



# **The Basics of Green Meetings**

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# Definitions



According to the Convention Industry Council, a green meeting is...

A green meeting or event incorporates environmental considerations to minimize its negative impact on the environment.

# Definitions



- A ***carbon footprint...***

is a measure of the impact human activities have on the environment due to the release of greenhouse gases as measured in units of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>).

- An ***ecological footprint...***

is the area of land and water needed to produce the resources to sustain the event and absorb its waste

# Definitions



***Biodegradable*** refers to the amount of time it takes for a substance to break down and return to the environment.

- Common items at events:
  - Banana peel, 2 – 10 days
  - Paper, 2 – 5 months
  - Tetrapaks, 5 years
  - Aluminum cans, 80 – 100 years
  - Plastic bottles, never

# Definitions



- ***A carbon offset...***

is a **conceptual financial tool** to help people mitigate the impact of their activities. The theory is that since climate change is a global problem, a reduction in emissions elsewhere will have a balancing effect. This is known as going “**carbon-neutral**”.

- Buying renewable energy to offset the burning of fossil fuel
- Buying of carbon credits
- Planting trees

- ***Greenwashing...***

is the act of misleading the consumer about the environmental benefits of a good or service

# Why Meet Green?



The issues involved in planning to meet green are the same issues that many organizations are trying to find solutions for, as they have an impact on all of us globally, including:

- [Greenhouse gas](#) emissions/global warming
- [Resource efficiency](#)
- [Solid waste](#) disposal
- [Sustainable development](#)
- [Renewable energy](#)

Most importantly, it involves ***sustainable business solutions***

# Green Meetings: Sustainable Business



CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) is a concept whereby organizations consider the long-term interests of the communities in which they operate and take responsibility for the impact of their actions on employees, customers/members, the community and the environment

# Green Meetings: Sustainable Business



CSR activities are often referred to as being in three different but connected realms:

- People
- Planet
- Profit

# FUTURE<sup>2008</sup> WATCH



A Comparative Outlook on the Global Business of Meetings and Events

Presented by:



MEETING PROFESSIONALS INTERNATIONAL

# Green Meetings: Organizational Value



## Organizational Value

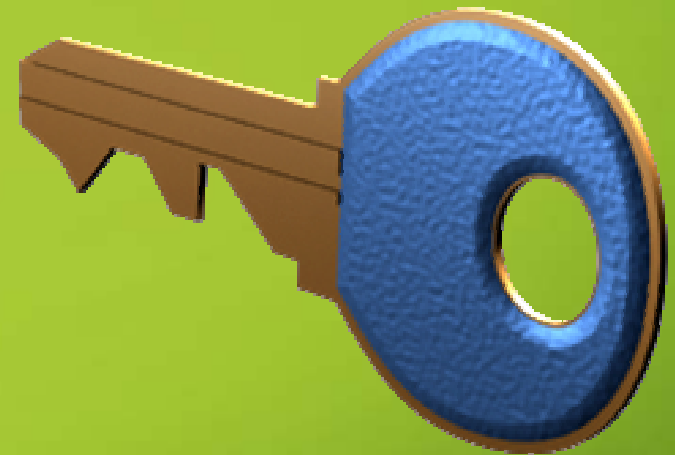
- Possible monetary savings
- Enhanced corporate image
- Increased shareholder/stakeholder value
- More streamlined processes
- Regulatory compliance
- Fits in with an organization's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives

# Green Meetings: Key Principles



One goal of having a green meeting or event is to reduce the carbon and ecological footprints it generates.

