

green spa
network™

Vital People. Vital Planet.



Green Meetings

To sustain vital people and a vital planet care needs to be taken in how and where we connect. These sustainable practices provide a guide for hosting and attending meetings that are sustainable for our people and our planet.

Why Green Meetings?

The event and tradeshow industry is one of the most wasteful industries second only to construction. The spa and wellness sector can make a positive impact by hosting and attending Green Meetings.



Green Meetings, as defined by the Green Spa Network, are a method of hosting or attending meetings with thought to how that meeting impacts the people and planet. By taking time to evaluate both the impact a meeting has and the impact of your participation, you are making a commitment to our future. You are placing precedence on what you leave behind and providing for a future of successful meetings that benefit people and the planet.

Businesses have found the following benefits from making their meetings greener:

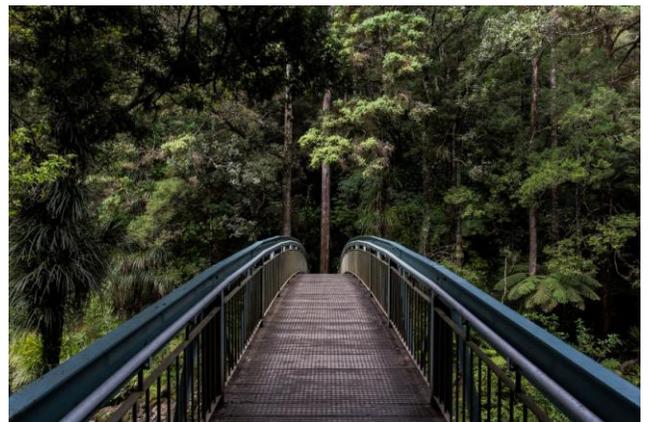
- A positive public image
- Lower operating costs
- Increased attraction and retention of employees
- Reduced impact on climate change
- Stimulation of additional environmental practices
- Causing positive change – in your organization and the community

How To Go Green

Whether you are a meeting attendee, a meeting planner, host organization, or venue for meetings, you can impact how green a meeting is. And with the growing success and popularity of sustainable initiatives, there are many ideas and action items you can take for the continued vitality of our people and our planet.

GSN has sought to identify ways you can make meetings greener in the following areas:

- Accommodations
- Energy and Water
- Food and Beverage
- Meeting Materials / Collateral / Signage
- Travel
- Vendors
- Venue Selection



YOUR FIRST GREEN STEP

The first step to greening your meeting is to ask three simple questions:

- 1) What can we reduce?
- 2) What can we reuse?
- 3) What can we recycle?

Aptly known as the 3R's of sustainability – **REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLE** - truly encompasses all of the efforts one can take when making a meeting greener. Your initial answers will give you the first steps you can take in making your meeting greener or making your meeting attendance greener.

Ask these questions for each stage of your meeting, planning, implementing, hosting/attending, and follow-up. The efforts you can think up first will be the ones you will be most passionate to implement, then you can use the following suggestions to tweak your ideas or add additional ones.



Once you have decided to go green with your meetings, make sure you communicate this with your attendees – everywhere! Let me know your intentions with every interaction. It's amazing how many people will participate, if they only know that it's happening! Don't assume they know, tell them again.

Top 10 Green Suggestions for your next meeting:

- 1) Create sustainable goals and **COMMUNICATE, COMMUNICATE, COMMUNICATE!**
- 2) Implement a recycling program, either with the venue or on your own; make sure bins are clearly marked with 'allowable' items and have a 'when in doubt leave it out' bin
- 3) Give precedence to recycled and local materials when making supply purchases
- 4) If using disposable tableware, utilize ONE universal type (recyclable or compostable), so that all items go in the same bin
- 5) Carpool, ride a bike, or walk to the meeting - when possible; Provide eco-friendly transportation options or off-set travel costs through company partnerships
- 6) Make printed meeting materials optional and have them available for download or email
- 7) Bring or supply non-plastic reusable water bottles
- 8) Serve local/regional/seasonal, buffet-style cuisine
- 9) Choose a venue that has an Environmental Policy or defined sustainability practices
- 10) Implement a donation plan for left-over materials and food

Additional suggestion for meetings with vendors or large set-up: Host an area for vendors to donate reusable materials (cardboard boxes, pallets, or containers) for other vendors to use.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Accommodation suggestions relate to the overnight necessity for meetings. When possible, it is recommended that your venue and accommodation host be the same to reduce travel of people, supplies, and materials. Having one host location also makes it easier to identify, communicate, and take advantage of sustainable practices. The 'Venue Selection' suggestions offers additional green practices for your host.

