



Case Study Metafore's 2006 Forest Leadership Forum



INTRODUCTION

The 2006 Forest Leadership Forum produced by Metafore attracted nearly 400 attendees from around the world. The 2006 Forest Leadership Forum provided an opportunity for action-oriented global leaders and key stakeholders to showcase innovative business practices for pulp, paper, and wood products, and to work towards aligning business practices in ways that achieve environmental, social and financial results.. The three-day meeting was held at the Oregon Convention Center in Portland, Oregon, May 3-5, 2006. This event offered an outstanding program filled with renowned speakers including Ben Packard, Director of Environmental Affairs, Starbucks Coffee Company, and David Refkin, Director of Sustainable Development, Time Inc.

PLANNING –OPPORTUNITIES TO GREEN THE CONFERENCE

Metafore serves as a catalyst for companies and organizations striving to become more environmentally and socially responsible. Their interest in producing a green conference was a natural extension of their organization's values. Their previous Forest Leadership Forum held in Atlanta in 2002 won the 2003 IMEX Environmental Meeting Award and was recognized as being one of the "greenest conferences ever held in the USA." The goal for this year was to reduce the impact that the Forest Leadership Forum would have on the environment, and to improve on the efforts of the 2002 Forest Leadership Forum.

As the conference managers, Meeting Strategies Worldwide began by working with Metafore to develop environmental policies for the conference and determine the minimum guidelines for facilities and vendors.

Ensuring that the site selected for the Forest Leadership Forum was an environmentally responsible one was crucial. Using the guidelines, requests for proposals were sent to several cities who were asked to fill out a survey regarding their environmental practices. The field was narrowed to three cities which met the guidelines. Of these, Portland, Oregon was ultimately selected.

Each meeting venue was also asked to complete a survey regarding their environmental practices. The Doubletree Hotel & Executive Conference Center (recently Green Seal certified) and the Oregon Convention Center were chosen based on those practices and the fact that they met the minimum guidelines established for the conference.

PARTNERS IN GREEN

Green meetings are becoming more popular, but not every city, convention center, hotel or caterer knows what to expect when greening an event. Metafore requested environmental practices be implemented. The next step was to ensure the practices agreed on were included in the contracts. Meeting Strategies Worldwide negotiated on behalf of the Forest Leadership Forum with the vendors to ensure implementation of environmentally sustainable meeting practices. The convention center and hotel had contractual agreements to honor the green initiatives.

Convention Center

The Oregon Convention Center has a recycling infrastructure in place for cans, plastic, glass, cardboard, paper, vinyl, wood, and leftover food and worked with us to ensure the conference would maximize use of their current structure to reduce landfill waste. The following are the requests made for the convention center and Aramark, the facility's caterer.

- Minimize energy use by reducing the light, power and HVAC during move in and move out times in the exhibit hall and turning off lights in meeting rooms when not in use.
- Minimize waste by:
 - Providing drinking water in large containers rather than individual bottles.
 - Serving juice, ice tea, coffee and water in pitchers rather than individual containers.
 - Using china service or biodegradable disposable service ware rather than paper or plastic service ware at no additional cost to Metafore.
 - Purchasing and serving condiments in bulk.
 - Donating leftover food to the degree possible within safety and health regulations.
 - Compost food scraps and other biodegradable waste.
- Provide collection bins and facilities, staffing and training necessary to recycle all glass containers, aluminum and steel cans, scrap metal, plastic bottles, film and table coverings, scrap wood, paper (newspaper, cardboard and other office paper), and grease.
- Conserve natural resources by purchasing and providing all paper bathroom supplies with 100% recycled post-consumer content paper.
- Minimize pollution and human exposure to toxic compounds by using environmentally responsible cleaning products for carpets, floors, kitchens, and bathrooms.
- Support local and sustainable agriculture by purchasing food and food products that are fresh and offer sustainable menu options that reflect the real costs of purchases. Provide a minimum average of twenty-five percent (25%) of total weight in food served as sustainable or organic at regular menu prices.
- Minimize air pollution by cleaning parking lots, sidewalks and driveways without the use of two-cycle combustion engines during Metafore event.

