

**CHOOSE
ENVIRONMENTAL**

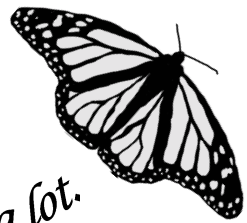


EXCELLENCE™

Green Event Planning Guide

Choose
Environmental
Excellence
When You Plan
Special Events

If we all do a little, we all do a lot.



Green Event Planning Guide

Whether you're planning a family reunion, an annual meeting for your workplace, or a community-wide festival, make it a more environmentally friendly event. Your family, co-workers, neighbors, and future generations will be grateful that you took time to look for solutions that are environmentally sensitive. A good time will be had by all, including your host, Planet Earth!

This Guide will show you how to:

- prevent or significantly reduce the waste and litter these events typically produce
- recycle as much as you can from remaining materials
- buy event supplies that are environmentally friendly

Case Study Example

In 1998 the Festival for Eno River, an event that attracts 35,000 people, reduced waste by 75% from earlier years; the Greater Kansas City Marathon achieved a 98% waste reduction in its first year of environmental planning.

How This Guide Is Organized

Although some of the planning considerations are the same or similar, the organizational approach may be different for planning a family celebration, a neighborhood block party, a business conference or a city-wide fundraiser. Since organization and planning are important factors in creating an environmentally friendly event, we've divided this guide into four sections:

Section I: It's A Family Affair, Special Events for Family Get-Togethers, page 3

Section II: Neighborhood Get-Togethers, page 7

Section III: Break Out Of the Business As Usual Box-Lunch Box, page 12

Section IV: Think Big, Bigger, Biggest, Community-Wide Outdoor Events, page 21

You'll see *Key Considerations* marked by this symbol:



Things to Be Cautious About are marked by this symbol:

You'll also see case study examples gathered from all over the country. These success stories illustrate what's possible when events are organized with the environment in mind.

Finally, although we believe this guide will give you all the basic information you'll need to plan an environmentally friendly event, we've also included a list of additional resources which may be helpful.

Why Plan a Green Event?

Planning a green event takes a little more time and effort, but the rewards are great. You will have the satisfaction of knowing that you've conserved resources, reduced landfill waste, and shown a commitment to preserving a sustainable quality of life for our community and our world.

Best of all, you will provide a model for others to follow. Your family, neighbors, customers, clients, and community members will note with approval that you have taken the time to ensure that your event is environmentally friendly.

A recent Roper-Starch survey indicates that
80% of us consider ourselves environmentalists!

Section I

It's a Family Affair! *Special Events For Family Get-Togethers*

Prevent Waste At The Planning Stages

Most family events – reunions, picnics, weddings, and parties – involve several areas where waste can be reduced or prevented at the early planning stages.

Invitations

Is your event informal enough to invite guests by telephone? If so, no paper is wasted. Getting the word out by e-mail is another efficient method, if friends or relatives have e-mail access (some families even have their own web page set up where family news can be posted).

If you want to send formal invitations, consider a postcard format or one sheet of folded paper with party information inside and room for address outside. Local copying services will help you design your own.

Request paper that's at least 30% post-consumer recycled content. If you have formal invitations printed for large events, such as a wedding, request recycled content paper and ask your printer about inks and printing processes. Most reputable printers today use soy-based inks and are careful to recycle overruns, but it's a good idea to let them know that you want your materials to be as environmentally friendly as possible. You can also create your invitations from "tree-free" alternatives such as paper made from 100% cotton.



Transportation

If you have a choice of venue, give some thought to places that are centrally located and accessible by mass transit. When appropriate, suggest carpooling or using other alternatives that use less fuel. For out-of-town guests flying in, suggest an arrival time “window” which would allow you to make fewer trips to the airport. If your guests will stay in area hotels, research those which are environmentally friendly (optional linen replacement, in-room recycling, sensor lighting) and give those names to guests. (See Resources, page ____.)

Food and Service

Here’s an area where planning ahead can make a big difference!

When planning the menu, use organic, locally grown foods as much as possible. Consider vegetarian choices, which also help reduce the environmental impact on water, energy and soil.

If you’re planning an outdoor event, consider a menu of “finger foods” to eliminate the necessity for utensils.

If you include other foods, use reusable utensils, dishes and flatware. For smaller events, non-breakable plastic picnicware may be appropriate. If you use plastic utensils, get the sturdier reusable kind, and let everyone know that you want to save them for reuse. Have a special box or container clearly marked where people can put them after use.



If disposable items must be used, choose paper plates and cups rather than polystyrene. Paper can be composted; even if you throw it away, it will not take as long to break down as polystyrene. You can purchase recycled-content paper napkins and plates. Or consider using new biodegradable plates, cups and utensils made from a cornstarch composite, which actually dissolves after use. (See Resources chapter for availability.)

Serve beverages in containers such as punch bowls, pitchers or urns. If individual beverages must be served, choose recyclable containers – aluminum cans or plastic liter bottles – and provide clearly labeled recycling containers for guest use. Eliminate straws.

Serve condiments (sugar, honey, jam, catsup, mustard, and relish) in bulk containers rather than individual packets. Eliminate plastic or wooden stirrers; use a few spoons instead.