Green Suggestions for Accommodations:

- Have a formal Environmental Policy and/or an outline of sustainability practices implemented through the property
- Achievement of external certification for commitment to sustainability
- Motion sensors present in guest rooms that control lights and/or heating and cooling systems
- Offers green-ride programs with energy efficient cars, listing of preferred environmentally friendly shuttle options, or local ride-share options
- In-room amenities are provided in refillable bulk containers, instead of individual plastic containers
- Utilizes salvaged or recycled material for various aspects of the property, i.e. flooring, paneling, artistic features, etc.
- Offers In-house recycling program
- Offers sustainable linen programs, with options for guests to choose how often linens are changed
- Offers Room Rate Charity Program, which provide the ability for a portion of room rates to be donated to a selected charity
- Uses environmentally friendly multi-purpose and/or biodegradable cleaners throughout the property



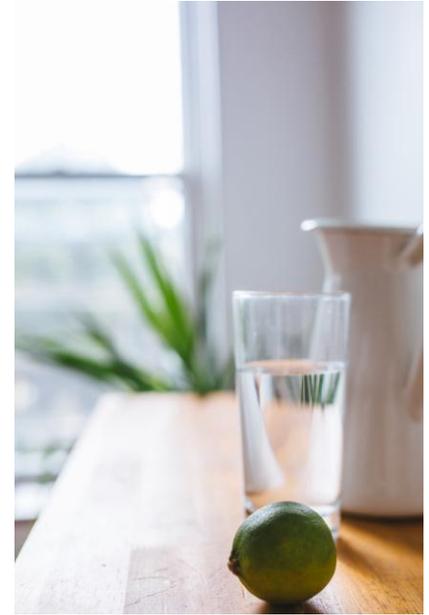
ENERGY AND WATER

Water is the essence of the spa industry, yet we still haven't mastered sustainable business practices to protect this vital resource. Simple measures as an attendee can reduce your water and energy usage, while meeting planners can choose venues that actively monitor their consumption and properties can implement practices and appliances that reduce or recycle energy and water consumption.

Green Suggestions for Energy and Water:

- Utilize non-plastic water bottles; Meeting host could partner with a sustainable company to provide these to attendees for use during and after meeting
- Ensure lights are off within your guest room (or home) when leaving for meetings
- Provide electricity-generating stationary bikes as a power recharging station for attendees to fuel their own energy consumption

- Off-set water usage during the meeting by partnering with a local company or non-profit
- Don't leave the water running while brushing your teeth or washing your face and hands
- Provide refillable water jugs or pitchers instead of bottled water; utilize reusable water containers for individuals, either non-plastic water bottles or reusable glasses
- Meeting space utilizes motion sensors that control lighting and/or heating and cooling systems
- Establish meeting times with host property, so that lighting and heating/cooling systems may be shut off or controlled outside of meeting times
- Energy-efficient appliances and lighting are utilized throughout the host property or properties
- Water-conserving fixtures and appliances are utilized throughout the host property or properties
- Host property waters landscaping only as needed and at times that minimize evaporation
- Host property utilizes white or lightly colored roofing to increase energy efficiency
- Host property utilizes geo-thermics to heat and cool the building(s)



FOOD AND BEVERAGE



The culinary options for meetings are endless and sustainable options are becoming more accessible each year. Meeting cuisine embodies how the food is provided to attendees, the options they have, the companies providing the food, and where and how the food is grown. With so much to consider, a great place to start is define what 'sustainable cuisine' means to you as an individual and as an organization. Then look for vendors that meet those standards. If no food is offered, search

for local restaurants that offer cuisine made with locally grown ingredients to recommend or visit before or after the meeting.

