

# It IS easy being **GREEN**

tips on how to  
keep your  
meetings and  
events  
Eco Friendly



# What is a green meeting?

- “A meeting that incorporates environmental considerations throughout all stages of the planning in order to minimize the negative impact on the environment.”
  - Minimize waste
  - Decrease energy consumption
  - Purchase and use products with post-consumer recycled content and food that is organic, local or fair trade.
  - Give back to the community.



# Why go green?

- Ultimately saves money
- Improves client and public relations
- Helps resources last longer
- Improves health – better, safer, and cleaner food, water and air
- Partner with conferences to move the conference sustainability forward



# Green Meetings

## Myths

- Only for “tree huggers”
- Too expensive
- Should be “all or nothing”
- “It’s only **one** event”
- Guests don’t notice or care
- “I can’t change how people think”

## Facts

- Sustainability=mainstream
- Cost-saving in long run
- Details do make a difference
- One event can have huge consumption rates
- Guests appreciate and value greening efforts
- Many success stories on record



# Increased Costs

- Recycled paper
- Organic food, fair trade chocolate and coffee
- Cloth, ceramic and glass containers when catering vs. paper and plastic
- Non toxic cleaners
- Biodegradable food service items such as plates and utensils
- Purchasing recycling bins
- Labor cost of sorting recyclables
- LED bulbs, or timing systems for lighting and heat, there will be a pay-off in electrical savings



# Savings

- Use less paper by printing double sided and by moving to an electronic delivery of information
- Lower costs of printing by offering material electronically
- Locally grown food costs less
- Cheaper to offer food in bulk (jugs of juice instead of individual juice boxes or bottles/ pitchers of cream and sugar instead of individual packets)
- Reduce amount of travel by choosing video conferencing
- Save electricity costs by turning off equipment and lights when not in use
- Wash linens less frequently saves money on electricity, hot water and detergent
- Print more generic signs (without a date) which can be used for years



# A conference of 1300 attendees = total savings of more than \$68,000.

- Using online registration eliminated paper, printing and postage, saving \$3 for each registrant for a total savings of \$3,900.
- Not providing conference bags—\$9 for each attendee—saved \$11,700, plus shipping.
- Not providing a standard 15-page handout saved \$1,950.
- Providing water in pitchers instead of plastic bottles, at a rate of one bottle per participant, per day, saved \$12,187.
- Eliminating the need for buses by choosing hotels close to the convention center saved \$30,000 to \$40,000 for the 3-day conference.
- Recycling plastic name badges at 75 cents each saved \$975.
- Contributing to a clean, chemical free, healthy, sustainable environment: **PRICELESS**

— Source: Spatrisano & Wilson (2003, May). *Learning curve: The price of going green. The Meeting Professional.*





# Paper - Reduce

- **Tree free paper, cotton, recycled post-consumer content paper**
  - **Key is REDUCTION**
    - Minimize the Mailings
    - Consolidate Inserts
    - Skip the Extras
    - Splurge on Calligraphy
    - Investigate Printing Alternatives
      - *Eco-friendly paper and inks*





# Centerpieces & Decor

- Potted Plants



These can then be given to your guests or planted to commemorate the event. Plants add a wonderful affect to the room. Announce to your guest where you got them from or if you are making a donation.

# Centerpieces & Decor

- Potted Plants



Bamboo is considered one of the most sustainable materials on earth - it can grow up to two feet a day. Use tall stalks of curly bamboo in centerpieces, or choose bamboo chargers for your reception tables.

