



Take a Pill and Get Over It!

Why are we focusing on sustainability? Is it important in a reality where our financial bottom line is being pinched? How do we start? Can we just ignore it and get on with the creative and logistical aspects of our event? Why can't we just keep on doing what we always did?

I think we both know the answers – concern for sustainability in event management and sustainable development globally is not going away. It may be a pill some of us don't want to swallow, but we have to take our medicine. We'll feel better, look better, perform better. We won't be contagious, our legacy will be a thriving, healthy community and planet, and not a sickly one.

So take a pill and get over it!

So enough of the pep talk (of sorts), now what do you do next? I could use this column to give you practical advice – separate your waste,

use great bin signage, hand out colour coded bin bags to campers or picnicking audiences, use fireworks companies that have taken the environmental impact of their work seriously (e.g. Foti in Australia), buy merchandise with traceable labour and materials stories so you know your t-shirt isn't poisoning rivers or forcing children to work, go local, go organic, use solar power, etc etc etc.

The world is your oyster when it comes to practical and creative ways to produce your event more sustainably.

There are a growing number of resources, standards and certifications out there for you to latch onto to help you on your way. I thought this issue I'd list some, in a kind of a self-help guide sort of way. I can only lead you to water, but you have to take the first gulp.

Here's some stuff to get stuck into:

Sustainable Event Alliance

www.sustainable-event-alliance.org

An industry association dedicated to event sustainability practice. Jam packed full of resources, how to guidance, links, supplier database, and a whole lot more. Join it. Use the Event Sustainability Roadmap to help you on your way.

Julie's Bicycle

www.juliesbicycle.org

For those of you in the music biz, this organisation has great programs and resources, focusing on greenhouse gas reduction and environmental responsibility.

Outdoor Festival Checklist

www.greeneventbook.com/resources/downloads

Want to just cut to the chase and have a checklist you can follow? I developed one for outdoor festivals – have a look here.

Sustainable Event Toolkit

www.semstoolkit.com

A fantastic resource to help you identify, learn, manage, measure and report your event sustainability. Watch the short video on the website to understand the tool, or download the guide.

Standards and Certifications

ISO 20121, BS 8901, BNQ 9700-253, CSA Z2010, A Greener Festival, Eventi Sostenibili, Industry Green, Good Green Event – these are all various programs for event sustainability performance recognition. Google them and you'll find them!

Event Legacy

www.causes.com/causes/790261-event-legacy

Consider what the enduring legacies are that you leave behind. If you focus on these twelve things, you'll be a great position.



Meegan Jones is President of Sustainable Event Alliance and author of Sustainable Event Management: A Practical Guide, is director of GreenShoot Pacific, and was on the working group to develop the GRI Event Organizer Sector Supplement. The guidance in this article on waste reduction is an example of how-to guides and resources available through the Sustainable Event Alliance (SEA). Visit the SEA website to see more. www.sustainable-event-alliance.org.