Green Suggestions for Food and Beverage:

- Avoid foods that are high in fat, sugar, and salt
- Offer local, in-season, regional cuisine
- Select vendors that source organic, fair-trade ingredients
- Choose sustainable seafood options
- Select buffet-style menus without the use of trays, to decrease food waste

- Host property has an on-site garden and utilizes the items within their culinary offerings
- Work with venue or cuisine vendor to donate or compost leftover food
- Utilize china or reusable tableware; if necessary, utilize recyclable or compostable items
- Utilize linen instead of paper for napkins and table coverings
- Choose natural or bulk foods that minimize packaging waste
- Serve condiments in bulk containers instead of individual packets, like sugar, salt, pepper, etc.
- Convert used cooking oil into Bio Diesel by partnering with a local farm or agricultural company
- If not hosting food, partner with local restaurants/cafes for discount or voucher to stimulate the local economy

MEETING MATERIALS / COLLATERAL / SIGNAGE

Not all printed collateral is recyclable, making it difficult for those that want to be more sustainable. Before you print, think about the end-of-use cycle, where does it go after someone has used it? The easiest way to be more sustainable with your printed materials is not to print them or if you must, use thin, eco-friendly options! As attendees, request materials via email and inform your host that you would like to opt-out of any printed items. Meeting hosts – make printed items optional and make items available online or via email for attendees to print if needed.

Green Suggestions for Meeting Materials:

- Go Paperless – utilize a website, emails, and social media to communicate
- Utilize double-sided printing on recycled, thin paper using soy- or vegetable-based inks
- Add this tag line to your emails, “Please consider the environment before printing this email”
- Allow attendees to ‘Opt-Out’ of receiving printed materials; ensure these resources are available for download online or via email
- Provide presentations and presenter’s notes on the website, via email, or through on an event app
- Encourage presenters to utilize technology in providing their take-aways; for example, they can host their presentation on Prezi or SlideShare or email notes to attendees following the event
- Choose sustainable companies for your printing needs, i.e. those with Environmental Policies or who use recycled materials or soy- or vegetable-based inks
- Offer individual USB’s for purchase, to share files and minimize printing
- Utilize whiteboards instead of flip-charts; if using flip-charts choose ones made of high post-consumer content paper
- Implement a donation plan for left-over conference materials, that you can’t reuse
- Utilize an online ‘guest list’ or ‘registration’ to discourage printing of attendee lists
- Utilize non-plastic eco-friendly name tags or reusable name tags that attendees write themselves
- Utilize non-specific signage that may be used at multiple meetings over several years
- Print signage on recyclable materials, such as cardboard, wood, or post-consumer products



TRAVEL

Travel encompasses how attendees, vendors, staff, and supplies get to your meeting. Make time to think through your travel plans in order to utilize the most sustainable methods available. For meeting planners, partnering with a company to offset your travel emissions is a great way to show attendees you are committed to providing a sustainable future.

Green Suggestions for Travel:

- Offset attendee air travel by partnering with a company or purchasing Renewable Energy Certificates
- Provide a listing of eco-friendly transportation options, such as ride-share programs, green shuttles, or public transportation information
- COMMUNICATE eco-friendly travel options to attendees and have dedicated staff or volunteer members to answer questions
- Provide dedicated, on-site bike racks
- Reserve VIP parking for those who carpool with 3 or more people and/or for those who drive eco-friendly vehicles
- Choose venues with electric car charging stations
- Utilize the stairs at the meeting or accommodation venue, unless carrying 10 or more pounds



VENDORS

If you are trying to green your meeting, you should look for vendors that also operate sustainably. It is also important to reduce the mileage a vendor or supplies must travel to your meeting, so establishing a local area from which the vendors should be based is a great first step. Then try to increase your percentage of 'local' vendors with each subsequent meeting.

Green Suggestions for Vendors:

- Choose vendors that are 'local' to the meeting space, for all aspects of the meeting; 'local' should be defined by a mile-based area, such as "within 200 miles of the venue"
- Utilize vendors that have an Environmental Policy and/or have implemented sustainable practices
- Utilize vendors that received external certification or recognition for their sustainable practices
- Choose vendors that source their ingredients and/or products from the defined 'local' area
- Utilize local businesses for any transportation or food and beverage needs
- Meeting host and venue utilizes local businesses to supply any furnishings or artistic features
- When selecting vendors and items for gift bags, take into account where the contents of each item comes from, how many uses the item has, and the items end-of-life cycle

VENUE SELECTION



The venue for the meeting can have an impact on other green aspects you would like to implement, so it is important to place precedence on choosing a property that has a sustainable vision or can support your green efforts. Similar to selecting accommodations, properties that have their own Environmental Policy will likely have suggestions for how to make your meeting greener.

