



Sustainable events – a how to guide

It's something every event organiser needs to think about and the earlier on in your planning you start, the easier it is to make environmentally sound decisions along the way. For the sceptics out there, don't worry about these choices meaning you have to compromise any of your goals or vision for your event, quite the contrary, making more sustainable decisions can enhance your attendees' experience.

Before we begin...

If you're going to make your event as environmentally friendly as possible, make sure you shout about it from the rooftops. You need to tell your guests what you're doing and why. Not only will this mean they understand some of the decisions you've made, it will also encourage them to make better choices themselves. Plus, it's a great way to get people talking about your event...

Venue

With every venue you consider, request information on their environmental policies. The Venue Team should be able to provide you details on the energy efficiency of their buildings, their waste management practices and any other efforts they make to lessen their impact on the environment. Another factor worth considering when looking at venues is their location. Finding somewhere centrally located for as many of your attendees as possible will dramatically reduce the carbon footprint your guests will make travelling to and from your event. A venue with good public transport links will also help with this.

Transport

Make it easy for attendees to take the environmentally friendly option – highlight walking routes and facilities for cyclists and make public transport options clear. Hiring a shuttle bus to take groups of guests from a train station to your event rather than leaving people to get individual taxis is a much greener choice. An even better option is to provide bikes for guests to cycle, or you could even make a feature of the transport by using bicycle-drawn rickshaws.

Recycled paper

Everyone has known for decades that we need to use less paper and there really is no reason why your event can't go entirely paper-free. Switching all of your correspondence over to electronic methods is better for the rain forests and your budget. If you feel a physical invite is necessary, sourcing recycled paper (don't forget the envelope) is an easy option. Make sure your speakers are aware of your preference for no paper so they can email any notes to their audience. Consider using one of the many well-designed and cost-effective event apps available instead of a conference brochure.

Catering

Locally sourced food and drinks will have a much lower impact on the environment as they will clock up less food miles. In addition, check if your venue is able to provide high quality meat-free or

ethically sourced meat options and consider reducing the amount of meat (especially red meat) on your menu. When compared to staples like rice and potatoes it requires 160 times more land to produce a calorie of beef. Ask your caterers how they source their ingredients and how they dispose of leftovers. Do they donate them to charity or turn them into compost? Packaging is also a concern for the environment, so consider jugs of cordial or tap water rather than bottled drinks. Also ask your supplier how much of the packaging they use is either recycled or biodegradable. Although you may not get all the right answers from all of the caterers you speak to, it's useful to compare who does what.

Waste and recycling

This is a topic you should bring up with all of your suppliers and your venue. What measures do they put in place to reduce waste and how do they dispose of any that is created? If you're not getting the answers you want to hear, see if there's any way in which you can help achieve a better result.

Off-setting

However far you get trying to create an environmentally friendly event, it's unlikely you'll manage to make it completely neutral. But there are ways to make amends. By committing a percentage of your budget to green projects such as planting trees you can go some way to making amends for any negative impact your event has on the planet.

King's Venues' green mission

Here at King's we take our environmental responsibilities very seriously. That's why we have a dedicated Sustainability Team and have set ourselves the challenge of reducing our carbon dioxide emissions by 43% from the 2005/6 baseline by 2020. We're also working towards increasing our recycling rate to 70%. If you have any questions about how we can help you reach your green targets for your next event at King's Venues, give the team a call on 020 7848 1700.