- **Reduce**
- **Mitigate**
- **Measure and report**
- **Potential business benefits**



# Management, Influence & Impact

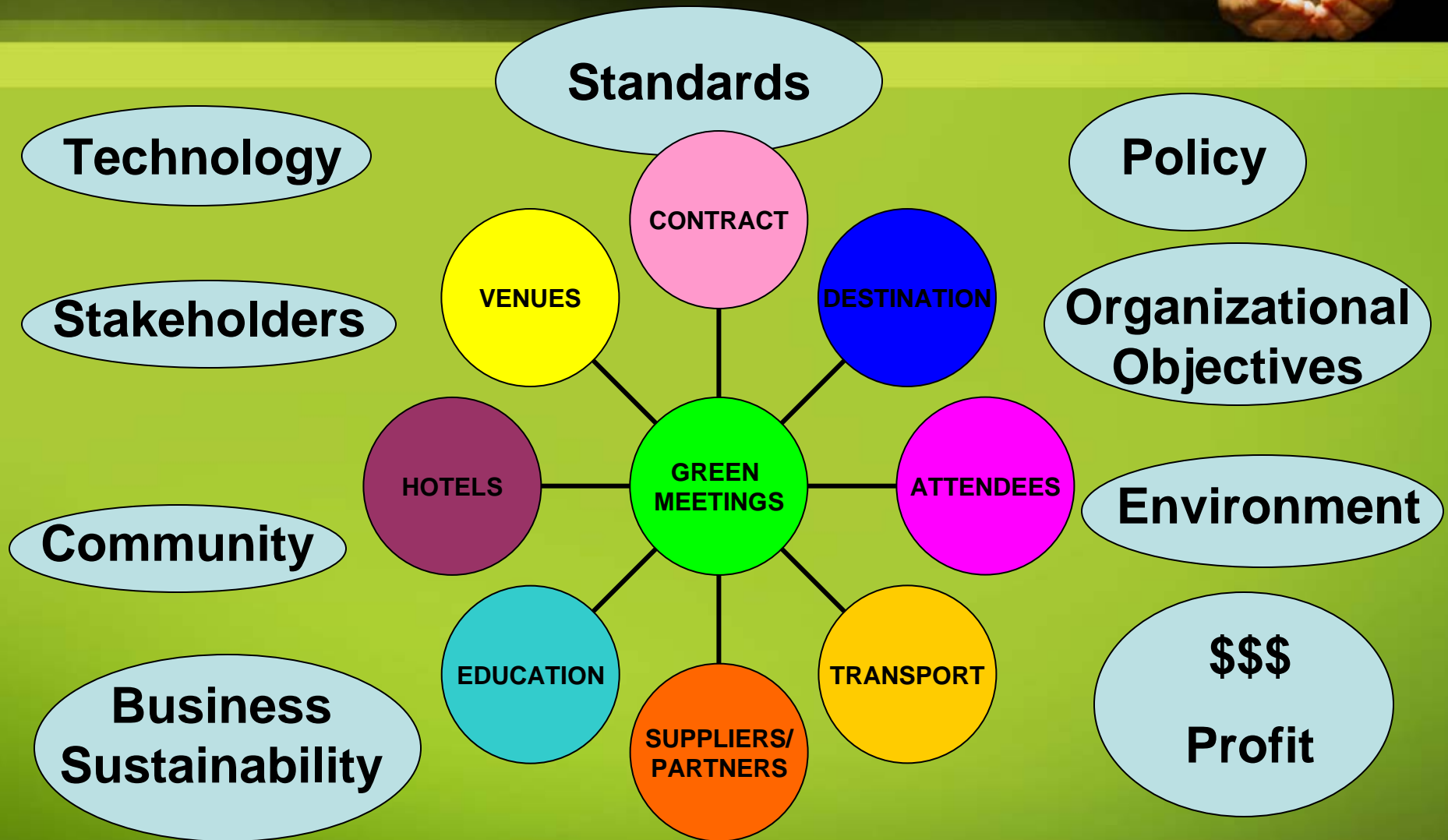


Generally speaking, there are two broad areas meeting and event planners can use to create a green meeting:

1. Those areas under your ***direct management control***, like contracts, site selection, menus, suppliers and technology
2. Those areas where you can ***influence behavior***, such as through education of stakeholders

These combine to create a ***broader impact*** in the community and on business sustainability

