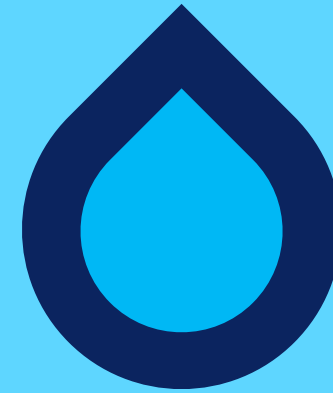


Freeman¹



Sustainable events: A checklist for change

Accomplish your company's green goals with these tips

Prioritizing eco-conscious choices at events makes a difference not only because it's good for the environment, but because it's good for business.

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ESG is the new VIP

As more and more companies expand their environmental, social, and governance (ESG) policies, event marketers must check the boxes with more eco-conscious event practices.

To do that, you must collaborate across the ecosystem — from facilities to waste management, food sourcing to logistics. And it's important to get your audiences involved, too — building sustainable events is a team sport, after all.

Here are a few ideas to get the green ball rolling.

Dare to go bare

Event carpeting is there because it's always been there — but it doesn't need to be. To make a difference underfoot, go bare. This change saves truck miles, fuel, tape, plastic coverings, and loads of materials in landfills.

If you must have carpet, talk to your event production company to source reused and/or recyclable carpet options and request soy-based padding.

Carbon counting

Check with your event production company to see if they offer a carbon calculator — these handy gadgets calculate how many tons of emissions you save for every unused square foot of carpet. Bonus: Add these calculated savings to your post-event report!

Revel in rentals

Instead of building or buying new, to reduce landfill impact opt for 100% recyclable, reusable structures and rental furniture. Lighter rentals reduce shipping weight significantly, resulting in fewer carbon emissions. Work with local donation programs to give non-rental items a second life.

Offer these same options for partners and sponsors so they can join the social responsibility party, too.



Waste away

One of our industry's biggest challenges is reducing our event-related waste — and plastics top the list. Reduce impact by:

- Donating food and other materials to local charities.
- Only offering compostable items when a commercial composting program is available in your event's location.
- Reducing swag (it's a drag) — consider offering a charitable donation for every tchotchke not handed out or gift certificates for experiences over stuff — both options are more memorable.
- Gotta have swag? Make it count by choosing items that support local vendors and communities. Bonus points for buying from women/minority-owned businesses.
- Working with vendors to find new ways to repurpose additional waste.

Recycling: Sort it out

To reduce and eliminate contamination in your event recycling and composting streams, hire extra workers for waste sorting. Why? Because once a waste hauler determines a load is contaminated, the entire dumpster is considered trash — any effort to recycle stops. Effective event waste recycling means extra hands can make or break the effort.

Corral your catering

- Ban bottled water; instead, provide reusable water bottles and plentiful refill stations.
- Avoid over-ordering by specifying appropriate quantities.
- Improve food sourcing by going local (lean into the next column).
- Consider doing a meatless, veggie-rich meal and then promote the green why behind it.
- Work with local communities, government, and NGOs to maximize the donation of leftover food.

Lean into local

Reduce your carbon footprint and travel costs by using local everything: local food, local labor, local materials, and hassle-free local transportation.

- Choosing locally sourced food, materials, and labor can significantly reduce carbon emissions.
- Local transportation means using public transportation, shuttles, and shared rides versus a flurry of rental cars.
- When selecting hotels, choose locations that offer proximity to the venue, allowing attendees to walk or bike.
- Consider offering incentives such as free vouchers, bike passes, or discounted public transportation tickets to keep attendees on the move.