Use reusable cloth napkins and tablecloths rather than paper. For family gatherings such as reunions, graduations, and other celebrations, a fun idea is to give guests permanent markers to write their good wishes and sign their names right on the tablecloth. It can then be used for future gatherings or as a memorable souvenir for the honored attendee.

If you use a caterer, request durable goods (flatware, napkins, and tablecloths) rather than paper. Ask what arrangements can be made for recycling disposable items such as wine bottles, aluminum cans and corrugated cardboard boxes.



Be Cautious About caterers who tell you that it “simply can’t be done.” Some caterers may be reluctant to make changes – it’s easier to do “business as usual.” Make it clear that you are committed to planning a green event; if they can’t accommodate you, others will.

Décor

Use simple, non-themed decorations which can be reused for other occasions. Consider using live plants rather than cut flowers. If cut flowers are used, donate leftover arrangements to hospitals, nursing homes or shelters; or compost them for garden use. Using locally grown flowers also reduces energy and pollution costs. Party favors present an ideal time to show off recycled-content or environmentally related items such as “to go” mugs or reusable ceramic mugs, recycled pens or pencils (imprinting with the party theme is a nice touch) or eco-fabric T-shirts.



Be cautious about items that imply that they have recycled content, when they are actually only recyclable. If an item is recyclable, it will have the chasing arrow symbol somewhere on the packaging or the container (show symbol). To buy items made of material that has been recycled, look for words such as “20% post consumer recycled content” or “this item made with recycled materials.”

Photographs

If you’re taking your own photos, or having friends do it, avoid using disposable cameras. Although some brands have a program for reusing some inner parts of these cameras, it’s preferable (and much less expensive in the long run) to use a non-disposable camera. If your family members have computers, consider a digital camera with photos that can be sent via e-mail: no need to develop them, resulting in a less expensive and less wasteful solution.



If your event calls for special equipment, check first to see if you can use borrowed, rented or secondhand items before purchasing anything new. Cutting down on consumption is usually a good environmental choice, as well as easier on the pocketbook.


Recycle Everything You Can

Make recycling an automatic part of your family event by making it convenient and visible. Be assured that your guests won’t mind putting an empty bottle in a recycling bin instead of a garbage can – as long as containers are clearly marked and conveniently placed.



Find out what can be recycled in the location of your party or event. If it’s in your home and you have curbside recycling available, you may want to stick to the basics of what’s collected – usually glass, aluminum, steel food cans, No. 1 and 2 plastic bottles and newspapers. If the event is in another location or you are willing to take items to a community drop-off recycling center, you may also find that corrugated cardboard, paperboard, mixed paper, batteries and other

materials can be recycled. You can find out what's recyclable in a given area nationwide by calling 1-800-CLEAN UP. For recycling information for the Kansas City metropolitan area, call Bridging The Gap's Community Recycling Centers at 816-561-1090 to find out what materials are accepted, hours of operation, and how to prepare items.

Use containers that are visible and place them next to trash cans. For smaller events, use corrugated cardboard boxes or barrels; you can line them with a plastic bag if you wish. Or use rubberized waste cans, but buy them in a different color and shape from your regular trash can. Mark each container by drawing the recycling symbol () along with the type of item you're collecting: "Plastic bottles only" or "Aluminum cans only." It also helps to post wall signs at eye level, just above the containers.



Be cautious about (BCA) making signs and labels too small or with faint print. Make it easy on your guests by having easy-to-read signs; use arrows if necessary. If your containers have lids, you can even cut the lid in the shape of the container, such as an aluminum can, which makes it harder to deposit trash items by mistake.

For larger or catered events, make sure the servers and clean-up crews know where the recycling containers are placed. Ask your caterer or event coordinator if containers can be provided. If not, they can be purchased inexpensively at retail outlets such as Wal-Mart or K-Mart and labeled accordingly. Containers can be kept out of sight in the serving or food preparation area if servers collect empties.



Wherever there's a container for trash, also put a container for recyclables. Your guests won't have to go to separate locations to separate their waste.

Section II

Neighborhood Get-Togethers

Depending on the event and the size of your neighborhood, you may think it's impossible to plan environmentally, but there's almost always room for improvement. With a few volunteers and some advance planning, your neighborhood block-party, parade or picnic-in-the-park can produce less waste and let everyone know your neighborhood cares about the environment. The results will mean less clean-up and ultimately less litter in general. Studies have shown that getting neighborhoods involved in recycling and waste reduction is also a step toward cleaner, healthier streets and yards.

Plan Ahead

The typical neighborhood event will have a group of people doing the planning. Include "environmental thinking" at the early stages of planning. Gather a committee to work on details and build in a progress report at each meeting. Share ideas and ask others for theirs. Since details will vary with each event depending on type, size and location, there's always room for creative thought!

How will you advertise the event?

Now is the time to promote recycling. If you print flyers or newsletters, include recycling and waste reduction plans prior to the event, as part of the promotion. Let them know about waste reduction efforts too!

If you advertise with flyers or newsletters, remember to print them on post-consumer recycled content paper (most printing and copying businesses have the paper available; if not, call a few days ahead and ask them to order it, or purchase it yourself and take it to them). Advertise the recycled content of the paper by printing on the flyer or newsletter itself the words "printed on recycled paper" along with the recycling symbol.