# Areas of Management and Influence



# Why Have a Policy?



- Being a leader
- Conservation of resources
- Lessening your environmental footprint
- Assuring stakeholders of your commitment
- Good public relations
- Cost control
- Reducing liability
- Sharing environmental solutions
- Making a difference in your community

# Environmental Policy Statement



- The policy should outline:
  - Organizational goals in relation to the environment
  - Compliance to relevant laws
  - How the policy will be communicated to stakeholders
  - How you will improve over time
  - How it will manage the environmental impact
- Reflect the impact your organization has on the environment
- Be realistic and achievable
- Be simple and brief
- Contain a framework for review and monitoring

# Policy Statement Example



*We recognize the immense potential impact our community has on our environment and will make a deliberate commitment to the power of meetings and events to support sustainability.*

*We will establish leadership and demonstrate commitment in the area of environmentally friendly meetings in Canada by including environmental factors in every decision we make on behalf of our members, and by making the best use of resources for maximum impact and alignment with our objectives.*

*We will educate and inform our members about our environmental actions. We are committed to building our brand and connecting our community in an environmentally sustainable way.*

# Integrating Green into Contracts



## Request for Proposal

The Request for Proposal (RFP) is where the contract process begins, and is the natural beginning of greening your event. This should contain your goals and objectives and request from the bidder these things:

- Description of existing programs
- Attributes of the products they use
- Certification that they may have
- Environmental management measures in place
- A description of staff training

# Integrating Green into Contracts



## Evaluating the Responses

- When evaluating the bids, you will need to look for value for money as well as the standard of environmental stewardship you require.

## Notification and Awarding the Contract

- To promote environmental performance, when notifying bidders and awarding the contract, outline your performance assessment of each bidder. This will assist the supplier with improving their environmental programs and may give them an incentive to do so.

# Integrating Green into Contracts



## Measurement, Performance, Consequences

Environmental *measures* your organization is implementing should be noted in the contract to guarantee performance and outline consequences. These clauses might include:

- That the facility will use re-usable containers exclusively
- Outline what will be recycled, composted or disposed of
- Specify how left-over food will be donated and to whom.
- Outline what training the staff has had prior to your event.
- Be specific; include measurable *performance expectations*
- Be clear on *consequences*
  - Need to have consequences for non performance
  - Withhold 5% of final payment until reports are completed

# Integrating Green into Contracts



For **Example**:

THE CONVENTION CENTER and the on-site caterer will implement the following procedures and practices during the conference.

- Minimize energy use by reducing the lights, power and HVAC during move in and move out times in the exhibit hall and turning off lights in meeting rooms when not in use.
- Minimize waste by:
  - Providing drinking water in large containers rather than individual bottles,
  - No Styrofoam (polystyrene #6 plastic) is to be used for any food/beverage functions or outlets,
- Provide collection bins and facilities, staffing and training necessary to recycle all glass containers, aluminum and steel cans, plastic bottles, table coverings, pallets, paper (newspaper, cardboard and other office paper), and grease.
- Conserve natural resources by purchasing and providing all paper bathroom supplies with minimum 35% post-consumer recycled content paper.

# Hotels: Basic



- Electronic contracts
- Electronic (paperless) confirmations, check in and check out
- Towel/sheet “recycling” (optional washing)
- In-room recycling of bottles, newspaper, plastic
- Environmental policy

# Hotels: Basic

## Case for Recycling #1



It takes an estimated 319\* days for an aluminum can to be manufactured, an average of 3 days for it to be bought by a consumer, and only minutes to drink.

Approximately 15% of aluminum cans are recycled; the remainder go to landfill. They do not decompose.

In 1999, the US threw away enough aluminum to replace its commercial aircraft fleet every three months.

*\* Source: Natural Capitalism*

# Hotels: Basic

## Case for Recycling #2



It takes 98 tons of various resources to produce 1 ton of paper.

Paper fibers can be recycled four - six times. Once they are no longer long enough to be made back into paper, they automatically enter the slurry in which paper is made. Waste slurry can be burned and made into energy or used in fertilizers.