The Hotel

The Doubletree Hotel & Executive Conference Center, as mentioned earlier, recently received their Green Seal Certification, which made them a great partner in green. Their management made a commitment to sustainable practices as a way of doing business which has fostered a culture of environmentalism. Here is what was agreed to in the contract:

- Recycling program: (materials to be recycled: paper, plastic, glass, aluminum cans, cardboard and grease.)
- Provide clearly marked recycling containers in common areas including lobby and hotel guest rooms unless hotel sorts and recycles.
- Towel and sheet reuse program.
- Not replace consumable amenities daily unless they are gone. Use of soap and shampoo dispensers would be optimal.
- Instruct hotel housekeeping staff to shut blinds and turn down the heat/air conditioning and turn off lights during the day in rooms while attendees are gone.
- Use glass or china (non-disposable) catering plates, cups and glasses.
- NO Styrofoam (polystyrene) used under any circumstances.

- Serve condiments in bulk containers, not individual servings, eliminating wasteful packaging. This includes sugar, creamer, butter, cream cheese, etc. (exception: sugar substitute may be in individual servings) To-go items are also exempt.
- Use shade-grown coffee at any conference functions.
- Use cloth napkins, whenever possible. Use coasters instead of cocktail napkins.
- Donate all leftover food to a local food bank.
- Donate all table scraps to a local farm or compost.
- Use cleaning products that do not introduce toxins into the air or water.

Exposition Services

The exposition management company was also selected based on their environmental practices and their willingness to partner with Meeting Strategies Worldwide and Metafore. The exposition management company was required to implement the following procedures and practices during the conference:

- Exhibitor Kits/Service - Kits will be available electronically via the website. Any binders that are mailed to exhibitors will be made from at least 35% post-consumer recovered fiber and recycled paper. The contents of the binder are printed on post-consumer recycled paper.
- Tabletop Coverings - Use of pre-cut, to length, table top vinyl, wooden tables, and biodegradable trash can liners.
- Booth headers – Should be made from renewable forest byproducts with water based ink.
- Aisle Signs / Show Signage / Double-sided signs, graphics and logos – Use products made of environmentally responsible components with applied and removable water base graphics.
- Registration Counter – Use lighting that is Energy Star Saver. Counters are to be re-usable and graphics and logo should be re-usable.
- Magazine Bins - Use re-usable bins. Logos are printed with water based inks. The shelves should be made of renewable resources or certified forest products should not contain topical hardwoods or endangered wood species.
- Computer Kiosks - Use re-usable kiosks with logo and graphics printed with soy based inks.
- Booth and Aisle Carpet – Carpet should be made from and fully recyclable into more fiber and backing or at least recycled after use.
- Equipment - Use natural gas fork lifts and hand carts to move exhibitor freight in and out of the show to assist in the air quality.
- Shipping and packing materials - Make available to exhibitors and show management biodegradable shipping and packing materials.
- Transportation - Reduce the environmental impact resulting from transportation while supporting regional economy. Partner with local contractor, manage and use local labor. Minimize transportation to from show site. Use bio-diesel fueled or alternative fuel trucks. Offset transportation emissions with carbon offset program.
- Staff Training - Staff will be trained to assist facility with properly disposing of recyclable materials and other waste. Personnel will be informed about the environmentally responsible practices to be implemented during this show.
- The exhibitors each signed an environmental clause as part of their rules and regulations and were encouraged to limit the amount of collateral materials they brought.

HOW GREEN WAS IT?

On-site management was the key to ensuring follow through. At the convention center, each room and breakout were checked to make sure that waste bins and recycle/compost bins were in place. In addition, we toured the back-of-house to see where the waste and recycling were being taken. The following highlights the accomplishments at the Forest Leadership Forum.

Oregon Convention Center

- ✓ Recycling containers were provided for aluminum cans, glass bottles, paper, and cardboard.
- ✓ Compost containers were provided for breaks where compostable cups, plates and napkins were used.
- ✓ Drinking water was provided in large containers rather than individual bottles.

Aramark

- ✓ Put together a menu more sustainable than its usual offerings.
- ✓ China and cloth napkins were used for meals.
- ✓ Juice, ice tea, coffee and water were provided in pitchers rather than individual containers.
- ✓ Paper products used for breaks were compostable.
- ✓ No Styrofoam was used.
- ✓ Centerpieces were made of reusable items.
- ✓ Local or organic produce was used whenever possible.
- ✓ The caterer arranged for 426 lbs of food waste to be composted.
- ✓ Attendees were offered vegetarian/vegan meal choices.
- ✓ Served fair trade/shade grown coffee.
- ✓ All condiments were served in bulk containers.
- ✓ Instead of individual plastic bottles, drinking water was provided in pitchers and large reusable containers.