Remember to use both sides of the paper when printing your flyers or newsletters. Double-sided printing and copying uses significantly less paper (and consequently, fewer trees). When possible, create flyers that use only one-half or one-third of a page.

Think creatively about other ways to advertise and promote your event that don't involve extra paper. Does your neighborhood have a phone tree? Does your organization's membership list include e-mail addresses?

Ask your neighborhood grocery to print information about the event on a run of paper bags – especially if the event will be open to the public and have a charitable purpose.

Promote your recycling plan by getting people familiar with the recycling symbol as "what to look for" when disposing of recyclables. Print the symbol on all advertising for the event, along with specific directions telling people what will be recycled, what the recycling bins will look like, and where they'll be located. Take every opportunity –



at meetings, through newsletters and other publicity - to encourage neighborhood participants to recycle at the event.

Will food be served?

If so, here's a golden opportunity to prevent waste with careful planning. Some options are:

- Limit the menu to “finger foods” to avoid utensils.
- Use durable (reusable) plates, napkins, tablecloths and utensils.
- If breakage is a concern, use plastic “picnicware” plates and sturdy plastic utensils that can be washed and reused.
- Serve buffet-style rather than box-lunch style, unless boxes or bags and contents can be recycled (see case study example below).

Does your neighborhood have gardeners with compost areas? If so, vegetable food scraps (no meat, dairy products or grease) and small amounts of paper, such as paper napkins, could be collected for compost rather than sent to the landfill as trash. Put a gardener in charge of the collection area to help keep out non-compost material.

If your planning group does opt for disposables, use paper plates, cups and napkins rather than polystyrene or disposable plastic, which is not recyclable in our area. Purchase recycled-content napkins and paper plates as a way of “closing the loop” by using materials previously collected for recycling.

If your budget allows, consider using new options such as cornstarch-based disposable tableware and utensils, which are biodegradable, compostable and designed to decompose soon after use in a compost bin (see Resources Section). Kansas City Rib Run Marathon participants will use more than _____ of these items in 1999's race.



More than 113 billion disposable cups, 29 billion disposable plates and 39 billion disposable utensils are used in the United States each year. While they make up only 3% of the total Municipal Solid Waste by weight, they make up about 27% by volume. All the utensils and about half the cups and plates are made of plastic. Our landfills are choking in plastic! Think seriously about using durable or compostable tableware for your neighborhood picnic, block party or potluck.

Start a “tableware cooperative.” Many neighborhood groups jointly share tools or large appliances. Consider getting donations for durable, reusable tableware – plates, cups, bowls and utensils – which can be kept in a central location and used for all food-related events. Rotate responsibilities for storing and washing the tableware. You might even reward dishwashing time with leftover food or door prizes.

Serve beverages in large containers such as punch bowls, pitchers or urns. If individual beverages must be served, choose recyclable containers – aluminum cans or plastic bottles – and provide clearly labeled recycling containers for guest use. Eliminate straws.

Serve condiments (sugar, honey, jam, catsup, mustard, relish) in bulk containers rather than individual packets. Eliminate plastic or wooden stirrers; use a few spoons instead.

Will decorations or door prizes be part of the event?

Here's another opportunity to reduce waste by obtaining reusable decorations. Christmas, Fourth of July and other holiday-themed decorations can be stored and used from one year to the next. Or use simple, non-themed decorations that can be reused any time of the year.

Recycled-content items or items with an environmental flavor make great door prizes. Purchase or ask for donations of reusable mugs, canvas shopping bags, gardening equipment, bird feeders or gift baskets filled with locally made products like soaps, candles, or barbecue sauce. Several mail order businesses produce specialty items made from recycled materials (see Resources). Another option is to give gift certificates for services or entertainment rather than a manufactured item. Gift memberships to Powell Gardens, the Zoo, Lakeside Nature Center and similar organizations are great environmental choices.

How do we set up recycling for the event?

First, find out what can be easily recycled in your area. If your neighborhood has curbside recycling, you might want to limit recycling to those items (usually glass, aluminum or steel cans, No. 1 and 2 plastic bottles, and newspaper).

If volunteers are willing to take recyclables to community drop-off recycling centers, you can also recycle paperboard, corrugated cardboard and scrap paper. To find out where your nearest community drop-off recycling center is, call Bridging The Gap at 816-561-1090 during regular business hours. Most drop-off centers will be open only on weekends, so plan accordingly if yours is a weekday event.

If your event will involve several hundred people, you may want to contact your trash hauler or a recycling hauler to furnish containers that can be placed at easily accessible locations. A fee may be charged depending on the size and number of containers. If your event is sponsored, propose that a sponsor underwrite the cost of containers in exchange for publicity at the event.

For smaller events you can purchase containers at stores like K-Mart or Wal-Mart, or make your own from lightweight barrels or rectangular boxes that can be securely taped at one end with the only opening at the top (for convenience they should be at least 30" tall). Recycling containers should be a different shape or color from trash containers.