# Hotels: Advanced



- Water-efficient bathroom fixtures
  - Low flow shower heads
  - Low flush toilets
- [Energy-efficient lighting](#); Sensors, timers or card-key controlled lighting
- Environmentally friendly [cleaning products](#)
- Back-of-house recycling
- [Waste audits](#) conducted
- Low [volatile organic compound](#) paints and carpets
- Environmentally advanced construction (LEEDS)
- Green certification (i.e. Green Key)

# Food and Beverage: Basic



- Reusable china service for meals; no disposables
- Water jugs instead of [bottled water](#)
- Spoons, not stir sticks
- Cloth napkins
- Bulk condiments (sugar, cream, etc.)
- Realistic guarantees for F&B functions
- Vegetarian options for all meals

# Food and Beverage: Basic Case for Non-Bottled Water\*



- North Americans pay 2-3 times the cost of gas for something we can get free (and safely) from the tap
- Every week, there are 37,800 18-wheelers that deliver water on our roads
- Up to 2 litres of water are used to wash each glass bottle (i.e. Pellegrino).
- Aquafina and Dasani brands both use municipal water sources (like your own tap water)
- 38 billion water bottles a year end up in landfills...1 billion dollars worth of plastic.

\* *From Fast Company*

# Food and Beverage: Advanced



- Re-usable or organic centre-pieces
- [Sustainable](#) food choices (i.e. stay away from [endangered fish choices](#))
- Local food sourcing (100 mile diet)
- Composting
- Food donation to a food recovery organization (i.e. Second Harvest)
- [Fair trade](#) tea, coffee, cocoa, sugar, chocolate

# Transportation



Consider the location of the meeting in relation to where the delegates are coming from. Try and place it as close to the majority of people as possible.

Transportation is the largest contributor to a meetings' carbon footprint\*.

# Transportation: Local/On-site



- Shuttles to reduce the number of vehicles
- Shuttles do not idle their engines and follow other [environmental driving tips](#).
- Preference to shuttle services that offer hybrid vehicles
- Put green performance measures into transportation contracts
- Offer bus passes and walking maps to delegates
- Suggest walking routes

# Transportation: Non Local



- The air travel carbon footprint is affected by how many transfers, type of aircraft, and whether you travel first or economy class.
- Buy [carbon credits](#) on behalf of delegates or suggest that delegates purchase them themselves.
- Choose cities that are hubs so delegates do not have connecting flights
- Give preference to those cities who have good public transit; also good public transit from airport to downtown. Write this into the RFP.

