



Conference & Meetings World Website
13 April 2011

THE SUSTAINABILITY TOP TEN FOR EVENTS



Sam Wilson, director of EcoEvents has come up with a sustainability top ten for events. In further weeks, Willson will look at each in more depth.

- 1** **Start at the beginning:** Consider environmental, social and economic issues from the very beginning of the event brief by finding out if there are any specific requirements. Most organisers have a corporate policy they would like you to support and may request meaningful KPI's (Key Performance Indicators) that they can take to the board for inclusion in Annual Reports.
- 2** **Be creative:** Integrate sustainability throughout the life cycle of the event - into your design, chosen materials and all communications (pre, during and post event) so that corporate values are experienced and you meet the event's identified objectives.
- 3** **Think Finances:** Most sustainability issues link to financial issues – so get the quick wins in the bag...simple measures for maxim return will always be there. Think about transportation, energy, waste and water and purchasing controls when it comes to achieving easy cost savings. Manage your resources to protect your profit margins whilst providing added value to the event!
- 4** **Conduct a waste audit:** Know what you and your team are handling. Is there any hazardous waste on site? And keep in mind that waste begins when we buy (most people forget this).

5 **Comply with the law:** Explore netregs.gov.uk and find out what legislation applies to your event. Most legal breaches involve incorrect disposal of effluent and illegal waste disposal. This can lead to fines and brand damage. The waste producer, which could well be you, is legally responsible (i.e. not your waste carrier as most people assume).

6 **Risk Assess:** Make sure you risk assess your event and related supply chain for environmental issues, and make sure controls are in place to mitigate risk. Emergency response procedures are equally as important and make sure you document any incidents so that you can provide an audit trail if necessary and also make sure you identify causes and implement appropriate corrective actions.

7 **Tailor make:** Give consideration to the venue and location of your event as this will define what you need to consider as a priority (is it in a park and therefore exposed to the outside elements, a fixed build, or a temporary structure?)

8 **Training. Training. Training:** At all levels, procedures are not worth the paper they are written on if no one knows about them and what they need to do. Identify roles, responsibilities, and authority so that accountabilities are clearly understood.

9 **Communicate:** Identify your key stakeholders - beginning with your own team as well as any relevant authorities. Make sure you communicate your objectives up, down and across the supply chain. Issue risk and method statements as necessary and collect the objective evidence that is relevant to them. Check that people are doing what they say they are doing and most importantly, get them engaged.

10 **Make sure your KPI's are meaningful:** For example, do not just measure KWH (for electrical consumption) - measure KWH per person, so that your benchmark has relevancy and purpose.

Any comments? Email cmw@mashmedia.net