

Put an Environmental Twist on Your Meetings

Planning a green meeting takes passion - passion for the planet and for changing the way meetings and conferences are developed. Meetings are a critical way of connecting with employees, sharing ideas, building strategy and learning new skills - it can also be a great way to educate your attendees on the importance of sustainability and the environmental challenges our planet faces.




Getting started with planning a green meeting takes initiative, research and strategy. Start by focusing on simple changes you can make and gradually, with each event you plan, making it greener will become easier! Always make sure to engage stakeholders in the green meeting process for support before you begin.

You may need to sell the concept of green meetings to stakeholders by discussing the positive affects it will have on how the public perceives your organization. There are a range of environmental benefits plus cost savings that come with hosting green meetings - not to mention an enhanced public image. You could also add that by becoming a leader in green meetings, there may also be increased sponsorship or funding from outside sources to your company. Going green provides a competitive edge!

Printing fewer handouts, eliminating bottled water and costly giveaways will save money for your organization but also save waste from landfills. Remember: it's about the triple bottom line. It's where a single green meeting ends and sustainability begins.

Speakers are becoming increasingly aware of greening their presentations by printing fewer handouts - some eliminating them altogether. Having a speaker present over a web conference not only reduces impact on the environment but can also reduce the fees associated with booking a speaker.

Ask Yourself These Questions:

-  How will we reduce waste?
-  How will we measure our progress?
-  What are the potential benefits (cost savings, stakeholders trust, enhance corporate image?)

Use this Checklist to Plan Your Green Meeting:

Getting Started

- Set goals and objectives for your green meeting "Reduce use of paper by 75%."
- Decide how you will measure progress before and during event and success post-event.
- Inform stakeholders of your environment policy and goals.
- Appoint someone/a team to take responsibility of all green aspects of the meeting.
- Use an onsite tracking form to note progress during event (material recycled, effective signage, amount recycled, eliminated or reduced, etc.)
- Use online registration, confirm through email, telephone.

Venue and Accommodation

- Choose venues in cities with mass transit systems, bicycle and pedestrian-friendly routes that connect to hotels and sites.
- Find venues that use environmentally-friendly practices. Let them know your plan to meet green.
- Choose hotels in close proximity to the event location to encourage guests to walk. Provide attendees with a walking route map.

Transportation

- Encourage sustainable and environmentally-friendly travel.
- Consider offsetting the carbon emissions generated by the travel of guests to and from the event by planting trees, using green power at the event or buy carbon credits.
- Try to have the meeting in the area where the majority of attendees are from.
- Use shuttle service to reduce number of vehicles traveling to the meeting.

Encourage your speaker to take part in sustainable initiatives if they don't already have their own plan of action. Communicate with your guests that handouts may not be available but offer downloadable versions after the event.

Embrace the message of green meetings and others will surely follow. Inform and educate - make sure attendees know alternative options are available (carpooling, organic food, jump drives, etc) and why your

Get Started on Creating a Corporate Policy:

- 📌 Use green suppliers – during events and general business practices
- 📌 Embrace community support/involvement
- 📌 Make 'going green' part of the corporation's goals
- 📌 Get a buy-in from all departments in your organization
- 📌 Educate staff on your green policies
- 📌 Train staff continuously
- 📌 Measure success
- 📌 Communicate your policies, goals and success to stakeholders

company has chosen not to offer costly promotional items, bottled water and handouts. Establish a volunteer "green team" to spread the message during the event. Communicate how much waste was eliminated to clients, attendees and stakeholders during and after the event.

Continue your new green meeting strategies by listing your corporate initiatives on your website. Develop a corporate social responsibility policy. Implement changes to the daily activities in your office (recycling, conserving energy/paper, carpooling, etc) and encourage clients to do the same. Your company's actions will have a direct impact on its community by increasing environmental awareness.

Make sure your company or association is ready to meet the challenges and opportunities. Lead the charge. Every step forward is a step in the right direction.

Terms to Know:

CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) – Taking public interest into corporate decision making by embracing responsibility for the impact of their activities on the environment, consumers and communities and eliminating practices that harm the public sphere.

Triple Bottom Line – People, Planet, and Profit. The measurement of an organization's agenda to take in account ecological and social performance in addition to financial performance.

Carbon Neutral - achieving net zero carbon emissions by counterbalancing a measured amount of carbon released.

Carbon Offset – an emission reduction credit that results in the reduction of carbon dioxide or other greenhouse gases into the atmosphere than would otherwise occur, typically measured in metric tonnes of CO2-equivalents.

Signage and Communication

- ❑ If you need to print materials, use recycled paper (FSC Certified)
- ❑ Avoid using dates/times for signage so they can be used for future conferences/events
- ❑ Post signs at the event to let attendees know it is a green meeting. Educate guests and encourage them to practice green habits. Tell them your environmental policies and specific goals related to the event and remind them of this daily.
- ❑ Use reusable nametags or lanyards and ask that guests return them after the event
- ❑ Use wipe boards

Food and Beverage

- ❑ Work with your caterer to include sustainable food options such as locally grown or organic ingredients.
- ❑ Avoid bottled water, Styrofoam, plastics, etc.
- ❑ Use reusable dishes and if you must use disposables, choose biodegradable products
- ❑ When using bulk items like condiments, use hygienic practices to avoid the spread of germs

Giveaways and Gifts

- ❑ Encourage waste minimization with exhibitors and exhibition organizers
- ❑ Inform decorators and exhibitors of the events environmental policy and mandate
- ❑ Source eco-sweg
- ❑ Use jump drives to share information, power point slides and notes. To encourage use, offer promotions/giveaways on the device

Post-Event

- ❑ Post event materials and documents online
- ❑ Inform stakeholders of measurements and success based on goals set
- ❑ Add sustainability to your event agendas in the future



Get Inspired. Go Green. Plan a Better Meeting. See the Future. Get Connected.