

10 Ways to ensure a Greener Event..

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Someone once said, "Everything is negotiable." That is certainly true during the *courtship phase* of venue selection for an event. If you are at ease with negotiating rates, dates and space, now is the time to add in your organization's sustainable initiatives as well.

It is also true that not purchasing items saves money and the environment. The best filter to use is the simple question, "Do we *really* need this?" What may have been necessary at last year's annual meeting may no longer be required or may have been superseded by technology.

Here is our Top Ten List of Ways to increase the profitability of your event by increasing revenue or cutting costs:

1. Get rid of individual water bottles. It is still surprising how many events haven't given this up even though the costs at most meeting venues are high. If you have already cut this cost, sodas can follow. Serving iced tea and lemonade in pitchers during the afternoon is perfectly acceptable.
2. Stop printing handouts and programs. Put them on the web or an app. I recently met with a tech guru who suggested designing your website to include conference information easily readable on a smart phone. It keeps attendees going back to your site even after the conference when most people delete the app.
3. Choose an event location that is on public transit or is within walking distance of your venue. Save on shuttles, rental cars and cabs while letting attendees enjoy the community.
4. Reuse signage or go electronic. Either way, your signage budget will be drastically reduced especially in upcoming years if you decide to reuse.
5. Use local food trucks for meals. Local food and the regional flavour provided by food trucks make this a trendy way to save money. For an in depth look at how to accomplish this sustainably, check out this blog ([link to blog](#)).
6. Serve vegetarian meals instead of meat. You've heard of Meatless Mondays, right? Incorporate this initiative into your conference as well. One recent event saved eight Olympic swimming pools of water and substantial dollars by switching from meat to vegetarian cuisine for lunch.
7. Give up conference bags. Unless you have a VERY good reason why not. Even grocery bags with the conference logo are getting to be old news.
8. Sponsors love to look good. Give them an opportunity to sponsor green angels, carbon offsets, green gamification, or sustainable food service.
9. Donate to save return shipping costs. Take a hard look at anything that can be donated locally instead of the costs and fuel for shipping them back. Renting, borrowing, or donating are better options.
10. Go virtual. While this is, by far, the best way to save money and the environment, it can also be the most controversial for some in this industry. Face-to-face meetings are important, there is no denying that, but there is also room for virtual meetings. Enlarge your audience, increase income, and provide valuable education to those who aren't physically attending.

Conferences and events build revenue for most organizations. They also improve the organization's image and help participants align with its mission and values. Environmental and economic savings are a win-win for all of us.

For more information on making your next event 'green', visit www.heritage-events.com