# Centerpieces & Decor

- Soy Based or Beeswax Candles

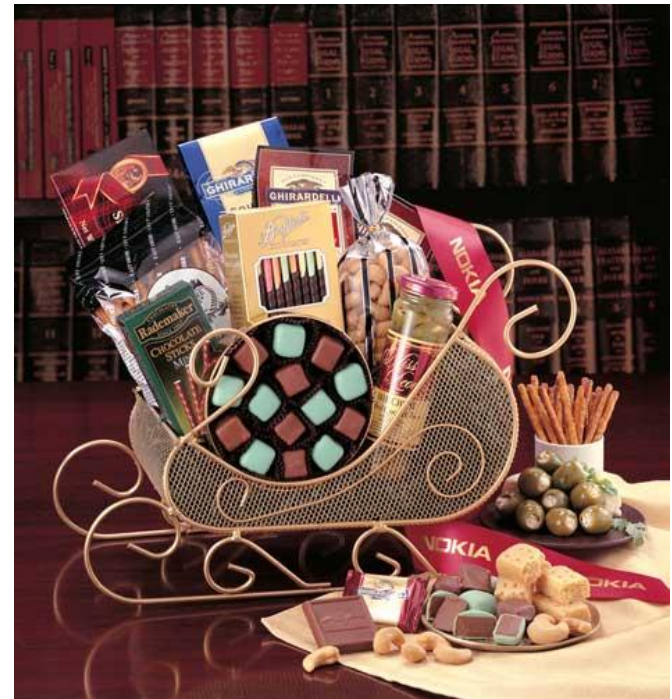


Candlelight is energy efficient. Look for soy candles - they're made from a renewable resource as well as being cleaner and longer burning than regular candles. The United States is the number one producer of soy in the world, so when you purchase soy candles, you are supporting American farmers. If you are going to be eating with lit candles, you definitely do not want the fumes from burning paraffin to interfere with your taste buds!



# Centerpieces & Decor

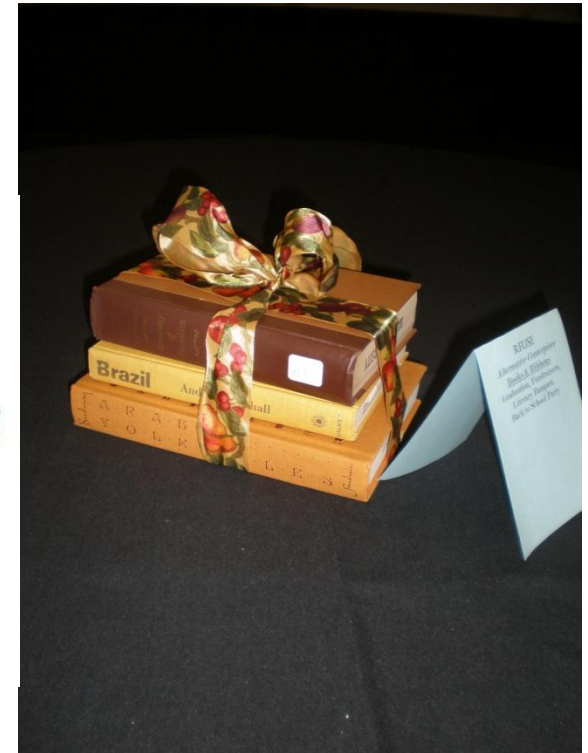
- Recycle Your Décor



Not only can you use centerpieces for decorating, but they can also serve as a memento for your guests when you send them along as gifts.

# Centerpieces & Decor

- Reuse



Reusing accents or materials doesn't just save money, it saves resources. Work with what you've got nearby and feel good about your efforts. Wrap empty cereal boxes, decorate pens, or wrap a ribbon around library books to create centerpieces and party favors.

# Centerpieces & Decor

- Edible Centerpieces



An edible bouquet is a green alternative to a floral bouquet and suitable for a gift as well. Most of the components are edible, and there is very little refuse.



# Centerpieces & Decor

- Edible Centerpieces



Instead of using centerpieces that have no future use, consider edible centerpieces.



# Centerpieces & Decor

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Desserts are a great way to bring color to the table!

# Centerpieces & Decor

- Giveaways/Party Favors



Looking for an eco-friendly favor? Many companies offer zero-waste personalized seed packet favors. Seeds are irresistibly packaged in hand-decorated biodegradable bags so they're not just eco-friendly—they're eco-lovely!

# Food and Beverage

- Stop using bottled water at events and conferences
- Provide hydration stations
- Avoid pre-pouring water glasses for meetings
- Encourage attendees to bring their own mugs or cups
- Donate surplus food when possible to food banks or shelters
- Avoid disposable dishes, cutlery and paper cups (Use compostable when necessary and up charge for this option)
- Use china and real cutlery
- Try organic/fair trade coffee, tea, and wine



# Purchasing Power: Choose Vendors Who Care

- Keep It Local
- Consider Digital Photography
- Book Green Lodging
- Live, acoustic music uses little to no energy, and it gives your party a more intimate feel.