Clearly label all recycling containers with bold, easy-to-understand signs. If possible, use wall signs as well. Put the recycling symbol (♻️) in a visible place on all containers. Use words such as "aluminum cans only" or "No. 1 and 2 plastic bottles only – no trash please" along with the chasing arrows symbol. If possible don't put specific event information, such as a date, on your signs, so that they can be used again.

Place a recycling container next to every trash container to make it easy and convenient for people to recycle.

Who's in charge of monitoring and collecting the recyclables?

Most groups ask for volunteers to help with these tasks. Give each volunteer an area to cover, or a certain number of containers to be responsible for. Ask volunteers to show up early enough to place containers in pre-designated locations if it's a large outdoor event; otherwise simply show them where the containers are located. Ask them to check periodically for contamination (things that don't belong) and remove any contaminants to trash cans. If recyclables get covered with even a few items of trash, your recycling container can quickly become a garbage can since people may glance at the contents without reading the signs.

Have a ready supply of bags for volunteers to empty full recycling containers into as the event progresses. They can take the full bags to a designated area until the end of the event.

For large events, arrange for a recycling hauler to pick up the collected recyclables. (See Resources for a partial list of area haulers.) For smaller events, ask a volunteer with a pickup truck to take the recyclables to a community drop-off recycling center, or place recyclables in designated containers for curbside pickup.

Ask volunteers to police the area around recycling containers periodically to keep it neat and litter-free. You can also hand out special litter bags to all attendees to make sure that everyone knows that it is a "litter free" day.



Be cautious about having too few volunteers for large neighborhood events. One easy way to organize volunteers is in two- or four-hour shifts, depending on size and number needed. It's better to have too many than too few!



If the budget allows, give volunteers colorful T-shirts, hats or other clothing items that identify them with your recycling efforts and make people more aware. If you have no budget for these items (and can't get someone to underwrite the cost), create a simple way for volunteers to identify themselves—perhaps green armbands or green colored ribbons.

How do we train volunteers?

If you can recruit volunteers to lead ahead of time, familiarize them with recycling by taking them to a Kansas City Community Drop-off Recycling Center (they can even volunteer there for a four-hour shift and receive training from the site manager). Knowing what is recyclable is an education process best learned "hands on."

Even if they can't stay and volunteer, the Recycling Center will have brochures showing what is and is not recyclable. These brochures will come in handy for all volunteers who haven't recycled before.

Another option is to hold a pre-event training session after your regular neighborhood meeting or at a time convenient for all or most volunteers. Use the brochures (also available from Bridging The Gap by calling 816-561-1090) plus actual examples of the materials you'll collect.

Explain the duties (monitoring for contamination, emptying containers when full, policing for litter) and assign designated shifts (two to four hours) and areas. If possible, station a volunteer at each site, or have them manage sites only within visible range, otherwise, contamination may be a problem.

For larger events, assign volunteers into teams with team leaders. Make sure the leaders are thoroughly trained and able to answer questions from their team members.

Designate a check-in area where volunteers can report for their shift, receive bags and other materials, and have questions answered. Assign one or two people to be in charge of this area.

Assign at least one person to stay at the bag collection area to make sure bags of recyclables get emptied into appropriate containers.

Remember to recruit enough volunteers for set-up of your recycling plan before the event and take-down after the event.

On the day of the event, it's helpful to have walkie-talkies to communicate between areas if necessary, especially for events covering a large area, or which have an especially large attendance.

If your event is outdoors in hot weather, be sure to have a cooler of cold drinks for volunteers at the check-in station. Other supplies include a first-aid kit, sunscreen and an extra hat or two.

Reward your recycling volunteers as much and as often as you can. Although the work is not hard, it can be tiresome—especially in hot weather – and a bit messy (tell them to wear comfortable shoes and casual, washable clothing—gardening or work gloves also come in handy). If appropriate, hold a post-event celebration for all volunteers. In addition to rewarding them, it's a great time to get feedback and suggestions for improvement.



For large events or events over more than one day, go to the Community-Wide Outdoor Events section, page 21, for more details.

When hosting a conference or meeting where hotel or convention facilities will be used, ask your planner to send them a copy of the Green Hotels Association's Meeting Planners' Questionnaire, a list of 36 environmental questions which will reveal in what areas the facility has applied environmental thinking to its premises. Areas covered include recycling, purchasing of recycled or recyclable items, food and beverage service, leftover food, meeting materials, guest room amenities, guest room linens, water and energy conservation. Each question may be answered Yes or No and examples or further information may be inserted.

When making a final decision between hotels, the Association suggests asking management if there is one further green accomplishment the hotel will offer to obtain the business, such as giving guests an option to postpone daily linen replacement, installing low-flow showerheads on one floor of rooms or adding a recycling bin for aluminum in a public area. A copy of the questionnaire is included in the Resources section, page 34, and is available free at their web site.



Millions of dollars are spent each year by businesses that host meetings and conferences in hotels. Your dollars can make a significant difference in greening the hotel and lodging industry if you make environmental choices and make your desires known to hotels that have not yet gotten the environmental message.

