

Guide to Organizing a Sustainable Event



McCord
Stewart
Museum
Montreal

What is a sustainable event?

A sustainable event is one that is organized in a way that minimizes environmental, social and economic impacts, reduces waste, adopts sustainable economic practices and promotes sustainable transportation. In this way, organizers seek to maximize the positive impact on local communities and incorporate fair practices for the entire workforce.

Why organize a sustainable event?

There are several reasons why it's important to move towards sustainable events:

→ Reduce environmental impact: Events can have a significant impact on the environment through the amount of waste they generate, energy and water consumption, and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. By organizing a sustainable event, you can minimize this footprint by adopting sustainable practices and making participants aware of the importance of the environment.

→ Promote social responsibility: Sustainable events can promote social responsibility by encouraging organizational leaders and participants to adopt practices that are sustainable and fair to the workforce, local communities and partners.

→ Reduce costs: Sustainable events can often reduce costs by minimizing energy consumption, reducing waste and choosing sustainable and recyclable materials.

→ Enhance brand image: Sustainable events can enhance brand image by demonstrating the company's or organization's commitment to sustainability and by engaging participants.

→ Facilitate access to financial partners.

→ Motivate staff and volunteers.

In short, organizing a sustainable event is a way to reconcile economic and environmental goals, to promote social responsibility, and to give the company or organization a positive image.

Pourquoi organiser un événement écoresponsable ?

The McCord Stewart Museum is an excellent option for organizing a sustainable event, since you're supporting a cultural non-profit organization (NPO) that:

→ Has a mission to take a critical and inclusive look at social history

→ Has a sustainable development policy

→ Is located in sustainable buildings

→ Is easily accessible by public transportation

→ Is accessible for people with reduced mobility.

Procurement and suppliers

→ Privilege local suppliers, i.e., whose head office is located near the event, preferably within a 25 km radius.

→ Select responsible suppliers by choosing companies who adhere to sustainable development principles, either through a policy or through concrete actions. Consult the Conseil québécois des événements écoresponsables's directory of suppliers.

→ Look for suppliers with a social mission (e.g.: NPOs, cooperatives, social enterprises, reintegration enterprises, adapted enterprises).

→ Use reusable decorations (e.g., by renting or borrowing equipment) or centrepieces that can be given as gifts to participants. It's important to avoid disposable balloons and banners.

→ Buy in bulk to reduce the amount of waste generated by individually packaged products.

→ Limit promotional merch and gifts in favour of non-material products, such as tickets to shows or donations to causes. It's important to explain this choice to participants. Équiterre's Guide to Sustainable Promotional Products can help you choose products that respect human rights and minimize environmental impacts.

→ Choose environmentally friendly or fair trade certified materials by looking for official certifications (e.g.: EcoLogo, FairTrade, BCorp, Ecocert, FairForLife, etc.).

Food and beverage

→ Use the catering services of Olive Orange, a local company that purchases local, seasonal ingredients.

→ Provide at least one vegetarian or vegan option, which is more environmentally friendly than meat.

→ Choose a buffet rather than a box lunch to avoid the extra packaging and food waste that can occur with leftovers from box lunches.

→ Where possible, use reusable dishes and utensils.

→ Use fabric tablecloths and napkins, or at least use unbleached paper containing recycled fibres (only one napkin per person).

→ Replace plastic coffee sticks with wooden spoons or sticks.

→ Also replace individual milk and coffee creamer pods with reusable containers.

Waste management

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- Reduce waste by encouraging participants to bring their own reusable water bottle.
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- Predict what types of trash will be produced during the event, and do your best to avoid them.
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- Set up recycling bins in strategic places with effective signage.
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- Learn about the waste collection options available at the event location and their requirements. For example, at the McCord Stewart Museum, you must separate materials (recycling and garbage), flatten cardboard, and put cans and glass bottles in the appropriate bins. There is no composting in order to protect the Museum's collections – ask the caterer (Olive Orange) in advance to bring the organic materials back with them for composting.
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- Inform the caterer – the day before the event – of the best waste sorting practices.
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- Assign team members to explain to participants how to sort waste materials.
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- Evaluate the quantities of waste (by weight or volume) to produce a report after the event.
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Transportation and GHG

→ Use videoconferencing to reduce the amount of travel required to plan the event.

→ Provide transit information (e.g., schedules, maps, fares and contact information).

→ Provide free public transit tickets to participants.

→ Encourage participants to choose a sustainable transportation method, promoting active and collective transport.

→ Ensure that there are sufficient and safe bike racks nearby.

→ Organize a carpooling system or encourage participants to use an existing service.

→ Provide a shuttle service for large events.

→ Calculate GHG emissions.

→ Offset GHGs through a recognized organization (e.g. Carbone boréal or Planetair).

Communications

By following these tips, you can consider obtaining BNQ 9700-253 certification and organize a sustainable event at the McCord Stewart Museum that minimizes the impact on the environment, while creating an unforgettable experience for participants.

→ Put someone in charge of environmental measures to ensure that they are implemented during the planning and execution of the event.

→ Make participants and suppliers aware of your sustainable approach by announcing the goals and measures, both in the invitation and during the event. Inform suppliers and partners of the measures and how you expect them to collaborate.

→ Choose electronic media for communications, invitations, registration and promotion.

→ Publish reference materials online using a website or file sharing site (Google Drive, Dropbox, etc.). Encourage stakeholders to consult documents electronically instead of printing them and delete online documents after a set period to limit their digital footprint.

→ Use recycled paper, print on both sides of the page, use black and white, avoid images and use half sheets or scrap paper if printing is unavoidable.

→ Opt for digital, reusable, repurposed, or recyclable posters and visuals, avoiding time-specific elements like dates and years for recurring activities so they can be reused from year to year. You can display your logo and event name on the screens in the Museum's lobby.

→ Distribute a report to announce the results to participants and the organizing team. Announcing goals and outcomes, and highlighting the team's efforts to make the event environmentally friendly, can appeal to and inspire participants!

Sustainability agreement

The organization has been informed of the sustainable management practices recommended by the McCord Stewart Museum and is committed to applying them as much as possible and according to its capacities and resources during its event.

The organization is aware of the environmental impact of its event and is committed to doing its part to minimize it. By signing this agreement, the organization commits to respecting these measures to make the event as sustainable as possible.

Within the framework of this sustainability agreement, the McCord Stewart Museum is committed to providing the resources to organize a sustainable event, such as:

→ This guide to planning a sustainable event

→ The required waste management equipment in the rental space

After the event, a report of the measures taken will be made to ensure that sustainability goals are met.

Organization name: _____

Event date (DD/MM/YYYY): _____

Person in charge: _____

Signature

Date (DD/MM/YYYY)