope and Salvation Army, however none was donated from the Professional Education Conference as there was little left-over food.

Recommendations:

- Ensure environmental requests are included in the contract with the caterer and any special practices are noted in BEO's.
- Explore the feasibility of composting food that is unsuitable to be donated. Houston was unable to do this in small quantities as they require a minimum amount to call in a local farmer to pick up food scraps.

Transportation Selection

The transportation footprint of a meeting includes travel of attendees to and from the host city, as well as their movement around the city. Along with buildings, transportation is a significant source of greenhouse gas emissions. Best meeting practices for transportation should consider how to both reduce transportation emissions and neutralize or offset those emissions that are unavoidable.

Best Practices:

- The shuttle buses used during the event used Ultra-Low Sulphur Diesel Fuel (ULSD). This is a cleaner-burning fuel that helps improve local air quality.
- Shuttles used paperless ridership tracking.
- Recycling bins were provided on buses, however received minimal use.
- Delegates booking through Continental Airlines were offered the option to offset their flight through Sustainable Travel International. Although participation rates were requested from Continental, they were unable to be provided.
- Carey (transportation company) did provide one hybrid vehicle for VIP airport transfers.
- Bicycle cabs were provided for the Opening Night Reception.

Recommendations:

- MPI is encouraged to consider calculating and providing their own carbon offset program. Although the voluntary offset provided through Continental is a step in the right direction, it is important to be able to track participation in the offset to enable post-event reporting.
- Assuming shuttles will continue to be provided, tracking of ridership on buses is encouraged to plan for more efficient shuttle routing and scheduling that is mindful of reducing emissions. In addition to the use of low sulphur diesel, greener operating practices should also be requested, such as reduced idling, and environmentally sound maintenance.

- MPI is encouraged to promote walking by delegates between venues as a way to reduce shuttle use.

Exposition Services

Exhibition production considers both the:

1. Practices of exhibitors, and
2. Policies and practices of the decorator.

Meeting coordinators are able to communicate and contract for environmental practices by both audiences to reduce waste.

Best Practices:

- The MPI decorating partner does have a corporate environmental policy and provides some environmentally sensitive alternatives for signage and booths.
- The decorator was able to achieve the following onsite for Houston:
 - Used disposable wastebaskets (made of recycled materials) for the booths on the floor and the registration area.
 - Provided service kits on-line (no paper kits were provided).
 - Used recycled substrates for some of the graphics.
 - Recycled some of the carpet after the event.
 - Recycled much of the paper that was generated both in the office and at show-site.
 - Recycled some of the aluminum pieces from hard-wall systems.
 - Recycled ink cartridges (from graphics production) through the boy scouts
 - Used water-based inks for graphics.
- Recycling bins were provided to exhibitors and to show offices.

- POD structures were provided for exhibitors, limiting the need to ship booth materials.
- Exhibitors were requested to limit handouts.

Recommendations:

- Although we have listed best practices by the decorator, they were unable to provide verifiable data regarding their green practices and the extent to which they were implemented.
- Although the decorator has taken steps to implement a corporate environmental policy and source some greener products, experience over the past two events has demonstrated that on-site practice varies. It is therefore important to contract with the decorator to provide specific green practices.
- Although some green practices were followed by the decorator, the decorator did not track or verify practice. MPI is encouraged to request that the decorator track and measure their environmental practices, including the amount of recycled content products provided for each show, and the amount of material (such as carpet and paper) that is recycled.
- MPI is encouraged to consider providing a list of recommended green practices for exhibitors at future conferences.



Student entertainment provided at the Professional Education Conference Expo.

Communications & Marketing

Meeting organizers are able to consider green aspects of communications and marketing on two levels:

1. How to reduce waste and pollution while communicating with key audiences, such as sponsors, vendors and attendees.
2. How to communicate the green practices associated with a conference to engage audiences and secure positive public relations.