# Transportation: Think Lean

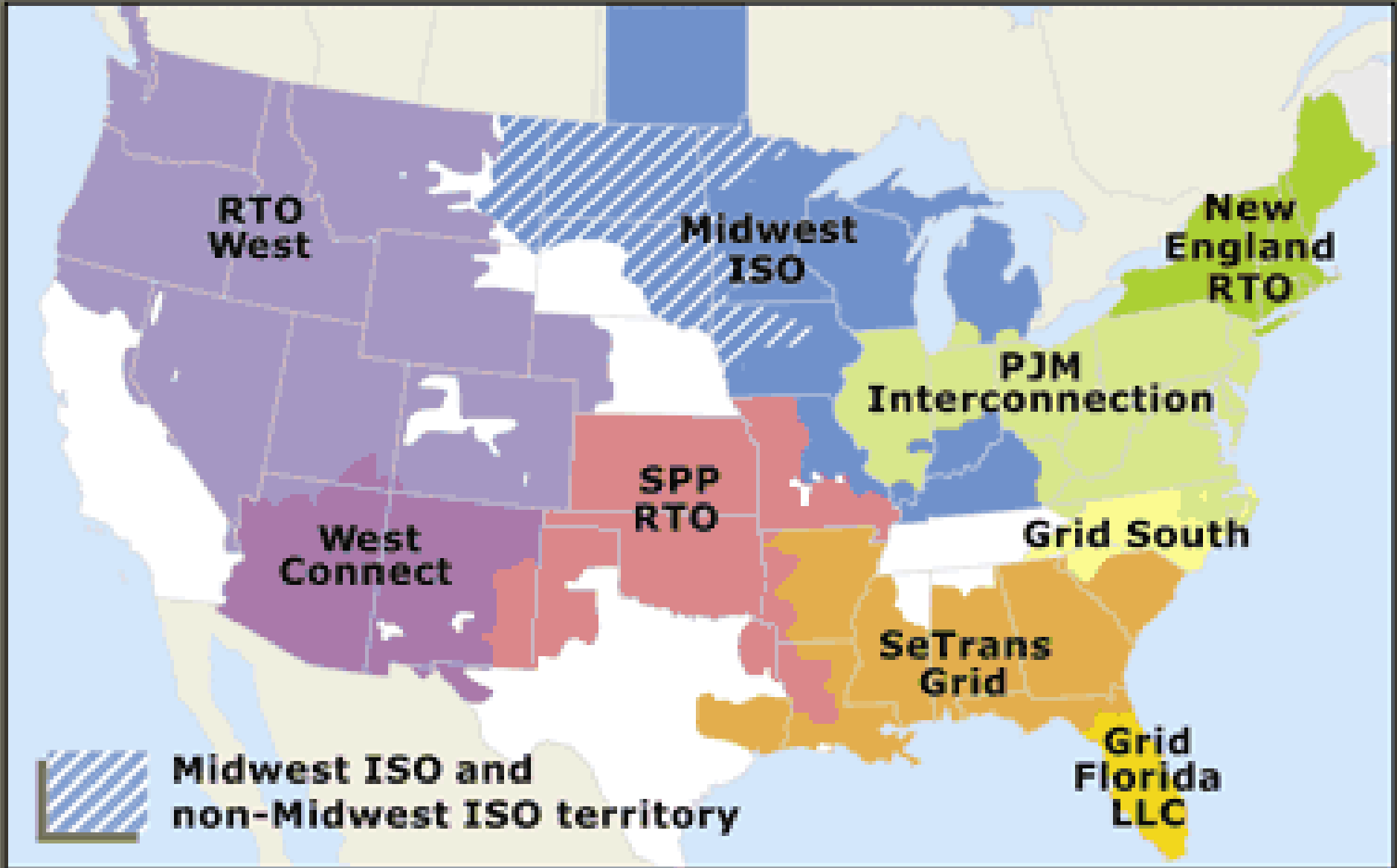


Meetings and events  
depend on their attendees to be successful.

Many other service providers, such as electricity grids, have determined that their profitability depends on the rate and location of customer “pull”...that is, demand for services.

This is an excellent business case for smaller, regional events that are situated close to the most customer “pull”. It may have the affect of reducing some critical environmental factors, such as distance traveled, and increasing the margin of profitability.

# United States Electricity Centres



# Technology



Technology can be a great green meetings enabler, as well as helping organizations achieve other objectives related to education, social networking and community.

# Technology: Go Close-to-Paperless



- Leverage technology to reduce the use of paper
  - Pre-event promotion
  - Publishing conference guides on an as-needed basis using such printing services as [www.lulu.com](http://www.lulu.com)
  - Links for destination information such as [wikitravel.org](http://wikitravel.org)
  - Electronic signatures for contracts
  - On-site, such as registration, the replacement of hand-outs and evaluations
  - Post-event, for information storage

# Technology: Increased life span



- Benefit is the potential life span of the information produced
  - Pre-event attendee engagement through blogs, wikis
  - Content management
  - Ability to be transmitted and stored
  - Creation of shorter-term educational vehicles between live events or to enhance live events, such as webinars and podcasts that can be archived and used on an on-demand, just-in-time basis (information the customer wants when they need it and have time to access it)

# Standards



- There is currently a movement towards green meetings standards
- British Standard 8901 for Event Sustainability is the first in the world and is looking for North American test cases. The hope is that this will become an ISO (International Standards Organization) standard
- In North America, several industry organizations in conjunction with the US Environmental Protection Agency are beginning a process of setting standards

# Basics for Delegates



## Delegates (Including Media)

- On-line registration
- Confirmation by phone or email
- Re-usable nametags and [lanyards](#)
- Post-consumer paper for nametags/vegetable based inks
- Water bottles, not bottled water
- On-line evaluations
- Gifts should be minimally packaged, durable (or consumable) and non toxic
- Offer a discount for those delegates who bring their own bags; they should indicate this when they register.

