

Green Meeting Guide for Conferences and Trade Shows — Checklist

Below is an example of what customers look for when selecting their “green” meeting locations. Many agencies are required to select facilities that host green meetings. Contact the K-State Pollution Prevention Institute (PPI) for help at 800-578-8898 or sbeap@ksu.edu.

Source: www.epa.gov/epp/pubs/meet/greenmeetings.htm

Food & Beverage

- Consider cloth instead of paper napkins, and reusable plates, cups, and silverware.
- If disposable, rather than reusable service ware, is used, look for recycled-content and/or recyclable materials.
- Serve sugar, creamers, and condiments in reusable dishes rather than packets.
- Consider providing drinking water in pitchers or large reusable containers instead of small plastic bottles.
- Donate surplus food when possible to local shelters and food banks.

Location

- Select locations that, on average, minimize the distance the attendees have to travel.
- Select locations where the facilities needed for your meeting are all accessible to each other, the airport, and local attractions by mass transportation options.
- Get a sense of the availability of green services in cities under consideration. Some cities or regions of the country are further along in their awareness and protection of the environment and will make it easier for you to green your meeting.

Accommodations

- Select accommodations that allow for efficient transportation routes (walking paths, bicycle paths, public transportation).
- Choose a hotel that has energy and water conservation programs, including: automatic controls for the HVAC system; fluorescent lighting and automatic lighting controls; and low-flow taps, showerheads, and toilets.
- Make certain that there are recycling and waste minimization programs in place. Specifically, find out what items are recycled. Are recycling bins placed in all guestrooms?
- Donate used amenities (soap, bottles, etc.) to charitable organizations or recycle them.
- Give hotel guests the option to reuse towels and sheets.
- Utilize paperless check-in, checkout, and billing procedures to minimize use of paper.

Transportation

- Locate meetings and accommodations within walking distance of each other so that excessive vehicle travel is minimized. Make sure to include area restaurants and attractions.
- Provide shuttle services between meetings, accommodations, and restaurants to minimize car and taxi trips if walking isn't feasible.

Meeting Facilities

- Look for facilities that invite meeting attendees to share in energy conservation and waste reduction efforts—for example, by reducing paper towels, supporting use of soap dispensers versus individual soaps, avoiding waste, and participating in recycling programs.
- Look for meeting rooms with recycling bins, posted with a list of all items that can be recycled.
- Put recycling containers in visible locations at entrances to halls and in the pre-function area. Let attendees know that recycling containers will be available. Place visible signage instructing delegates as to what is and is not recyclable. Put additional containers in hotel lobbies near checkout areas.

Exhibitions

- Use signage that is reusable whenever possible.
- Reduce paper use by putting floor plans and exhibitor service kit items on your Web site when practical (and/or the decorator's Web site).
- Work with the shipping firm and decorator to minimize packing materials and to use recyclable and other environmentally preferable shipping and packing materials.
- Incorporate community service into the exhibition. Ask exhibitors to donate leftover flowers, giveaways such as trinkets, pencils, or T-shirts, or other booth decorations or items that would normally be thrown away to local shelters, hospitals, or schools. Set up areas for exhibitors to drop off reusable items at the end of the show.
- Discourage exhibitors from bringing large quantities of material to the show, which often end up in the trash because exhibitors don't want to ship unused conference materials back at the end of the show. Encourage exhibitors to bring small quantities and then mail (or e-mail) materials to clients from their offices after the show or refer clients to their Web site. Also, useful environmentally responsible gifts are preferable to items that will be discarded at the end of the show.

General Office Practices and Communications

- Reduce paper by allowing attendees to register online. Confirm registration by e-mail when possible.
- Recycle paper inserts and plastic badges.
- Use double-sided copies.
- Print marketing and registration materials (whenever possible) on recycled paper using soy-based ink.
- Promote electronic distribution instead of printed handouts to reduce paper usage.
- Encourage use of electronic presentations and distributing disk handouts to eliminate paper waste.
- Do not use mailing lists that have not been maintained. A mailing list more than 2 years old is usually unreliable.
- Provide information about the meeting and destination to potential attendees and allow them to register via e-mail on-line.
- Set up a system for making photocopies on demand instead of over-printing materials.
- Post minutes or other handouts on the Internet, or circulate them electronically after the meeting.