Meetings and Meeting Rooms

- Choose or provide meeting rooms with energy-conserving compact fluorescent lighting, timed or on an occupancy sensor if possible.
- Use dry-erase boards or other reusable visual aids, rather than flip charts.
- Rent meeting equipment that is used only occasionally rather than purchasing it.
- Provide durable coffee mugs and drinking glasses for meeting participants. See Food and Beverages section, page ____, for refreshment suggestions.
- Send meeting notices and advance agendas by e-mail.
- Rather than making paper copies of the agenda for all participants, write it on the dry-erase board or use a projector.
- For other documents, use a projector, or circulate or post a few copies, rather than distributing individual copies.
- If documents need to be edited by meeting participants, consider networked computers with on-line editing capabilities.
- If meeting in a hotel, let them know you do NOT need blank pads of paper and pencils or pens for all participants. Most business people come prepared for note taking. If these items are needed, they can be requested on the spot.
- If nametags are needed, buy reusable nametag holders and pre-print names, or ask attendees to put a business card in the holder. (Adhesive-backed disposable nametags cannot be recycled or reused.) Provide a convenient and visible place to recycle the holders, and announce a reminder.
- If hosting a workshop or conference, give speakers an accurate attendance count so that they can avoid preparation of excess handout materials. Better yet, ask speakers not to pre-print distribution materials and to furnish them only on request.
- Offer electronic versions of information rather than hard copies.

information).

- Request cloth napkins and tablecloths.
- Serve beverages in bulk with reusable glassware, or in recyclable cans and bottles. Provide collection bins for recyclables in food vending areas, break areas and meeting rooms.



If you have a choice of food and beverage vendors, hire those with a proven environmental record. Free State Brewing Company, for example, is an award-winning local micro-brewery, restaurant and caterer which recycles over 70 tons per year of spent grain to local farmers for use as supplemental livestock feed, composts all restaurant food and has a comprehensive program which has successfully reduced waste by 80%.

- Avoid use of coffee stirrers, straws and paper doilies.
- If allowed by local Health Department regulations, serve sugar, cream, butter, jam and other condiments in bulk containers rather than individual packets.
- Ask your caterers or food vendors to recycle all corrugated boxes and other recyclable packaging.
- Serve bite-size or finger foods. Serve buffet style if possible, rather than individual box-lunch servings. Work with local caterers to eliminate packaging waste.
- If you use box lunches, see if you can use recyclable containers and include them in your recycling plan.

Case Study Example

Gould, Evans, Goodman Associates LLC, (GEG), a large architectural firm in Kansas City, estimated that it held an average of 35 food-and-beverage related meetings each week onsite. Armed with this knowledge and a desire to reduce waste, GEG Green Team members approached restaurants in the immediate vicinity to request their help in future orders. One restaurant agreed to deliver and serve food in durable containers with its own tableware – and pick up the dirty dishes at the end of the meeting. Another agreed to switch disposable containers from polystyrene to recyclable paperboard or aluminum foil. These changes cost nothing extra and resulted in much less cumulative food packaging waste. GEG also compiled a list of “eco-caterers” who used organic locally grown foods and served it buffet-style on durable plates.

Case Study Example

Amway held annual business meetings in Portland’s Memorial Coliseum, attended by 28,500 people over four weekends. Each person was served a box lunch made of recyclable cardboard printed with simple instructions for recycling it and the aluminum drink can. Clearly labeled collection cages were placed throughout the area, easily accessible from the Coliseum. Nearly four tons of cardboard and more than 20,000 beverage cans were collected.

Case Study Example

The Greater Kansas City Marathon Awards Committee has chosen awards with the above criteria in mind for the past four years. Awards have included: medallions made from recycled granite shavings and a non-toxic epoxy, used historic bricks from Kansas City streets with a commemorative metal plate affixed to them, glass vases and bookends with recycled book jacket covers, cloth lunch bags and tote bags, and terra cotta sculptures made from recycled materials. Volunteers were given 100% recycled cotton T-shirts.

Recycling

- ❑ Make recycling an important consideration in your decision-making for the event location. Ask your meeting or conference planner to make sure all convention centers, hotels and other facilities you use for meetings have an existing recycling program for your needs. These needs could include paper, corrugated cardboard (if a trade show or exhibitors' hall is involved), aluminum, No. 1 and 2 plastic bottles, or glass.
- ❑ Incorporate recycling and other environmental priorities in the facility contract. Consider contract incentives such as sharing profits from the sale of recyclables, or special publicity given to environmental efforts.
- ❑ If no recycling program exists, ask if the facility would work with local recycling resources (environmental organizations, municipal environmental departments or recycling haulers) to initiate one.

Liability and cost are two of the most common reasons given for reluctance by facilities contractors. Yet in many regions of the country, planners who are persistent in their commitment to host an environmentally friendly event have successfully surmounted these obstacles. For example, planners of a pollution prevention conference persuaded a hotel to use ceramic plates rather than paper ones for an outdoor buffet. At another event, planners convinced onsite vendors to use recyclable plastic cups instead of polystyrene cups, despite a nickel a cup difference in cost. At \$3 per cup retail cost, planners pointed out that the vendors' profit margin was still ample.