✓ *Choose vendors who have demonstrated a clear commitment to environmentally friendly practices*





# Conference & Meeting Rooms

- Put recycling bins in visible locations
- Incorporate community donation programs for leftover flowers, trinkets, booth decorations
- Discourage exhibitors from bringing excess materials to shows
- Encourage the use of electronic presentations
- Offer paperless registration using an online set up on your Website
- Event schedules posted on the web rather than printing programs



# Conference & Meeting Rooms

- Encourage speakers to post handouts or presentations on website, avoid printing
- Send electronic invitations
- Turn off overhead projectors when not in use
- Turn off lights on breaks and overnight
- Recycle and use name badges and lanyards



# Basic Office Management Principles

- Use Post Consumer Recycled paper products
- Do not provide un-maintained mailing lists (older than 2 years is probably unreliable)
- Print using the double sided feature on printers
- Use Soy Based Printer Ink
- Turn off printers and other equipment when not in use
- Educate staff on green initiatives and offer rewards for their participation
- Develop a Sustainability Website for your department or university





# Basic Office Management Principles

- Implement paperless registration and check-in/out
- Install energy efficient light bulbs in hallways, lobby, and bathroom light fixtures. CFL last 10 times longer and use 75% less energy than regular
- Reduce wattage of bulbs in vending machines and lighted signage
- Replace all exit signs with LED
- Install Automatic controls for HVAC systems



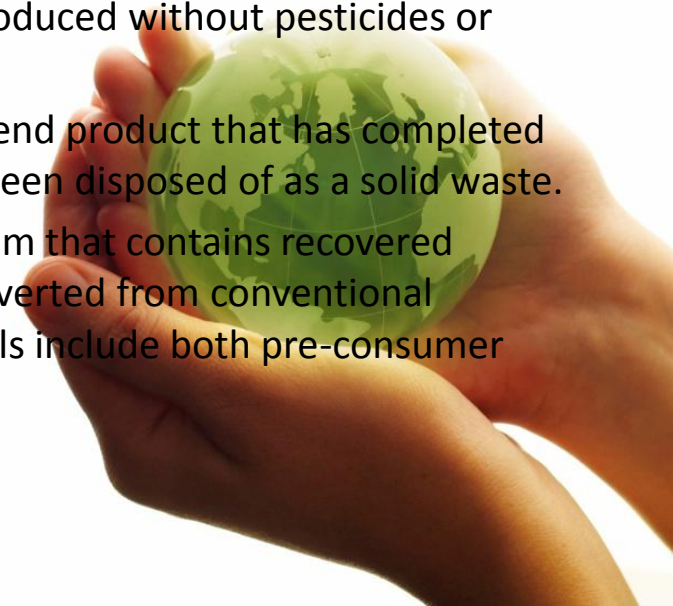
# Current Initiatives

- Grounds: mulch is from old palettes, not trees
- Housekeeping chemical supplies are green
- Working on recycling program in cooperation with Miami Shores
- Several tasks to reduce costs and energy usage for cooling
- Switching to energy-efficient lighting



# Terminology

- **ALTERNATIVE ENERGY:** Energy produced from renewable sources
- **BIODEGRADABLE:** Capable of decomposing under natural conditions.
- **DEGRADABLE:** A material that breaks down through chemical reactions rather than through the activity of microorganisms
- **ECO-FRIENDLY-** is a term used to refer to goods and services considered to inflict minimal harm on the environment.
- **FAIR TRADE-:** an organized social movement promoting standards for international labor, environmentalism, and social policy in areas related to production of Fair Trade labeled and unlabeled goods.
- **GREEN:** anything considered environmentally friendly
- **LEED:** it stands for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, and it's the most widely accepted stamp of approval to certify that a building's green.
- **ORGANIC-** A term used to describe any product grown or produced without pesticides or genetic modification.
- **POST-CONSUMER RECYCLED-** Post-consumer material is an end product that has completed its life cycle as a consumer item and would otherwise have been disposed of as a solid waste.
- **RECYCLED/ RECYLABLE-** A recycled-content product is an item that contains recovered materials. Recovered materials are wastes that have been diverted from conventional disposal such as landfills for another use. Recovered materials include both pre-consumer and post-consumer wastes.



# Resources

- Convention Industry Council:  
[http://www.conventionindustry.org/projects/green\\_meetings\\_report.pdf](http://www.conventionindustry.org/projects/green_meetings_report.pdf)
- Environmental Protection Agency:  
<http://www.epa.gov/oppt/greenmeetings/>
- Bluegreen Meetings:  
<http://www.bluegreenmeetings.org/>