

What is a green meeting?

Everyone knows what a meeting is.

Large or small, they are a means of bringing people together to share information, generate ideas, and make business connections. When you think of being “green” or environmentally responsible, recycling is usually the first thing that comes to mind. A green meeting or event goes beyond recycling.

Green meetings have been defined as a “meeting that incorporates environmental considerations throughout all stages of the meeting in order to minimize the negative impact on the environment.”

Greening an event encompasses all aspects of the planning process. By making choices at every planning level, from site selection to serving condiments like ketchup and sugar from bulk containers, the environmental impact of the event can be significantly reduced. It means taking steps to minimize waste through recycling, composting and avoiding disposable items, to decrease energy consumption, and to use products with post-consumer recycled content and food that is organic, local or fair trade. Green meetings also incorporate social aspects such as charitable donations and projects that give back to the community.

Why is it important to make my meeting green?

A small meeting may not seem important, after all what difference does a few dozen cups and napkins make? But think about what happens when it is on a large scale. For example, during a typical five day conference, 2,500 attendees will use 62,500 plates, 87,500 napkins, 75,000 cups or glasses and 90,000 cans or bottles. Plus there are all the greenhouse emissions from people traveling to and from the conference and paper and plastic waste from conference handouts.

Now multiply this by the thousands of meetings produced each year worldwide and the environmental impact is staggering. So it is important to make changes whenever possible, because every meeting can make a difference and reduce its environmental and social impact.

What can I do?

Read more about some of the myths surrounding green meetings and check out our list of basic greening tips to get you started. For more in-depth materials, we have a large collection of free resources available on our website.

Contact the friendly experts at Meeting Strategies Worldwide today to discuss how we can help you make your meeting green. Nancy Wilson nancy@meetingstrategiesworldwide.com or Amy Spatrisano amy@meetingstrategiesworldwide.com.