



Krisam Group & Global Events Partners



Going Green Guidelines

With more and more companies making strides to become more socially and environmental conscious, Krisam Group & Global Events Partners wanted to provide you with some ideas, suggestions and some highlights from across the industry. These provide you with ways you can become more “green” through your events, questions to consider and ways to give back to the local community where you are holding an event.

Meetings Industry’s Effect

The Average U.S. meeting attendee, over the course of a three-day event, uses more than 2,000 BTUs of electricity, consumes more than 800 gallons of water, and generates more than 80 pounds of waste. While we’re by no means saying stop holding meetings, there are things at the margins planners can do to help eliminate and reduce the effect on the environment, and in many situations, reducing costs.

Work with your Partners!

While the below is a sampling/summary of some of the common things planners are doing, if in doubt, work with your partners in the local destination. Ask what they are doing in their destinations, ask what they’re vendors are doing and what they can provide. Your GEP DMC can be a tremendous resource as it pertains to the vendors in the area that are providing socially conscious services, help with venues that are close to your hotels so transportation isn’t needed, work with transportation companies that provide cars that emit less carbons/gases, where food can be donated, etc. They are the experts in their destinations, so take advantage of their expertise. In addition, ask what your hotels are doing, and what they can provide for you to become more socially conscious.

Things to discuss with your hotel/venue:

There are several things a planner can ask their hotels/venues when considering a hotel/destination about their green practices. Many planners include these questions in their proposals, look for this information on their websites and bring up during site visits.

Site Selection

If you are making decisions for your hotel/destination based on their green practices, there are several questions you can be asking the hotel in advance:

- Do they recycle?
- Do they compost?
- Do they have access to public transportation?
- Do they use sustainable caterers and food service?
- Can they buy food from local sources?
- Do they use environmentally friendly cleaners and energy-efficient lights?
- Are they certified by EPA Energy Star, Green Seal or are a LEED Certified Building?

Onsite Implementation

If based on your company or clients goals and needs, you do not make decisions based on the hotels green policies, there are several things you can ask your hotel to comply with to make your experience more “green”. Some suggestions include:

- Ask the hotel to only clean linens upon request
- Ask attendees when checking in whether or not they would like newspaper delivery instead of automatically delivering them a paper.

- Does the hotel offer recycling options for guests in their sleeping rooms? If not, have attendees bring items to recycling bins in meeting area.
- Do not to replace the amenities daily unless they are gone. Use of soap and shampoo dispensers would be optimal.
- Housekeeping staff to shut blinds and turn down the heat/air conditioning during the day in rooms while attendees are gone or during turn-down service.

Food & Beverage:

F&B is an obvious place to try and reduce waste at a meeting, and there are several easy ways to do this, while also giving back to the community. Hotels are getting these requests more frequently from planners, and are making strides to work with planners to implement some of these things when possible. Some suggestions are:

- When possible, work with caterers and hotel staff who are familiar with planning environmentally-friendly meetings.
- Ask your supplier to buy local, in-season produce to avoid costly transportation of goods.
- Stop offering plastic bottles of water. Offer pitchers of water instead.
- Provide bulk condiments, beverages, and other food service items instead of individually wrapped packages, when possible. This includes sugar, creamer, butter, cream cheese, etc.
- Avoid use of coffee stirrers, straws, and paper doilies. Use spoons instead.
- Have cocktail napkins available at bars but encourage bartenders not to hand them out with each drink, or use coasters instead of cocktail napkins.
- If possible, ask attendees to pre-order meals to save food waste.
- Donate excess food to community service organizations; compost perishables not donated.
- Provide reusable coffee mugs rather than disposable cups and do not use saucers.
- If using 'to-go' cups, use recycled brand.
- Sort and recycle all nonfood waste — paper, cardboard, glass, aluminum, metals, carpet, food waste, and grease.
- Ask for catering plates, cups and glasses to be china or glass (non-disposable). If plastic, ask for washable dishes. Try and avoid Styrofoam. You can move in the direction of eliminating disposable tableware, although renting and bussing dishes sometimes costs more.

Program Execution:

There are numerous action steps you can put into place throughout the planning and execution of your event to be more socially conscious. Some suggestions below:

- Print fewer promotional materials and use post-consumer recycled paper for those you do print.
- When providing copies of documents, print on both sides of the paper.
- Eliminate paper handouts at education sessions. Post materials and resources online and encourage use of free Wi-Fi throughout the building, if available.
- Print name badges on recycled paper and recycle name badge holders. Offer to draw name badges from recycle bin for a prize to entice people to turn them in at the end of the program.
- Include green tips and guidelines for the participants in the program or in onscreen slides during program.
- Encourage exhibitors to avoid bringing large quantities of collateral and fewer samples, and send information upon request.
- Minimize packaging materials by shipping displays in reusable, recyclable crates and containers and using biodegradable shipping and packing materials.
- If using flower arrangements, consider using organic flowers. Consider using plants or trees that can be replanted after program.
- Encourage attendees to turn off lights and air conditioners in their hotel rooms when leaving.
- Collect unopened bath products and amenities and donate them to a local homeless shelter.
- Use local talent, products, and services when possible.
- Separate recycling bins for attendees to use at all catered functions, registration, and meeting space. Label clearly.

- Recycled-content promotional products when deciding on pens, bags, shirts and caps. There are beautiful awards made of recycled glass.
- Signage: Recyclable cardboard signs instead of the typical vinyl.
- Provide unused office supplies and equipment to local schools or charitable organizations.
- Consider getting a recycling sponsor for your event. One that may cover the carbon-offsets for the event. (Donate trees, purchase renewable energy credits)
- Other possible sponsorships: Cupcoats – reusable cup sleeves <http://www.cupcouture.com/wholesale.htm>

Transportation:

As you can imagine, transportation is one of the biggest factors as it relates to carbon emissions. While there are things planners can do to choose destinations based on distance and travel times to reduce their carbon footprint, there are many planners that are not able to choose their destinations in this manner. At a minimum, there are some things onsite and in the planning process that a planner can implement/consider to reduce the program's carbon footprint.

- Choose off-site venues in part based on their proximity to the headquarters hotel to limit transportation needs.
- Work with your DMC to find dine-arounds that are within walking distance of hotels
- Promote the use of public and mass transportation in advance and offer transit passes via registration process.
- If doing transfers, work with your DMC and transportation company to see if they have hybrid vehicles or vehicles that offset carbon emissions
- Secure as many hotel rooms as possible within walking distance of the venue and public transit.
- For regional or drive-to meetings, encourage carpooling.

Resources:

While there are many resources online to help planners sort through this and educate themselves on holding green meetings, below are a few that we found particularly helpful:

Informational Websites:

- Website and resource for best practices, RFP language, tips and tools - www.greeneventsource.com
- Green meeting trends, case studies, looking for and working with green venues, green meeting checklists and tips - http://meetingsnet.com/green_meetings/
- National Recycling Coalition: Green Meetings Policy that covers their policies on printed materials, transportation, food & beverage, venues, convention centers, hotels, education and criteria for site visits - www.nrc-recycle.org/greenmeetingsp.aspx
- To measure your footprint and learn ways to offset your attendees carbon emissions such as implementing tree planting programs and other remedies to mitigate greenhouse gases – www.carbonfund.org

Vendor websites:

- Offers a wide selection of sustainable office products - www.thegreenoffice.com
- Offers badge holders, links, clips and lanyards that are environmentally friendly - www.biobadge.com
- Website that offers recyclable EcoSMART signs made from 100% recovered fibers and average 35% post consumer waste - www.meetingsigns.com