- ❑ For in-house meetings, provide recycling containers with clear signage for paper and any other recycling materials used. Your recycling hauler may be one source for containers; you can also get advice on where to purchase attractive containers and signage from Bridging The Gap. (See Resources, page 34.)
- ❑ If the event is a sizable one, or will take place over several hours, arrange for employees or hired personnel to monitor recycling containers and empty them when needed. (See Section IV, page 21, for details on organizing recycling for large events.)
- ❑ Arrange a place for collection and storage of recyclables during the meeting or conference.

- ❑ Include the custodial crew in your planning if the event is large enough or long enough to require their services. Make sure they know the difference between trash and recyclables, and train them in their specific responsibilities with respect to handling of waste during and after the event.
- ❑ Remember to provide a convenient place for attendees to return nametag holders for reuse.
- ❑ Announce your recycling efforts to attendees at the beginning and end of meetings to increase awareness and compliance.

Case Study Example

The Oregon Convention Center recycles office paper, corrugated cardboard, glossy show materials and magazines, newspaper, wooden pallets, beverage bottles and cans, tin, #2 plastic and clear and green glass, resulting in more than 70 tons a year of materials recovered.

Promotion and Public Relations

- ❑ Promote your recycling and other environmental planning efforts at every opportunity: in advance of the event through newsletters, e-mail and websites, press releases and press conferences.
- ❑ Hold a joint press conference with facilities personnel and other partners on the environmental aspects of the event.
- ❑ If possible, present figures on estimated savings through reduced paper use, avoided landfill fees or revenues from recyclables.
- ❑ Also give figures on approximate pounds (or tons) of recyclables to be collected and diverted from the landfill, number of trees saved by paper reduction efforts (a rule of thumb is 17 trees per Ton), and amount of water or energy saved by conservation efforts.
- ❑ Promote efforts in all conference brochures and printed or electronic promotional materials.
- ❑ Use onsite promotional signs, banners and the like to accomplish the dual purpose of promotion and education.
- ❑ Remember to reward and recognize employees who take on coordination efforts.
- ❑ Let clients and customers know what you're doing and why. Spreading the word will spread your environmental efforts even further.

Holiday Parties and Office Celebrations

- ❑ Because of their social nature, parties may present a greater challenge in environmental thinking.
- ❑ If serving alcohol, ask liquor stores to take back boxes. Ask bartenders to save all glass or recyclable plastic bottles for your in-house recycling program (or arrange to have them taken to a community drop-off recycling center).
- ❑ Serve hors d'oeuvres, holiday dessert cookies and other finger foods that cut down on the need for paper plates and utensils, or use durable ones. Donate edible leftovers to local charities.

Case Study Example

One of the world's largest environmental trade shows served several hundred thousand customers with soft drinks served in durable plastic glasses. Attendees were charged a \$2.00 deposit. To reclaim their deposit they had to return the glass to one of the dozens of concession booths, where it was sent to a central point for washing and reuse. Hundreds of thousands of cans or bottles were avoided, reducing significantly the solid waste that is usually generated by such events.

Section IV

Think Big, Bigger, Biggest

Community-Wide Festivals and Other Outdoor Events

Although large outdoor events present a big challenge for recycling and waste reduction, some of the largest have been the most successful: the 1996 Summer Olympic Games, host to nine million spectators with over 500 separate competitions, was one of the largest. This gigantic recycling effort, though not perfect, resulted in more than 20 million cans and bottles recycled in the 10,000 blue recycling bins distributed throughout the area.

Most recycling challenges will be less daunting than the Olympic Games, but the procedures followed and lessons learned there were strikingly similar to events smaller in scope. For example, planners found that pre-training of volunteers and pre-planning of logistics were critical factors, along with making sure clean-up crews and waste haulers knew the plans. The suggestions below present an outline of organizational tips to make outdoor event recycling and waste reduction possible for an event of any size or scope.

Start with a Timeline

The bigger the event, of course, the longer planning time you'll need. It's best to start planning as early as possible, and to include all other players in your planning so that the pieces fit together as smoothly as possible.

On page ____, we've adapted (with permission) the timeline from the brochure titled "Recycling for Festivals and Special Events" published by the University of Northern Iowa's Center for Energy and Environmental Education. This timeline, one of the best for large event recycling, begins a year in advance and goes to one week post-event. Using this timeline as our checklist, we've added comments, details and case study examples from our own and others' experience.

Determine the level of commitment

A strong commitment and positive attitude towards your environmental efforts are essential from your team or committee members, and a crucial asset from organizers in order to establish a successful program. Keep in mind that event organizers have a complexity of details for the entire event to handle, with a huge number of tasks to accomplish. It may be helpful to enlist the aid of sponsors or key event patrons to emphasize their support for recycling and waste reduction being part of the event.

If you have less than positive support from organizers or sponsors, accept people where they are and resolve to explore possibilities with "gentle persuasion" and education rather than strong-arm tactics. Take the long-term view towards change and accomplish what you can in the first year, while leaving the door open to accomplish more in future years.

Don't get bogged down

Mistakes occur, things will be forgotten or omitted, volunteers don't show, equipment breaks down. No event comes off perfectly, despite perfect planning. Acknowledge at the outset that there will be room for improvement and things to learn for next time. Build in an evaluation component so that the next year will go more smoothly. Concentrate on the positive accomplishments of your team – and don't forget to express your gratitude to everyone for their hard work in making it happen.

