

Green Events

Hosting events or meetings can be a great way to boost business and provide a memorable experience for guests. However, hosting events or meetings can also be extremely impactful to the environment due to the large amount of resources and items that can be required to make an event successful. Having a “green events” package available and ready to offer to guests can be a great way to keep these events environmentally sustainable while still providing a wonderful experience for your guest. Hosting a “green event” involves conserving energy and water consumed as a part of the event, minimizing waste generated, and providing sustainable food and transportation options to attendees.

Maintaining standard “green events” practices can also set your facility apart from competition among guests who are looking specifically to maintain a small environmental footprint at their event.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS

Set your business apart. Offering a standard set of environmentally preferred events practices may be a selling point for guests interested in sustainability.

Better understand the environmental footprint of events. Then, identify more sustainable alternatives to offer. By considering more sustainable options for green events or meetings, staff and management can learn more about the overall environmental impact of choices made in hosting events.

Demonstrate sustainability values to a large audience. Promote environmentally preferred practices to event or meeting attendees.

Develop working relationships with vendors and contractors that prioritize sustainability. Be sure they know your facility can host “green events” so they can promote it as a location to future guests. Several states require facilities to provide a “green events” option or be certified as a sustainable choice to use for business events and lodging purposes.

THIS GUIDE IS APPLICABLE...

FOR

- ✓ Food & Beverage
- ✓ Lodging
- ✓ Travel & Tourism
- ✓ Recreation

TO

- ✓ Management
- ✓ Housekeeping
- ✓ Event Planning
- ✓ Maintenance & Operations
- ✓ Food Operations
- Front of the House

BEST PRACTICES

1

Develop a standard “green events” guide. Consider compiling a list of preferred vendors, environmentally preferred practices that can be offered, and alternatives for guests seeking a “green event” into a guidance document. Once these practices are documented, events coordinators will know where to look and potential guests will be able to see what an environmentally preferred event looks like at your facility. Also, be prepared to answer questions from potential guests, including about sustainable practices and environmental usage data at your facility. Provide options for sustainably traveling to your facility such as through public transit, ridesharing, or shuttling. With a standard guide in place, your business will be ready to respond quickly to requests from guests.

2

Market the “green events” option proactively. The best way to encourage sustainable events at your facility is to openly market the ability to host these types of events. Consider featuring this option prominently on your website and in other marketing materials and offer to speak to potential guests about the option in further detail to ensure that the package is the right fit for their event.

3

Avoid disposables when possible. Meetings and events can create an abundance of trash. To minimize waste generated, avoid disposable items such as plates, cups, napkins, tablecloths paper communications, badges, and décor when setting up for a “green event.” If special equipment is needed for an event, consider renting or purchasing that equipment as an investment for your facility.

4

Ensure that there is an accurate head count. Over-purchasing food and supplies negatively impacts financial and environmental goals. To avoid over-ordering, ensure that there is an accurate head count for the event to reduce food waste and an excess of supplies.

5

Maintain and use a list of contractors and vendors that can meet sustainability goals. Instituting sustainable practices at an event can be largely driven by the vendors and contractors used for services like catering, providing furniture, and technology needs. Explore vendors and contractors in your area that utilize environmentally preferred or socially responsible practices and use these businesses for “green events” needs.

6

Utilize digital communication. Try to utilize digital rather than printed communication as much as possible. Examples include online invitations, emailed receipts and contracts, and an online version or app for schedules and attendee communication. If communication needs to be printed, utilize paper products with a high recycled content, double-side print when possible, and consider small sizes of handouts to fit additional items on a single piece of paper.

BEST PRACTICES

7

Tell attendees that they are attending a “green event.” Although the event or meeting organizer might already promote sustainable practices, attendees provide a great audience through which to educate and discuss the environmentally preferred initiatives taken at the event. Be sure to promote these practices to guests and attendees to raise awareness around environmental issues and point out the facility's practices.

8

Think carefully about free items for attendees and décor. The waste footprint of an event is more than what is thrown away at the event itself – providing items for attendees to take home that are likely to be disposed of later is an extension of the event's waste footprint. To reduce future waste associated with the event, consider digital items like online coupons to provide to event or meeting attendees. If giving away physical items, prioritize sustainable options and items that are likely to provide long-lasting use to those who take them. Similarly, try to use décor that will not be discarded immediately or that can find a reused purpose at the facility or with the attendees.

9

Provide responsible waste management options. Despite intentions to minimize waste produced at events, it is bound to happen. Be sure to provide as many responsible means for managing waste as possible, such as reusing items, composting food scraps, and recycling. The Compost Company, for example, has a specific service for composting organics generated at events. Consider where attendees will spend time and generate waste and try to situate waste management solutions in convenient areas.

RESOURCES

Eventbrite

- [How to Plan a Green Event](#)

Four Points by Sheraton Tallahassee Downtown

- [Sustainable Meeting Practices](#)

Green Hotelier

- [What is a Green Meeting](#)

Keep Kansas City Beautiful

- [Green Event Planning Guide](#)