Green Suggestions for Venue Selection:

- Place priority on a venue that can host all aspects of your meeting; for example, one that has event space, accommodations and/or in-house food options
- Venue has an Environmental Policy and/or outlined sustainability practices
- Venue has achieved external certification for their commitment to sustainability
- Venue has an in-house recycling program
- Venue has motion sensors in meeting spaces that control lights and/or heating and cooling systems
- Venue has implemented energy efficient lighting and/or use natural lighting, when possible
- Venue makes use of geo-thermics to heat and cool the building
- Utilizes salvaged or recycled material for various aspects of the property, i.e. flooring, paneling, artistic features, etc.
- Utilize green spaces available at the venue for meeting needs, as much as possible or place precedence on venues with usable green spaces

ADDITIONAL GREEN IDEAS

These additional green ideas were gathered from properties around the world that make green meetings a priority. Similar to the other options, it's best to start small and slowly incorporate attainable green practices meeting after meeting.

- Provide recognition or rewards for attendees who participate in the sustainability initiatives, such as those who utilize iPad or tablet to take notes or those who carpool to the meeting
- Partner with local spas and restaurants to provide discounts or specials for attendees, encouraging attendees to support the local economy
- If meetings are quite large and you are having trouble locating a green venue, look into hosting several smaller, regional meetings with less attendees; this will increase the potential host venues and local businesses, while reducing travel distance for attendees
- Hire a Green meeting planner to handle your sustainable initiatives, some will even pick-up and properly handle your waste disposal
- Up the fun factor with creative green games and/or lectures that directly involve the attendees in the

sustainable initiatives

- Provide a relaxing reward to those individuals who planned the meeting, to sustain their hard work!
- Host a volunteer opportunity for attendees to get involved with the local community and create positive change in your meeting location
- Donate any reusable left-over meetings items to a local charity
- Source sustainable flowers for decorations and utilize sustainable, reusable vases
- Provide information on nature-based activities in the area of the venue and accommodations
- Incorporate a charity aspect, by donating a specific amount per attendee to a local charity
- Partner with venues and vendors that participate in Earth Day activities



Lastly, communicate your sustainable efforts... EVERYWHERE! Social media, newsletters, website, online meeting materials, and post-conference communications. Don't assume your attendees know that you want to go green and how you're doing it. Tell them, again and again and again! These are great initiatives you are taking on for the benefit of the planet and our people. Get the word out, so we can support you!

MEETING ATTENDEE

As a meeting attendee, you are able to impact the sustainability of a meeting through your actions. Both before and after the meeting, your choices affect how green a meeting is. Green Spa Network has compiled a list of ten ways you can be green... sometimes it just takes a little creativity! GSN has also provided a sample letter you may use to encourage your meeting to increase their green focus.

10 Green Suggestions for Meeting Attendees:

1. Bring your own reusable water bottle.
2. Offset air travel with a donation to a carbon offset non-profit or volunteer project; online carbon footprint calculators can assist you in determining the appropriate number for your travel.
3. Ensure lights are turned off in your office, home, or hotel room; set room temperatures at temperatures fit for the time of year.
4. Download presenter notes and access them from your tablet or laptop to reduce printing.
5. Utilize eco-friendly transportation to get to the meeting, i.e. public transportation, bicycles, ride-share programs with eco-friendly vehicles or shuttle services.
6. Turn off water while brushing teeth and washing hands or face.
7. If staying overnight, participate in the properties linen and towel reuse programs.
8. Get outside! Take advantage of local nature activities or volunteer opportunities.
9. Add this tag line to your emails, "Please consider the environment before printing this email"
10. Participate in the sustainable initiatives promoted by the meeting.

Sample Letter to Meeting Planner

Dear Meeting Planner,

As you may know, the event and trade show industry is one of the most wasteful industries second only to the construction industry. As a meeting planner for [*insert name of meeting or company host*], you have a unique opportunity to make an impact on sustainability. There are many ways to make meetings greener these days and your decisions could help us make a positive impact on the future of our people and planet.

I would request that you make sustainability a priority during your planning process, providing opportunities for myself, as an attendee, to leave a positive impact through my attendance. The Green Meeting resource, provided by the Green Spa Network, details sustainable ideas in a variety of areas, including travel, venue selection, and food and beverage. I believe that with your support we can positively impact spa and wellness meetings.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to seeing sustainability initiatives at your meeting in the future.

Sincerely,

Green Attendee [*to be replaced with your name, of course!*]

MEETING PLANNER

Meeting planners have a large impact on the sustainability of a meeting. To help you in your quest to make your meeting greener, GSN has provided you with a checklist to use in the meeting planning process. As you go through each section, use the Green Meetings document to gain additional insight or ideas. Then get creative and be sure to let GSN know how it goes, so we can spread the green word!