# Basics for Exhibitors/Sponsors



- Eliminate give-aways unless service-based
- Limit pamphlets and encourage on-line resources
- Signage is reusable and non-dated
- Alternatives might include a virtual trade show
- Place recycling containers in the trade show area and garbage cans at harder-to-reach locations just off the trade show floor to encourage recycling

# On-Site Office



- Use whiteboards instead of flipcharts
- If flipcharts, use [recycled paper](#)
- Use [SMARTBoards](#)
- Burn a CD, provide USB portals on-site or post materials on website
- If printed materials are used, use recycled paper with a high post-consumer content and print on both sides
- Ensure computers are not left on when not in use
- Ensure recycle bins are placed in offices and throughout the meeting event area at frequent intervals
- Signage is reusable and non-dated

# Educate



- Remind delegates daily of the environmental programs before the speakers are introduced
- Let stakeholders know what your environmental policy as well as specific goals for the event
- Educate delegates about the area that they will be in, including special environmental challenges or designations such as national parks or UNESCO World Heritage sites
- Follow up the event with environmental tracking measurements

# Things to Measure



- Weight of recycled goods, including
  - Paper
  - Glass
  - Aluminum
- Amount/weight of food composted
- Amount/number of meals sent to food recovery organizations
- Amount/weight of paper saved through provision of services in alternate ways (i.e. on-line conference programs, etc.)
- Total mileage traveled by attendees, staff, presenters; your “Event Miles”
- Carbon emissions through travel
- Total energy usage

## Case Study: The European Meetings and Events Conference



The first event to attempt to become officially certified by the new British Standard 8901 for sustainable events, we have officially achieved both Phase 1 (planning) and Phase 2 (implementation) certification to date.

Phase 3, the reporting phase, will begin after the event.

# Case Study: The European Meetings and Events Conference



## **Sustainability goals:**

- To raise awareness and provide education on sustainability within the UK meetings and events industry.
- To create a benchmark for the sustainable development of The European Meetings and Events Conference
- To achieve BS 8901 Sustainable Event Standard

## Case Study: The European Meetings and Events Conference



### **Sustainability Volunteer Team:**

This team is briefed on sustainability, the objectives of the conference and the 8901 process.

- They interviewed all attendees to discover how they travelled to the event and what their mileage was (to track event miles)
- They will also track all venue waste, recycling, and energy usage (food, paper, plastic, bottles, gas, electric and water).
- Attendees can sign up at the Sustainability Desk to become a sustainability volunteer at any point; the opportunity is limited to ten people at a time, three times a day. It allows delegates to get really active on sustainability.

# Case Study: The European Meetings and Events Conference



## Community Involvement:

Newham is a farm in a local park. Volunteers will have the opportunity to help by painting and (believe it, or not) milking goats. All volunteers will also learn how to stage their own community events in the future.

# Case Study: The European Meetings and Events Conference



## Supplier Engagement:

- All suppliers were contacted in advance to discuss our goals and sustainability initiatives by telephone, email, conference call and the opportunity to attend Positive Impact sessions where sustainability was discussed.
- Success story: One of the suppliers attending decided to re-create their business plan along sustainable guidelines in response to these sessions.

# Case Study: The European Meetings and Events Conference



## Advance Communication:

- Everyone coming on-site (suppliers, sponsors) was contacted to discuss the sustainability policy and the goals of 8901.
- Everything they are bringing on-site will be measured and, in some cases, sustainable alternatives will be suggested.