Best Practices:

- Digital signage was used extensively to reduce the use of paper and cardboard.
- Print kiosks were provided and handouts avoided, enabling delegates to only print what they need.
- The Professional Education Conference made unprecedented use of online technology to network delegates, enhance learning and reduce their paper trail. This included using digital and meter board signs to communicate green efforts and tips on implementing CSR to attendees.
- All BEO's and rooming lists were sent electronically.
- Where printing was required, as in the case of the On-Site Guide, it was printed on recycled paper using vegetable-based ink and a minimum of 10% post-consumer recycled content paper.
- Monitors in the convention center provided information about the conference greening initiative.
- Engagement in community projects and student learning helped to demonstrate MPI's commitment to the UN Global Compact.

Recommendations:

- Set public printers and computers to energy savings settings and ensure they are set to default print double-sided.

- Establish a set of environmental specifications for unavoidable print jobs that include a minimum 20% post-consumer recycled content paper.
- Printed signage was greatly reduced by using digital signage. There may be additional opportunities to convert sponsorship signs, which are often one-time use, to digital methods to further reduce waste.
- MPI is encouraged to track how much paper use has been avoided as a result of these efforts. This data can be translated into cost savings and environmental benefits.

On-site Office

On-site practices by meeting organizers are one of the last steps of the planning process, but integral to ensuring follow-through. This section measures the ability of event organizers to plan to reduce their office management impact on-site, by using energy efficient equipment and paper reduction strategies. Another key component is staff training to ensure environmental practices in all other areas are implemented once the conference starts.

Best Practices:

- Lanyards, airport greeter t-shirts, and conference bags were made from organic cotton. Although delegates were encouraged to re-use their bags, donation bins were provided for unwanted bags after the event. Approximately 50 bags were returned for donation to a local charity.

Recommendations:

- Request energy efficient, all-in-one equipment for the site office and ensure printing is done double-sided, using post-consumer recycled paper.
- To increase re-use of namebadges consider placing more collection bins in high profile areas and collecting them at host hotels.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Building on the report from World Education Congress, MPI has taken measures to engage delegates in greening initiatives, is starting to address climate change issues by presenting off-set options and is integrating socially responsible activities into conference programs. Opportunities remain to continue to push the envelope in all of these areas. In addition, critical opportunities exist to request green services, contract for environmental practices and measure the impact of these practices.

Commit to it

Although MPI has committed to the UN Global Compact and a philosophy that supports “People, Planet and Profit” discussion is needed to translate these over-arching policies into practical commitments, goals and actions for green conferencing. What does MPI want to achieve in terms of its green meeting practices? Waste reduction? Its carbon footprint? Water conservation? Cost savings? Social responsibility?

It is important to determine commitment, identify available resources and articulate measurable goals that meeting management staff are able to implement and evaluate as they move forward with greening their global conferences. This one way to report on commitments made to the UN Global Compact.

Train for it

MPI staff will be receiving green meeting training to help expand and ingrain environmental management into existing conference management systems. As part of this process MPI staff and management are encouraged to confirm their commitment to environmental sustainability, identify SMART goals (specific, measurable, actionable, realistic and time-bound) and strategies for achieving these goals.

Ask for it

MPI is encouraged to leverage the power of their RFP in support of greener meeting practices. Selecting a green destination can make

environmental sustainability measures much easier to implement, so it is important to include environmental requests in RFP’s that are issued to prospective destinations. This will help identify those cities that are prepared to work with MPI to meet sustainability goals. We also encourage MPI to develop a list of expectations for each vendor it contracts. Select destinations and vendors who are able to meet these expectations, or at a minimum intend to work toward meeting them.

Contract for it

To plan a successful green meeting it is critical suppliers know what is expected of them. To facilitate this MPI should develop its own minimum green guidelines and integrate these into all vendor contracts. To ensure expectations are met MPI should also consider both performance incentives and penalties for non-compliance as part of the negotiation process. It is not necessary that each vendor be able to meet minimum criteria upon contracting, however intention to work with MPI to implement green practices by the time of the event is important.

Measure it

In order to verify vendors are complying with green expectations and understand the difference MPI’s actions are making it is critical to track data from year to year. This can include recycling diversion rates, energy consumption, water consumption, and costs savings. It can also include delegate comments about greening efforts through evaluation forms. Measurement of conference greening initiatives will require vendor cooperation and participation so it is important to stipulate benchmarking requirements in contracts.



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