Look at Every Aspect of the Event for Greening Possibilities

Besides recycling and reducing waste during the event itself, if you're an event organizer or can work with organizers who are environmentally committed, explore every planning aspect of the event to make it more environmentally friendly. Look for ways to prevent waste at the source, conserve energy, buy products that are less toxic and hazardous, made of recycled-content materials or have less packaging. Ask event organizers (or vendors and product sponsors) to donate edible food and leftover beverages to local charities, for example (See Resources, page 34.). Examine all the "standard" ways things have been done and look for environmentally preferable alternatives.

Case Study Example

For several years the Greater Kansas City Marathon & 10K race committee sent 30,000-piece brochure mailings to advertise the race. After working with Bridging The Gap, less wasteful alternatives were adopted:

- The Kansas City Star donated ad space. The ad included a registration form and was designed to be folded and mailed without an envelope.
- A website for the race was created and links were established to other runner and race-related links throughout the nation.
- Strategies were developed for smaller, more effective mailings. Brochures were designed to be smaller; all written materials were printed on post-consumer recycled-content paper, double-sided.

Where to Get More Help

If you want expert help, try these community resources:

- Event organizers who have had experience with waste reduction and recycling components of the event (The cost will vary depending on size and complexity of the event.)
- Environmental consultants who have waste management and recycling expertise and experience (e.g., Bridging The Gap). Again, cost will vary but non-profits may be less expensive than private consultants. Non-profits may also have signs and other materials they can loan, as well as media suggestions and contacts.
- Municipal or county government environmental, waste management and recycling staff, who may be able to give free or low-cost design and operation tips.

10 Months

Determine budget needs. Your costs will vary depending on the size of the event and scope of waste reduction and recycling efforts. You'll need to know whether you'll be charged for recycling and hauling services and whether revenues from recyclables can be used to offset any cost. Other costs include signage, collection containers, publicity, volunteer amenities and possibly rental of walkie-talkies or cell-phones if the site is large.

Establish a theme. Pick a phrase that's fun, easy to remember, and is amenable to illustration. **EXAMPLE?**

Develop a sponsor solicitation plan. You can never start too early to get good sponsors. Approach community-minded, environmentally friendly businesses. Devise a promotional package that clearly states what the benefits of sponsorship will be. Personal solicitation works best, as opposed to simply writing a letter.

Inform vendors of your recycling project. See comments above with regard to the recycling committee. Communication with vendors is a crucial area that needs to happen early and often. Vendors need to know what is expected or requested of them before they can order supplies. If working with an established event, you may encounter reluctance to make changes. Send letters to vendors requesting their cooperation. Assure them that you'll work to give them as much support as possible, as well as sharing promotional opportunities.

Case Study Example

Vendors of an arts festival in Iowa agreed to switch beer containers from polystyrene cups to No. 1 containers despite a five cent cost difference. Organizers were in turn able to negotiate a local discount off the vendor price of No. 1 cups.

9 Months

Identify prime sponsor and other supporters and announce to the public. See comments above regarding promotion.

Determine whether an education program will be offered. See comments above.

If yes, appoint a sub-committee. Recruit enthusiastic, creative people who can design age-appropriate education programs.

Determine recycling categories in conjunction with local recycling providers. In the metropolitan area, this could include glass, No. 1 and 2 plastic containers, aluminum cans, metal food and beverage cans, corrugated cardboard, paper and newspaper. You may also be able to collect vegetable and fruit food scraps for composting and meat and bone waste for rendering. Focus efforts on the items that constitute the bulk of the waste at your event.

Modify or establish vendor contracts (if applicable) to reduce waste and increase the proportion of recyclable products – organizers of established events may be

reluctant to put in clauses requiring vendors to recycle. If your community has passed an ordinance requiring recycling for all outdoor events, it will give them support. Event sponsors can also be persuasive.

Case Study Example

Vendor contracts for the Del Mar, California State Fair, an event which attracts thousands over several days' time, require vendor recycling of aluminum, glass and plastic bottles and corrugated cardboard. The contract specified that "violators will be fined \$100 per incident for not recycling these products." Together with composting efforts, they achieved a 90% diversion rate in 1997 and 1998.

8 Months

Begin design of recycling stations. Design should include clear, easy-to-read signage and labeling. Containers should be of a consistent shape and color throughout the event area, and should be different in size, shape or color from trash cans. The recycling symbol (♻️) should be prominent, since most people associate recycling with this sign. Also clearly label the container with what it contains: "aluminum cans only" or "No. 1 plastic cups only." Consider placing recycling symbols with a line drawn through on trash cans as a reminder to put recyclables in recycling containers. Make recycling stations visible, colorful and easy to use.

Case Study Example

Recycling stations at the Cedar Rapids Jazz Festival consisted of three bright red barrels with plastic bag liners (extra bags were placed underneath the first bag for ease of replacement). Plastic car window cup holders were hooked onto the tops of the recycling barrels for plastic cups so that attendees could choose to stack empty cups or deposit them inside the barrel (this tactic also gave a visible reminder of what was being recycled in that barrel). Each station consisted of three barrels, with one large eye-level sign mounted behind them. The vinyl signs were designed to be flexible with the use of reinforcing rods and PVC pipe supports, and could be erected and dismantled in less than 10 minutes.