## Case Study: The European Meetings and Events Conference



- **Offsetting:** Carbon offsetting will be available for the event
- **Delegate bags:** Are cotton and coconut; left-over bags will be donated to a local school

## Case Study: The European Meetings and Events Conference



Positive Impact is a not-for-profit project focused on providing education in sustainability to the events industry, to aid in setting standards for sustainable events.

All stakeholders were encouraged to attend these free sessions. There were three Positive Impact sessions:

1. *The Challenges of Waste and Energy*
2. *Fairtrade, Organic and Local Produce and How to Tackle the Issue of Food Waste*
3. *Steps to Certification*

# Most Impactful



## Food

- Offer bulk condiments for things like sugar and cream
- Do not use disposable items like plastic or paper coffee cups
- Offer water in jugs, not bottles
- Offer local food choices and stay away from endangered species.
- Donate left-over food to local programs

## Venues

- Ensure the accommodation offers in-room recycling of towels, sheets, plastic, paper and bottles

# Most Impactful



## Leverage Technology:

- Eliminate hand-outs and printed contracts. Offer educational information on-line, burn a CD or offer pre-loaded memory sticks
- On-line registration and confirmation for both delegates and media

## Recycle

- Offer recycling stations for paper, glass, aluminium cans
- Measure and report quantity; create a baseline for continuous improvement

## Educate

- Ensure you tell your stakeholders what you are doing and what results you have had

# Make it Work For You



**Basic**



**Involved**

**Do what is possible; basics are easy and make a difference**

**No Cost**



**Expensive**

**Take your budget into consideration; however, “advanced” isn’t necessarily expensive, just time-consuming**

**Balance of:**



**COST**



**TIME**



**“DO-ABILITY” PARTNERS**



# Resources



- Government of Canada Green Meetings:  
[http://international.gc.ca/foreign\\_policy/ees/EnvironMan/system/greenop/greenmeeting/annex-en.asp](http://international.gc.ca/foreign_policy/ees/EnvironMan/system/greenop/greenmeeting/annex-en.asp)
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency:  
<http://www.epa.gov/oppt/greenmeetings/pubs/who.htm>
- Blue-Green meetings: <http://www.bluegreenmeetings.org/>
- Green Meetings Industry Council:  
<http://www.greenmeetings.info/>
- Convention Industry Council Green Meetings:  
[http://www.conventionindustry.org/projects/green\\_mtgs.htm](http://www.conventionindustry.org/projects/green_mtgs.htm)
- David Suzuki Sustainable Meetings:  
[http://www.davidsuzuki.org/Climate\\_Change/What\\_You\\_Can\\_Do/carbon\\_neutral\\_events\\_2.asp](http://www.davidsuzuki.org/Climate_Change/What_You_Can_Do/carbon_neutral_events_2.asp)

# Resources



- Energy Efficient lighting: [http://www.eartheasy.com/live\\_energyeff\\_lighting.htm](http://www.eartheasy.com/live_energyeff_lighting.htm)
- Waste Audits: [http://www.cook.rutgers.edu/~envpurchase/basics\\_cycle\\_audits.htm](http://www.cook.rutgers.edu/~envpurchase/basics_cycle_audits.htm)
- Bottle water: [www.fastcompany.com/magazine/117/features-message-in-a-bottle.html](http://www.fastcompany.com/magazine/117/features-message-in-a-bottle.html)
- Sustainable food: [www.sustainabletable.org](http://www.sustainabletable.org)
- Sustainable fish: [www.oceansalive.org/eat.cfm](http://www.oceansalive.org/eat.cfm)
- Fair Trade products: [www.transfair.ca](http://www.transfair.ca)
- Eco-Driving: <http://www.ford.com/our-values/environment/air-climate/eco-driving/ecodriving-458p>

# Calculators



- Paper Choice Calculator:  
<http://www.edf.org/papercalculator/>
- Event Footprint Calculator:  
<http://www.epa.vic.gov.au/ecologicalfootprint/calculators/event/introduction.asp>