Doubletree Hotel & Executive Conference Center

- ✓ Recycle program was in place for paper, plastic, glass, aluminum cans, cardboard, and grease.
- ✓ The hotel had clearly marked recycling containers in the common areas.
- ✓ Guests had the option of using the towel and sheet reuse program.
- ✓ The hotel housekeeping staff was instructed to shut blinds and turn off the heat/air conditioning and turn off lights during the day in rooms while the attendees were gone.
- ✓ No Styrofoam was used in the hotel.
- ✓ Condiments were served in bulk containers.
- ✓ Leftover food was donated to a local food bank.
- ✓ Table scraps were composted.
- ✓ Cleaning products used did not introduce toxins into the air or water.

DWA Trade Show & Exposition Services

- ✓ Exhibit kits were provided online.
- ✓ Expired carpet and padding was sent to manufacturers for reuse.
- ✓ Booth signs, cardboard and shrink-wrap were recycled.
- ✓ A water-based ink was used for signs and graphics.
- ✓ Metal sign hooks were picked up after the event and reused.
- ✓ Damaged aluminum & metal was recycled
- ✓ Vinyl was sent through the OCC recycling program.
- ✓ Leftover pallets were reused.
- ✓ Carpet cleaning products were citrus-based and laundry detergents were non-phosphorus and 100% biodegradable.
- ✓ Forklifts were propane powered.
- ✓ Proposal was printed on 35% post-consumer waste recycled content EnviroCopy paper.
- ✓ Exhibition management recycled packing materials.
- ✓ All leftover materials, magazines and flyers were recycled.

OTHER ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Transportation

To mitigate air quality issues, Metafore purchased carbon offsets through Better World Travel to offset attendee travel to the conference. In addition, the convention center and host hotel were located on the MAX line which meant attendees could take advantage of Portland's mass transit system thus decreasing carbon emissions.

Marketing, Communication and Registration

- ✓ Newsletters were emailed.
- ✓ The exhibitor prospectus and sponsorship packets were available online.
- ✓ The program was printed using sustainably-forested paper.
- ✓ On-line registration was provided, eliminating paper and postage.
- ✓ Name badge holders were made of recycled material and were turned in to be recycled.
- ✓ Paper with 100% post-consumer recycled paper was used for faxes and onsite printing.
- ✓ Conference bags were not provided. No additional handouts were produced.
- ✓ Room signs were consolidated to reduce the number of session signs required.

MEASURING THE RESULTS

Measuring the environmental components was the last step in evaluating the success of greening the conference. According to figures provided to the Oregon Convention Center by its recycling vendor, the following materials were recycled:

Cardboard	1900 lbs
Other recyclables (glass, plastic, paper)	3060 lbs
Compost (4) bins (estimated)	426 lbs

LESSONS LEARNED

As with every project there are opportunities to learn from the experience. The lessons learned reflected here center around the environmental impact of the Forest Leadership Forum. The following lessons are shared with the intention to educate and motivate others to take on greening their events.

1. Start early. You need to make sure that the necessary waste management procedures are in place, and if not, that you have enough time to do the research and possibly make the arrangements yourself.
2. If you are requesting local/organic food and beverage, it sometimes takes longer to coordinate the menus and make sure that the items you want are available or in season, so again, make sure you allow enough time to accomplish what you want.
3. Make sure to include environmental clauses in all of the contracts, but also have a conversation with your vendors about your expectations and what is possible. If there is more than one event taking place in the venue, as there was in our case, you want to make sure that they can track your waste separately, or at least give you an estimate of the percentage of waste that your event generates. As it turned out the Forest Leadership Forum was only able to obtain the total amount of waste that went to the landfill and the total amount of salvaged recyclables for the week.
4. Make sure that the venue or vendor is held accountable. Especially if the reason you chose that particular facility was based on their environmental policies. Even though you may have environmental language in the contract, you need to make sure that there are consequences for the facility or vendor if they do not uphold their part of the contract. If you do not have anything to address non-performance, then you have no recourse.
5. Be sure to get a tour of the back-of-house, and don't be afraid to ask questions.

CONCLUSION

The greening of the Forest Leadership Forum in Portland was successful in a number of ways. In the short-term, the conference minimized its impact on the local ecosystem, and provided more learning opportunities. Long term, it raised awareness and educated venues, vendors and attendees.

The environmental practices in place for the Forest Leadership Forum proved to demonstrate Metafore's commitment to environmentally responsible business practices. Every event that identifies environmental stewardship as a priority is a step in the right direction, and Metafore is a part of the growing number of organizations illustrating how all gatherings, regardless of whether they involve industry, nonprofits or religious organizations can be more environmentally responsible.