

Green Credentials

1 History:

Our commitment to the environment is no flash in the pan reaction to the recent upsurge in demand for green venues, it is multi faceted and dates from the very formation of the group in 1995.

1.1 Recycling:

- We have always offered all delegates writing materials made from recycled plastic cups, all printed material has always been on recycled paper using vegetable based inks.
- When we started like the majority of our competitors we placed bottled mineral water on all conference and catering tables. Initially this meant we were throwing away many hundreds of empty bottles on a daily basis, this seemed an enormous waste; we investigated the potential for recycling the bottles and concluded though this allayed some issues we were still left with the consequences of producing the bottles and transporting them. We became one of the launch customers for the Pure Water filtering system, allowing us to both recycle the bottles and to save the enormous external costs associated with transporting the water to ourselves and then taking the bottles away.
- Since 2004 we have had in place a scheme whereby all paper / cardboard / glass and plastic bottles / batteries and light bulbs are recycled.
- The last time we changed all our conference chairs we donated all the old chairs to a local church, where they are still to be seen.

1.2 Integrated into our Build Programme:

In 2001 we opened the Cavendish Conference Centre, a major criteria throughout the build process was the integration of market leading environmental practises whenever practicable i.e.:

- We installed an absolute state of the art air conditioning system with the highest energy reclaim commercially available system at that time.
- In many rooms we installed opaque glass; the aim was to limit the amount of direct light falling into the rooms, which would in turn reduce the amount of air conditioning needed.
- All rooms have individual AC controls to allow zoning, i.e. rooms heated or cooled unnecessarily.
- Electronic signage throughout, to reduce printing and paper usage.
- Water usage is metered and minimised through the use of hypos etc.

3.3 Sustainability:

We have striven to integrate sustainable practises into our processes whenever and wherever possible.

- We have looked at every aspect of our operation with a view to cutting waste this has resulted in the following:
 - The use of re-usable dollies to frame mugs and glasses rather than paper
 - We no longer use individually wrapped sugar or butter
 - Electricity and Water readings are taken daily and levels recorded. This has resulted in a sustained campaign to turn off items at the end of the day i.e. water boilers / computer screens etc.
 - All tea / coffee sugar and milk is now organic and fair trade sourced.
 - 100% Organic menus area available at all centres to all customers. To incentive their use only 50% of the extra food cost is passed on to clients.
- When it is within our control Green Power is used throughout. As defined by a supplier that is exempt from the governments carbon levy
- We have sponsored a number of sustainable events including the sustainability centre at Mudchute community farm in Canary Warf London

1.4 Transport:

- All company vehicles are dual fuel diesel / hydrogen. Hydrogen being the only fuel source with absolutely no environmental impact at the point of use.
- We have made sustained efforts to encourage all delegates to arrive using public transport i.e.
 - For many years we offered a service allowing delegates to produce an individual map showing the best route to our sites using public transport, eventually we dropped this owing to lack of demand.
 - We now highlight public transport over all other forms of transportation on all our websites.
- We recently commissioned a transport survey at our Cavendish Conference Centre to ascertain how delegates arrive and depart the centre. We aim to use this to implement policies aimed at a quantitative reduction in vehicle numbers at all our centres.
- Together with our caterers and AV providers we have an active policy of consolidating vehicle loads with the aim of a 15% reduction in vehicle movements when we repeat the traffic survey next year.

3.4 Communication

3.4.1 External Communication

- As of 2007 all printed material shows what it was produced from the ink and energy used.
- All relevant documents are posted up on our website i.e. environmental / sustainability / purchasing policies etc.

3.4.2 Internal Communications

- An internal system of Green leaders has been introduced. At each venue there is a nominated individual charged with implementing the agreed initiatives and ensuring best practise is shared. Monthly minuted meetings take place when all venues review their procedures, ensure compliance to the management system and drive forward the agenda.

4 Management Systems:

All of the systems we have introduced would be pointless without the introduction of practicable systems against which our performance can be measured.

1.1 Green Mark

In 2007 we chose the Green Mark accreditation scheme as the most suitable management system for our business. It was chosen on a number of criteria.

- They are local to us i.e. based in East London
- They were recommended by Envirowise a government funded body considered by many to be authoritative body on sustainable issues.
- It is an independently assessed scheme having the backing of the London Environmental Centre.

1.2 Green Tourism

- On the 29th January 2008 we were assessed for a Green Tourism Silver Level accreditation (report available). We have integrated their management system into our internal systems. We are confident we will receive Silver Level accreditation when the inspection returns in September.

1.3 BS 8555

- In June we received an initial visit from Global Systems with a view to accreditation for Stage 5 of BS 8555.

Again this has been integrated into our management system.

2 New Initiatives:

2.4 Discount for Minimising Waste:

- We are trialling an initiative aimed at reducing the vast amounts of printed material left after certain conferences in particular waste delegate packs and exhibitor materials. We are offering certain clients a discount on their day delegate or room hire rates if they undertake to leave no materials at our centres at the end of the day. Conversely we will charge a premium if materials are left. At present we are offering a discount of £2.00 per delegate if no materials are left and a supplement of £75.00 per bag of left material.

2.5 Land Fill neutral

- We aim to be landfill neutral by the end of 2008. We have managed to cut our waste streams so that now the only significant items non recyclable items left are food waste. We are working with Clare Matheson at UK Food Waste Ltd to introduce an off site composting system as soon as possible.

2.6 Carbon Free

- We are working with the Carbon Trust to introduce a carbon calculator that to our knowledge will be the first to include the delegate's journey to work as well as the waste produced by the conferences themselves. The transport survey we commissioned was part of this initiative.

3 Clients:

These Green initiatives have resulted in an impressive roster of Green Clients including:

- The Carbon Trust
- Carbon Neutral Company
- The Green Alliance
- Green Power Conferences
- The Green Service Company