Clear the air

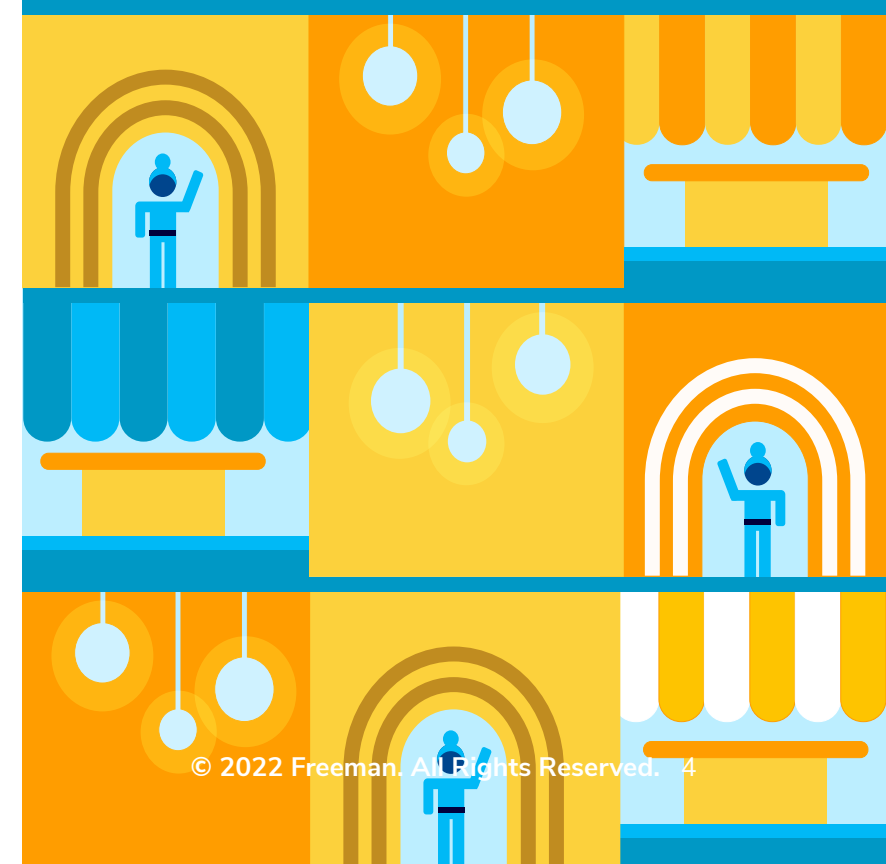
Shipping costs money and generates emissions. The heavier a vehicle is, the greater its fuel consumption and CO₂ emissions. When choosing products and materials to use on-site, factor the specifications and weight into the decision-making process.

Consider selecting a transport carrier that participates in the [EPA SmartWay Partners Program](#). This designation recognizes partners for setting and achieving greenhouse gas reduction goals in freight transportation. These savings are thanks to fuel-conserving technology and strategies showcased by the EPA SmartWay program.

Out-of-towner tip:

Remember that your event city may be a new destination for some, which means new forms of transportation could be confusing or daunting — hello, NYC subways!

Make the move easier by providing helpful tips with simple, step-by-step directions to get them on their way.



Too legit to print

It's an obvious no-brainer that bears repeating because we all need reminders:

PRINT LESS!

Consider these alternatives:

- Use digital signs whenever possible.
- Remove printed handouts. Use digital documents and QR codes instead.
- Print all single-use rigid graphics on high-quality, recyclable substrates, and aisle signs on 100% recyclable, high-quality paper with only non-VOC inks.
- Take it a step further by printing graphics locally to reduce carbon emissions.
- Don't be dated: Leave off the month, year, and locations from signage so it can be reused even if the month/city changes.

Go gRRReen
with the new 3Rs:
REIMAGINE
REPURPOSE
RESPONSIBILITY

Making swift
decisions brings
GREEN to the
bottom line

Every little green step counts, so think about each item being ordered and used with a new, repurposed mindset. Look at every aspect of your event plan and ask the three R questions:

How can we reimagine this event with environmental impact in mind?
Where can we reimagine, repurpose, and operate responsibly?

