



Meeting in the Green: Choosing Sustainable Meeting Venues

When choosing a meeting or conference venue there are a number of factors that will greatly influence your success in greening the event. You can enhance your ability to have a green meeting early on when choosing a venue...

A growing number of businesses and organizations are now requiring that their meeting events have a certain environmental standard. Although there is currently no official standard in the US regarding green meetings, they can be understood to include practices and policies that reduce their environmental impact while enhancing the experience for participants and host communities. A growing number of venues are now equipped and prepared to host more environmentally friendly events.

What to Look for in a Green Venue

- It provides a written environmental plan or policy
- It offers public transportation or is located in a walk-able distance from accommodations
- It offers parking for alternative fueled vehicles and bike racks
- It has a recycling program and has recycling bins in public areas (including paper, metal, glass and plastic products)
- It offers internet connectivity or wireless services to minimize paper use
- It has technology or policies in place to ensure that lights and A/V equipment are turned off when not in use
- It offers sustainable catering options, such as organic or locally grown produce
- It offers meeting spaces free of charge for local nonprofits

For a complete list of Sustainable Practices for Conference and Events visit www.sustainabletourism.org/Business-Resources-Checklists.cfm

What to Look for in a Green Hotel

- It has a team dedicated to identifying and implementing sustainable practices
- It has an active recycling program for both staff and guests, including in-room recycling bins and staff training
- It uses environmentally preferable cleaning products
- It uses renewable energy, such as solar thermal
- It uses and provides BMP training for staff
- It has an official green purchasing policy, outlining preferences for environmentally preferable options
- It uses natural day lighting and LED exit signs as part of a comprehensive energy efficient lighting plan
- It provides windows that open
- It uses green building design principals such as those outlined by the LEED building standard or EPA Energy

For a complete list of Sustainable Practices for the Lodging Industry visit www.sustainabletourism.org/Business-Resources-Checklists.cfm

How to Increase Green Success

- At the very beginning, share that you are interested in having a green event and include it in your RFP's
- Add environmental commitments as part of venue and vendor contracts
- Develop a method of measuring success. For more information on waste and energy audits, contact the NC Division of Pollution Prevention and Environmental Assistance (www.p2pays.org) at nowaste@ncmail.net
- Don't be afraid to share with participants how well or poorly you achieved your green goals. By being honest and transparent you can greatly increase your credibility with participants and other stakeholders.
- Remember that not all sustainable practices are equal and no one venue will satisfy every need. Talk with stakeholders and decide what are the most important areas of concern for your event.

For more information on green meetings please visit:

www.sustainabletourism.org
www.epa.gov/oppt/greenmeetings/
www.travelgreen.org
www.charlottegreenteam.com
www.greenbuildexpo.org/About/greening.html



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