

Sustainable Events Guide

The advent of BS8901, a new standard for the event industry to encourage sustainability, has opened the door for using green issues as a selling point. From the choice of venue, through the invitation process, catering and delegate pack, a:live will help find ways to make your event greener. Here's a snapshot of some things you might like to consider:

- Venue – central location for all delegates; controllable light and heat; optimum size
- Catering – local produce; healthy menu options; water – ask for tap!
- Delegate management – email invitation and web registration process; re-usable badge holders; minimise content of delegate packs in recyclable, branded but not date/event specific holders; black and white double sided print, use recycled paper, human signage v printed matter, avoid laminates
- Techs – use in-house whenever possible; stock sets made with FSC certified wood and sustainable finishes; LED lighting; use of projection for branding

For the future, the ultimate green event is the virtual meeting, however the jury is still out on whether you can ever beat the value of face to face meetings and networking.

What are we doing behind the scenes for you?

Local sourcing and sustainable procurement

We look at the supply chain, so you don't have to. We source local ethical suppliers wherever possible – this means we can benefit from local knowledge and less travel is involved reducing costs and emissions.

We aim to create a partnership between our organisation and our suppliers so that sustainability is an issue which is understood and embraced by every level of our supply chain.

Transparency

One of the key elements of a sustainable approach is a willingness to share information and best practice without expecting anything in return. We have committed to publishing information about a:live online every year. We aim to use plain English in our policies to ensure the message is not obscured. We also seek transparency from our suppliers.

Financial Impact

Running your events more sustainably should save you money. If you can manage your resources to reduce overall consumption, reuse materials wherever possible and recycle anything you no longer need, you should be able to make savings. Running a sustainable event is all about managing your resources, and your budget is one of the most important resources you have. If your event is more expensive than previous similar projects, or fails to deliver on its objectives, then you risk sending the message that sustainability is a costly indulgence rather than a necessity for the future success of your organisation.

In more detail

Energy

The Committee on Climate Change has recently advised the government that the UK needs an 80% reduction in emissions of greenhouse gases by 2050 in order to help avert global warming.

- Use venues that have switched to a green energy tariff, or better still, a dedicated renewable energy supplier. Some venues have even installed their own energy saving systems, such as solar panels and hydrogen fuel cells.
- Hold your event in a room with natural daylight to reduce artificial lighting requirements.

Transport

Road transport now accounts for 22% of UK CO2 emissions and road traffic is increasing 2% each year.

- List public transport options on delegate booking confirmations.
- Find out delegates transport methods at the event and aim to increase the number travelling by public transport or lift share at future events.
- Set up a page with Liftshare for your event – to encourage delegates, speakers, entertainers and staff to share lifts.
- Offer an incentive / discount to those travelling by public transport.
- Remove transport implications completely by organising a virtual event.
- Ask suppliers to commit to fuel efficient techniques for their fleet.

<http://www.transportdirect.info/Web2/Home.aspx?repeatingloop=Y> will find the transport methods available for a journey and compare typical CO2 emissions for each option.

Waste and recycling

It is estimated that there is only between five and nine years capacity in the UK's landfill sites, so we have a serious need to reduce, reuse and recycle.

- Ensure the venue and suppliers are able to recycle waste at the event.
- Keep a measure (eg by weight) of the amount of waste not recycled, and aim to reduce this.
- Closed loop recycling – products made from recycled goods that can be recycled again and again.
- Ask suppliers to cut down on unnecessary packaging and ask if they have biodegradable options.
- Aim to replace paper with digital literature wherever possible
- Re-use the same branding and merchandise at following events by future proofing it.

Visit www.wrap.org.uk for further advice.

Land use

The effect we have on land can have an intense, long lasting impact and careful consideration is needed to ensure we're not damaging something we may take for granted.

- Take photographs before and after the event to compare the state of the location afterwards
- Choose previously developed land over Greenfield sites
- Incorporate an activity into the event which will actually improve land use
- Consider using composting toilets eg www.comfycrappers.com

Water

Reducing water waste and usage should be central to sustainability planning. The average person in England uses 150 litres of water per day, 50% more than 25 years ago, and this has led to several shortages in South East England in particular.

- Choose venues that have instigated water saving devices, such as Hippo's in the toilet cistern and flow controllers on existing taps.
- Stick to tap water rather than bottled water wherever possible. If you really can't then use an ethical water brand such as Belu, One Water or Thirsty Planet.

Source: Seventeen Events www.seventeenevents.co.uk

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