First Questions to Ask:

- What can we reduce?
- What can we reuse?
- What can we recycle?

Selecting a Venue or Accommodations

- Does the venue have an Environmental Policy, defined sustainability initiatives, or external certification?
- Does the property have a recycling program? What items can be recycled?
- Do they have energy-efficient lighting and monitoring systems?
- Are there water-conserving fixtures and appliances used throughout the venue?
- Are in-room amenities provided in bulk containers, instead of individual plastic containers?
- Is there a sustainable linen program offered?
- What sustainability measures can your meeting attendees take part in? How will you communicate these?

Vendors

- Is the vendor within your defined “local area” for the meeting?
- Do they have an Environmental Policy, sustainable initiatives, or external certification?
- Where do they source their ingredients or products? Are they within your defined “local area”?
- What is the life cycle of the product? (i.e. where do the contents come from, how many uses does it have, and how does it get disposed of?)

Food and Beverage

- Do they offer local, regional, or organic cuisine?
- Do they ethically and responsibly source their seafood, if offered?
- Are there vegetarian options offered?
- Do they use refillable water jugs or pitchers?
- Do they provide china and linen or recyclable/compostable cutlery?
- Do they serve condiments in bulk? What about milk and sugar?
- What is the plan for leftover food? Is there a donation plan in place?

Meeting Supplies

- What can you reuse from a previous meeting?
- Are you using thin, recycled paper for printed materials? What about vegetable or soy-based ink products?
- Is there a donation plan for leftover conference materials, which you will not reuse?
- Can you provide presenter presentations and notes online or via email?
- Can you use non-plastic reusable name tags or ones printed on recycled label paper?

Travel

- What eco-friendly transportation options are available to access your venue/accommodations? How will you communicate them to your attendees?
- Can you offset your attendees air and ground travel? Can you make it a sponsorship opportunity?

MEETING VENUES

Meeting venues can attract meetings and events through their sustainable initiatives. GSN has provided a list of sustainable ideas in three tiers: the first being actions that require minimal investment, the second being those that require investment and time, and the third being large projects that have shown to provide a return on investment. In addition, the GSN website provides properties that have implemented some of these ideas and could potentially be used as a case study for your implementation process.

First Tier Suggestions

- Develop an Environmental Policy or Sustainable Goals for the property; Ensure these are being communicated to your guests on all platforms
- Participate in Earth Day by hosting one green activity on your property
- Partner with a local charity and offer a volunteer opportunity for your associates and/or guests; Pick one that is related to sustainability or green initiatives
- Define a 'local' sourcing area in terms of mileage and try to increase the percentage of vendors and supplies from within this area each year
- Partner with local transportation companies that utilize eco-friendly vehicles; communicate these, along with public options and local ride-share programs with your guests and event hosts
- Add this tag line to your emails, "Please consider the environment before printing this email"
- Water landscaping only as needed and at times that minimize evaporation

Second Tier Suggestions

- Provide a linen and towel reuse program, giving guests the opportunity to reduce their impact
- If you have an environmental policy or initiatives, seek third party certifications for your property
- Implement a recycling program throughout the property
- Partner with a local company for artistic features that utilize salvaged or recycled materials, i.e. statement pieces, room décor, or artwork
- Create and/or market green spaces throughout the property for events to utilize, say a garden or nature area or walking labyrinth
- Provide on-site bike racks for visitors and associates
- Utilize whiteboards instead of flip-charts; if using flip-charts use ones made of high post-consumer content paper
- Go Paperless – utilize a website, emails, and social media to communicate
- Implement a food waste program that composts or donates left-over food
- For guest rooms and bathrooms, provide amenities in refillable bulk containers
- Implement the usage of environmentally friendly multi-purpose and/or biodegradable cleaners

Third Tier Suggestions

- Install monitoring systems in all rooms and meeting spaces to control lighting and heating and cooling systems
- Utilize salvaged or recycled material for integral aspects of the property, i.e. flooring or paneling
- If you offer transportation, utilize eco-friendly vehicles
- Offer local and seasonal cuisine, avoiding foods that are high in fat, sugar, and salt
- Create an on-site garden that supports your culinary offerings
- Eliminate plastic water bottles from the property; provide re-usable non-plastic water bottles for sale and re-fill stations throughout the property
- Implement water-conserving and energy-efficient fixtures and appliances throughout the property
- Implement geo-thermics to heat and cool the building