

## Green Meeting and Event Planning Checklist

### Reducing Waste

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#### Planning

- q Purge mailing lists to eliminate invalid addresses or duplicate mailings.
- q Paper: use backsides of paper for drafts, use paper with recycled content and print double-sided for all event materials.
- q Consider the following publicity efforts to reduce waste:
  - print on recycled paper, print double-sided
  - use a printer that offers soy or vegetable inks
  - use web sites to offer more information so the publicity piece uses less paper (also reduces postage costs!)
  - print addresses directly onto envelopes avoiding address label waste
  - use removable or erasable dates when making signs and posters to allow for reuse
  - instead of direct mail, consider newspaper, newsletters or radio announcements
  - publicize your event via e-mail and web sites

#### Presenters

- q Encourage speakers to prepare computer presentations instead of handouts. If handouts are required, ask them to print double-sided.
- q Offer resources or copies of presentation materials via email or downloadable from a web site.
- q When requiring pre-registration, consider offering online registration.

#### At the Event

- q Consider displaying the agenda or other lists enlarged on easels instead of printing sheets to hand out to each participant.
- q Use reusable name badge holders and collect them afterwards for reuse.
- q Use dry erase boards or chalkboards instead of flip chart paper.
- q Use centerpieces that are reusable or can be taken home, such as plants in pots.
- q Offer reusable or durable remembrances of the event instead of one time use or items with a short life. (*i.e. travel mugs or recycled pads of paper instead of pens or plastic toys*).

## Food & Recycling Waste

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- q Provide reusable items for serving and eating food such as silverware, glasses, mugs and plates and cloth napkins that can be washed instead of paper. If no kitchen is available, someone might be willing to take them home to wash instead.
- q If using paper for food serving and eating, consider offering plates, cups and silverware made of recycled content. For small events, a volunteer may be willing to take paperware home to compost—over time, paper products will break down in a backyard compost bin.
- q Compost food scraps. If it is a small event, see if you can find someone to take the organic material home afterwards. If it is a very large event, work with your waste or recycling hauler to get the materials to a commercial compost facility. If your city has curbside composting service (Wayzata, Orono, Minnetonka, Hutchinson, Burnsville, and soon in Saint Paul), put food scraps, paperware, and compostable products at the curb for composting.
- q Avoid plasticware. Plastic products are made from the petroleum and cannot be recycled or composted (only plastic bottles can be recycled). Paper products and compostable products also give you the option to compost.
- q If you use compostable products at your event, be sure you have a place to take them when the event is over. (There is very little, if any, benefit to disposing of compostable products, but there is a significant environmental benefit to composting.) Compostable products don't break down well in a backyard compost bin; they need to be taken to a commercial compost facility. Eureka Recycling is a good contact with which to start for purchasing compostables, as well as finding a place to take your compost after the event.
- q Request and offer clearly labeled recycling and compost bins and services for your event. Consider attaching samples of each waste item that will be generated at your event on a sign above the proper disposal container. Make a plan for where these materials will go once the event is over.
- q Serve bite-size or finger foods that require no utensils or choose entrées that can be served in large containers versus over-packaged box lunches (*i.e. self serve pasta in a large bowl or party sub sandwiches*).
- q If serving box lunches, ask if they can be wrapped and/or packaged in recyclable containers or wraps (*i.e. foil is recyclable verses plastic wrappings*).
- q Accurately estimate attendance when placing orders or confirming a catering order. Consider placing a pre-order with your caterer and confirming the total attendance a few days beforehand to provide a more accurate number.

## **Event Location**

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- q Look for a convenient location near bus lines or mass transportation to avoid excess driving.
- q Offer directions to your location by bus or light rail to make it easier for participants to use mass transportation. Offer directions by car for those who have no other options.
- q Seek naturally-lighted meeting rooms to conserve energy.
- q Seek a location that already offers recycling services.

## **Caterer**

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- q Try to find and use a caterer that can offer reusable items for serving and eating food such as silverware, glasses, mugs and plates and cloth napkins that can be washed instead of paper.
- q Consider caterers that use local, seasonal and organic foods.

### **Low Waste Event Products List:**

-Local office supply stores or copy centers usually offer 30% recycled or 100% recycled papers for printers.

-For recycled content or biodegradable plates/cups/silverware, try your local natural foods store at [www.twincitiesfood.coop/locations](http://www.twincitiesfood.coop/locations).

-For real dishes, visit your local resale shop for mismatched silverware, plates and cups.

### **Event Planning Tips**

- Plan ahead! Communicate your waste reduction goals to all involved
- Use reused materials or materials with recycled content.
- Provide reusable items instead of disposable items when offering food.
- Use easily recyclable items.
- Be sure recycling containers are clearly marked at your event.
- Monitor recycling containers and trash cans during the event.

### **Exhibitors**

Sample wording for a contract with Freight Company and/or exhibitors:

*All Exhibitors adhere to the Green Conference practices set forth below in exhibiting their products and services during the conference. Moreover, [Name] will include within each subcontract or consultant agreement such provisions which shall conform substantially to the language of this clause, incorporating, where appropriate, adherence to the following Green Conference practices:*

1. Parties shall use, when available, biodegradable shipping and packing materials;
2. Parties shall minimize packaging materials;
3. Parties shall recycle cardboard, freight boxes, plastic wrappings, etc...
4. Subcontractor and Exhibitors shall prohibit items made from endangered or threatened species;
5. Exhibitors shall use, when available, recycled or consumable products as giveaways;
6. Exhibitors shall use, when available, soy-based ink and recycled paper in their materials;
7. Exhibitors are discouraged from bringing large quantities of collateral materials, such materials to be sent only upon request;
8. Exhibitors shall purchase supplies for use at the event that have minimal packaging;
9. Exhibitors' displays shall incorporate indoor air quality principles;
10. Contractor shall provide collection bins for less common recyclable materials (e.g., batteries, transparencies, tyvek, etc.) and provide information regarding collection sites;
11. Contractor establish drop off sites in Exhibit Hall for reusable items;
12. Contractor shall arrange for donation of all leftover usable supplies and foam core to schools and/or civic organizations;
13. Contractor shall establish and maintain recycle bins throughout Exhibit Hall;
14. Contractor shall use, when available, carpet that is recycled or recyclable and/or use environmentally friendly cleaning products and methods;
15. Contractor shall establish, promote and maintain donation area for exhibitors to contribute items.

**Checklist provided by Do It Green! Minnesota**