



# A Greener Path for Events: Eco-Friendly Practices to Deliver Sustainable Experiences

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Strategies for creating environmentally responsible experiences that resonate with today's eco-conscious attendees



**F**uture-ready events are designed with a focus on minimizing environmental impact, from adopting zero-waste initiatives to using digital materials and sourcing from local sustainable vendors. These practices aren't just about meeting current demands; they are about actively shaping a responsible future.

Integrating sustainable methods into event planning helps minimize waste and carbon footprints, while enhancing attendee engagement, supporting community-focused practices and aligning with the growing demand for eco-conscious events. By focusing on the following practices, based on the [mci group responsible-experience model](#) (Rethink, Reduce, Choose, Eliminate, Help), event organizers can deliver meaningful experiences, while contributing to a greener future.

## **RETHINK**

### **Assess your organization's event strategy.**

Start by evaluating every facet of your event, from logistics to materials, and identify areas where sustainable practices can be introduced. Conduct a thorough audit of your venue, food and beverage options, transportation and attendee engagement methods. Assessing your strategy holistically allows you to pinpoint high-impact changes and provides a clear understanding of where sustainability

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fits into your current approach, which will help set measurable goals for more responsible events.

### **Determine how you can improve your event's accessibility and inclusivity.**

Begin by considering barriers that may prevent full participation, such as venue accessibility, communication formats and transportation options. Incorporate technology solutions such as live captions, language translation services and virtual access for remote attendees to create an environment that is welcoming.

Integrating elements such as gamification can further support inclusivity by offering interactive, engaging experiences that reduce reliance on physical resources. For instance, gamification can replace printed materials with digital badges, leaderboards and interactive challenges accessible via attendees' devices. These methods not only reduce paper waste but also create a universally accessible platform for networking, learning and engagement.

## **REDUCE**

### **Provide eco-friendly transportation options to help reduce your event's overall carbon emissions.**

Encourage the use of public transportation, provide shuttle services with electric or hybrid vehicles, and set up bike-sharing stations at the event. Provide incentives or rewards for those who choose one of these options while on-site. These initiatives promote a greener travel plan and make it convenient for attendees to choose eco-friendly travel options. Be sure to communicate how and where attendees can safely access public transit (along

with information on routes, tickets, etc.), bike-sharing stations or routes for walking.

### **Offer environmentally friendly alternatives to traditional event giveaways.**

Choose items that are practical, reusable, made from sustainable materials or contribute to environmental causes. These giveaways can serve as reminders of the event's commitment to sustainability and inspire recipients to adopt similar practices in their daily lives.



## **CHOOSE**

### **Cater with sustainably sourced food.**

Choosing catering options that feature organic, locally sourced ingredients lowers transportation-related emissions and encourages environmentally responsible farming practices. Offering plant-based options further enhances sustainability, thanks to their lower environmental impact compared to meat. For instance, beef is a resource-intensive food, and its production is a large contributor to greenhouse gas emissions. Oat milk has a better sustainability profile than almond or dairy milk, with a lower impact on land, water and carbon emissions. These are factors to consider when planning food and beverage.

### **Select hotels and venues that practice sustainability.**

Choose venues certified by credible sustainability standards such as LEED or ISO 20121, which demonstrate commitment to environmental management and sustainability. These venues often use energy-efficient technologies, waste reduction practices and other sustainable operations that contribute to a greener event.

Additionally, consider partnering with venues that support charitable causes or donate a portion of rental fees to environmental or social initiatives. This not only enhances the social impact of your event but also resonates positively with attendees who value corporate social responsibility.

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## **ELIMINATE**

### **Limit single-use materials.**

Opt for reusable utensils and tableware or compostable alternatives made from bamboo or other biodegradable materials. Install refillable water stations and encourage attendees to bring their own reusable bottles or provide branded bottles that can also serve as event memorabilia. Look across your event to see what you can do to eliminate or limit the use of disposable items.

Using digital options such as digital signage, projection mapping, VR/AR, LED and video walls, or digital art installations can transform event spaces without the need for physical materials that need to be discarded after the event. This approach enhances the visual aesthetic and adds modernization, while allowing for dynamic content that can be changed instantly to suit different themes or messages throughout the event. These technologies can also be reused.



### **Avoid the use of environmentally harmful materials.**

Many conventional event items, including certain types of décor, cleaning agents and adhesives, contain toxic substances that are detrimental to both the environment and attendee health. By choosing biodegradable, non-toxic alternatives, event organizers can eliminate these hazards, ensuring safer waste disposal and minimizing long-term environmental impact.

## **HELP**

### **Hire local entertainment.**

Using local performers or artists supports the local economy and cuts down on emissions from performers traveling long distances. This helps promote local culture and talent, giving attendees a unique and authentic experience.

### **Donate time, resources and materials.**

By setting aside time and resources for local initiatives, event organizers can align with social responsibility goals, creating a positive influence that extends beyond the event itself. This could mean

organizing volunteer activities for event staff and attendees or partnering with local organizations to provide materials, equipment or leftover resources — like food or event supplies — to those in need.

Implementing sustainable practices in events is an ongoing journey that requires consistent evaluation, collaboration and innovation. To make a lasting impact, consider setting measurable sustainability goals for each event, tracking improvements and celebrating progress along the way. Engage attendees, staff and other stakeholders in your sustainability mission by openly communicating your efforts and inviting their participation. Each event is an opportunity to refine these practices, reduce environmental impact and inspire others to adopt eco-friendly approaches. By continuously adapting and expanding sustainable methods, your organization can contribute to a greener, more responsible future.



## Additional Resources



WEBINAR

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