Begin operational planning. Details are important. For example, depending on placement of recycling dumpsters and roll-offs you may need to post a volunteer to avoid contamination (people associate dumpsters with trash and don't distinguish recyclables) or arrange for a locked lid.



Be cautious about asking volunteers to go through trash to retrieve recyclables. One large festival pays organizations such as the Boy Scouts to literally sort all event wastes off-site. This means going through messy sacks of garbage and could possibly be a risk if broken glass or needles are present. While this could result in a higher level of captured recyclables, we do not recommend it.

telephone or e-mail. Printed evaluation forms are the least productive method for getting a high amount of feedback.

Announce preliminary results. Get tonnage or estimated weights and volumes from haulers. How much waste was prevented or reduced? How many pounds of recyclables were collected? For promotional purposes, translate to number of trees saved, energy conserved, and other visual aids (enough aluminum cans to fill a football field? A recycled can requires only 5 percent as much energy to manufacture as a can made from raw materials, with energy savings equivalent to 6 ounces of gasoline). Do a press release estimating the percentage of waste removed from the landfill, compared to previous years.

Case Study Example

After the first “green marathon,” Bridging The Gap estimated that total waste had been reduced by an astounding 98% from the previous year. Actual non-recycled waste was reduced from three truckloads to six 30-gallon plastic bags, which included all trash from the 26-mile course. Organizers and sponsors issued a joint press release as an “Environmental Report Card” detailing all the aspects of the race that had been changed to become more environmental.

Adjust operational plan as necessary. Brainstorm any problem areas.

Elect chair and begin preparations for following year.



To this timeline, we add the following item:

1-2 Weeks After the Event

Send written thank-yous – handwritten if possible – to everyone who participated in the success of the event. This includes event organizers, vendors, sponsors, volunteers, haulers, other recycling committee members, and members of the press who were responsive. Personalize thank-yous when possible by acknowledging specific contributions. If the budget allows, send a concrete token of your appreciation: perhaps a photo taken during the event, a gift certificate or other item. Bridging The Gap sometimes sends ceramic mugs imprinted with the Choose Environmental Excellence logo, filled with small bags of candy, to significant contributors. Expressing your genuine appreciation and acknowledging others’ contributions is a key to people returning for another year.

Meeting Planner's Questionnaire for "Green" Lodging Establishments, cont.

Item/Question	Yes	No	Example(s)
Does your property donate, sell, or recycle old "durables" (i.e., furnishings, etc.)?			
Will your food and beverage services use reusable items such as cloth, glass, ceramic, etc. rather than disposable items such as polystyrene or plastic for our meeting?			
Will your property serve food buffet-style? One large plate? Without garnishes?			
Will your property use cream pitchers, sugar pourers and reusable spoons rather than individual creamer and sugar packets, etc. for our meeting? Jelly servers rather than individual packets? Other?			
Will your kitchen purchase fresh rather than packaged produce?			
Are vegetarian or vegan menus available?			
Does your property purchase and serve beverages in returnable refillable containers?			
Who pays for bottle deposits-the client or the property?			
Does your property donate leftover food to a local non-profit organization?			

Meeting Planner's Questionnaire for "Green" Lodging Establishments, cont.

Item/Question	Yes	No	Example(s)
What are you doing to reduce dry cleaning and laundry paraphernalia?			
Does your property offer double-sided copying at a reduced rate (less than two single sheets)?			
What percentage of your property's lighting is fluorescent?			
What other energy conservation measures have been taken?			
What other conservation measures have you incorporated?			
Is your property a member of "Green" Hotels Association®?			
Has your property contacted "Green" Hotels Association® (713/789-8889) for information regarding being "green"?			
Is there anything further in regard to being "green" that your property will offer us?			

Property Name: _____

Address: _____

Contact: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Environmental Improvement and Energy Resources Authority (EIERA), 325
Jefferson St., Jefferson City, MO 65102 573-751-7752

Kansas Department of Health and Environment, Capitol Tower Building, 400 SW 8th
Street, 2nd Floor, Topeka, KS 66603-3930, 785-296-1500 Fax: 785-368-6368, website:
www.kdhe.state.ks.us; e-mail: info@kdhe.state.ks.us

Kansas Recyclers Association, P.O. Box 152, Hutchinson, KS 67504-0152, 316-663-
5599 · Fax: 316-663-5623, website: www.hutchnet.com/KRA; e-mail:
KRA@hurchnet.com

Mid-America Energy and Resource Partners, 7525 Sussex Avenue, St. Louis, MO
63143 314-645-7752; Fax 314-645-1244; website: www.merp.org www.merp.org ; e-mail:
merp@info.csd.org

Mid-America Regional Council Solid Waste Management District, 600 Broadway,
Suite 300, Kansas City, MO 64105, website: www.marc.org

Missouri Department of Conservation, P.O. Box 180, Jefferson City, MO 65102-0180
573-751-4115, 1-800-781-1989, website: www.conservation.state.mo.us

Missouri Recycling Association (MORA), 101 W. Tenth St., Rolla, MO 65401,
Website: www.mora.org.

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