



Timeline & Stakeholder Involvement for Greening Events

Event planners are busy people handling contracts, vendor negotiations and communications for every aspect of an event. For annual events, planning typically takes place as soon as the previous year’s event is concluded. Greening needs to take place along every step of the way.

Critical: The timeline of event production and greening an event are linked. Information about your program needs to be communicated to stakeholders every step of the way. Make your communications specific to each group to ensure greatest chance of involvement and success.

Timeline

- Select venue or location
 - Include language about services provided or available from the venue in your contract!
 - Who will handle materials?
 - How will materials be moved at the event? Union labor? Volunteers? Conservation Corps?
 - Who will cover cost for services?
- ASAP, marketing & attendee outreach begins
 - Leave No Trace or Pack Out What You Pack In
 - Zero Waste – why are you implementing the program?
 - Bring Your Own – water bottle, utensils, bandana, coffee mug, etc.
 - Develop stage statement (housekeeping notes about program) for use throughout the event
- Floor plan & event element selection
 - Make space for eco-stations in your floor plan or event layout
 - Identify key areas for signage about program
 - Include an educational center
 - Make sure elements are included on floor plan that is included in attendee materials (program book)
- Major service providers selected – Décor, destination companies, activity providers
 - As you shop for services, look for companies that will work with your goals in mind
 - General Contractors – Stetson versus ??? – carpet & table coverings
 - AV companies – who uses LED versus other lighting, alternative fuel for generators
 - Select local vendors when possible to reduce use of fuel
 - Tenting companies that reuse materials versus single use practices
 - Partner with local groups to handle recycling when possible

Stakeholders

- **Producers** – marketing materials & sponsorship benefits – what can be offered
 - They are minding the public image and the money
 - **Keep in mind their desire for brand awareness and event goals**

- **Sponsors**
 - Standard sponsor benefits include:
 - Banner placement
 - Inserts in goodie bags
 - Logos on signage and in media placements
 - Special booth or table locations (if an expo)
 - Carpet for top sponsors
 - **All this has potential to produce waste**

 - **Give them alternatives that will prevent waste at events**
 - Offer more web and online benefits
 - Sponsor a reusable water bottle or coffee mug
 - Sponsor refillable water stations throughout the event
 - Sponsor the eco-stations
 - Or sponsor one station with funds or by providing a monitor for the event
 - Sponsor event bandanas or reusable cloths for drying hands and/or cleaning reusable mugs
 - Sponsor linen and cloth table dressings instead of using paper goods and disposables
 - How to provide benefits without tons of inserts and give-aways that get used once and then are thrown away – yellow pages from Nonprofit Boot Camp

- **Sales team / exhibitors / food vendors**
 - Contract language regarding handouts and samples
 - Prohibit or limit quantity of handouts or other materials brought to the event

 - Leaving booth clear of materials
 - Leave No Trace – Green Festival - financial incentive, take pictures
 - This can reduce cleaning costs for the event

 - Making arrangements for reuse of materials they don't want to take with them
 - Needs to be in place *before* event begins.
 - Construction event examples: stone patio pieces, carpet tiles, etc.
 - Food samples that can be used at the office, or taken by volunteers or food bank. Chocolate!

 - Requiring food vendors to use only compostable materials
 - Include with other relevant information: health permits, fire permits, etc.
 - Provide technical assistance so food vendors can select the correct products for your program
 - Contact sheets for trusted vendors &/or for finding the right products

Stakeholders (continued)

➤ **How to deal with higher cost of products**

- Expect push back from vendors
- Event could share cost
- City could subsidize costs
- Event could add a surcharge to door fee for environmental stewardship. Fee could be waived for attendees that “bring their own” supplies, that don’t have to be disposed of.

➤ **Entertainers**

- Not a whole lot you can do for this group, but here are a few items that will help
- Let them know you are running a waste diversion program & how they can help
- Provide dedicated collection bins in green room and back-stage areas
- Coordinate travel arrangements and utilize green travel options

➤ **Other service providers**

- Give-aways, décor, AV
- Ask shippers to use reduced packaging – example from CDN Live!
- Use biodiesel generators and/or solar powered stages for outdoor needs
- Utilize reusable décor elements
- Advise service providers about program so they can help you reach your goals

➤ **Caterers**

- Requiring organic and/or local foods that are in season (when possible)
- Use bulk instead of individual packaged foods
- Offer healthy, unpackaged items, like fruit
- Collect compost food scraps in the prep areas
- Allowing time to train staff onsite to ensure program success

➤ **Attendees – information for the website**

- Bring your own water bottle
- Bring a bandana
- Take only what you need
- Leave No Trace or Pack Out What you Pack In
- Zero Waste – why they are implementing the program
- Stage and housekeeping announcements

Stakeholders (continued)

➤ Volunteers

- Can assist with set-up, teardown, and monitoring of eco-stations
- Can also assist with sorting activities
- Make a schedule – how many stations x volunteer shifts
- Start recruiting a minimum of two months in advance
- Appoint someone to manage volunteer recruitment and coordination onsite
- Provide something tangible for their efforts: t-shirt, water bottle, free meal, etc.
- Plan for attrition (recruit 25-50% more people than you really need)
- For fee based events, set up a volunteer recruitment table at the entrance to the event
- Let them know what to expect & what to bring: sunscreen, hat, water bottle, etc.
- Let them know what will be provided: gloves, aprons, pick-sticks, etc.
- Assume nothing – provide training specific to your event onsite
- Communicate all information electronically to reduce paper use

➤ Staff

- Highly recommend appointing one staff person to coordinate all greening efforts
- Inform all staff about program and goals, and what the chain of command is to communicate needs onsite
- Provide same training to staff and to volunteers, so more people can answer questions from attendees or others as needed

Use concise, simple language that is relevant to each group.

Although an event is an ever changing beast and can be a mad house on the ground, the planning portion is pretty much the same from year to year. Once you incorporate greening into each step of the process, you can replicate it again and again.

Historically, waste or garbage has been a simple issue: get a single bin for waste, use the venue labor or hire a service to collect the bagged attendee waste, and clean up the litter at the end. When we aim to divert waste, it requires several different functions.

It can cost more to collect compost and/or recycling at an event than to just collecting everything as waste. However, if an event incorporates greening principles along every step of the way, cost savings with in other areas will often offset any additional costs to the budget as a whole.

And, as you can see and probably know now, it is no simple task to “green” an event. However, it is possible and very rewarding.

Event planners are the key. Do what you can be successful with and build from there.