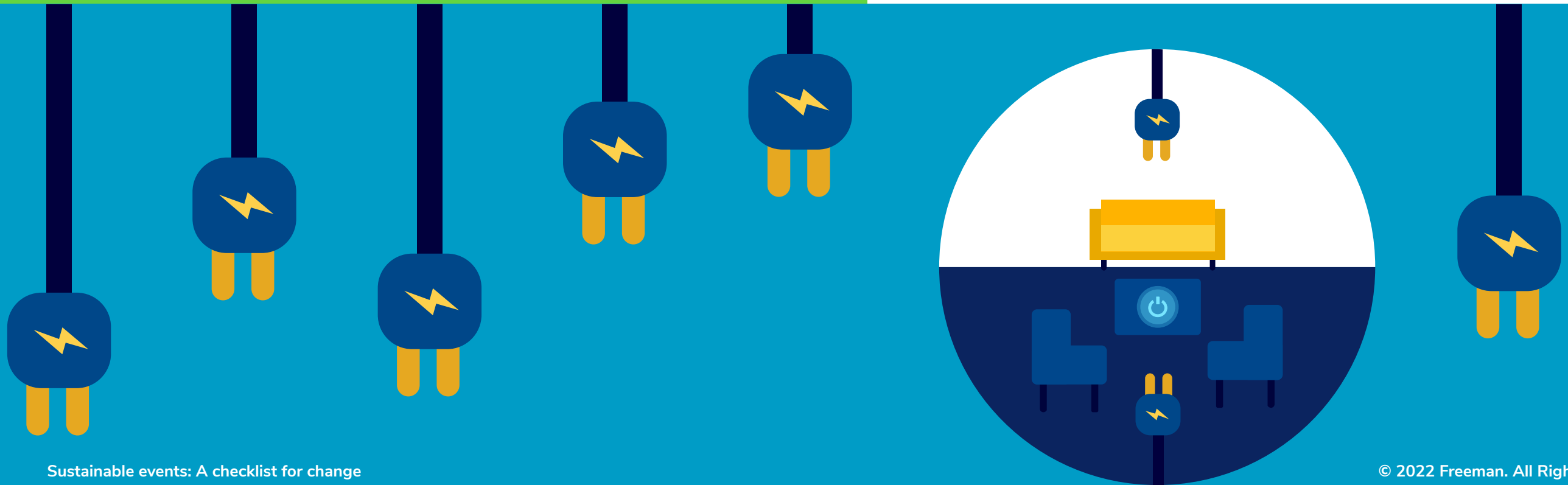
Take signage, for example:

- Are you using too much directional signage?
- Can you repurpose signs you've used before or update with digital?
- If we must print graphics, what recyclable substrate can we use?

Down to power ... down

Save energy and reduce electricity consumption by ...

- Choosing venues that have invested in green energy technology and hold a LEED certification (or other green building certification).
- Selecting an AV provider that uses energy-efficient (Energy Star) electronic equipment when available.
- Asking vendors about electronics and battery recycling or donation programs.
- During move-in and move-out, cutting lighting to 30 or 50 percent, planning your HVAC use carefully, and limiting escalators.
- Mandate a power-down policy: *All electronics and audio visual equipment should be turned off overnight whenever possible.*



Inspire to conspire

To get others involved with your eco-conscious event practices, include sustainability throughout the planning process and weaved into the on-site experience. And inspire your attendees along the way:

- Include information and suggestions about available recycling efforts throughout the space.
- Provide examples of products and practices to reduce or eliminate on-site.

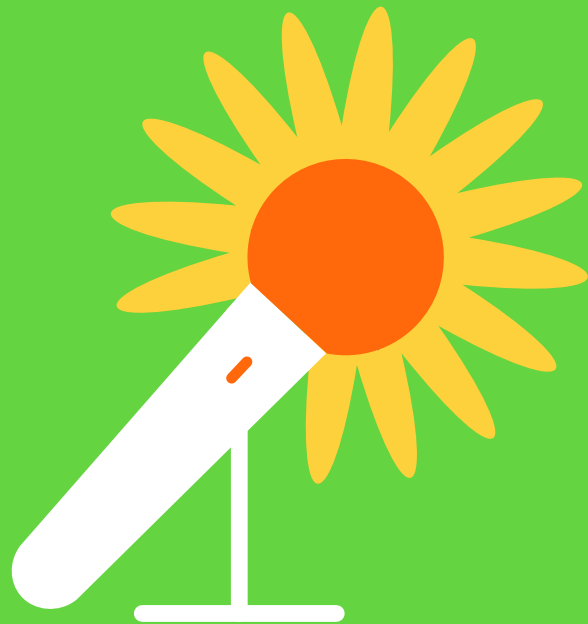
- Suggest sustainable products available to use as alternatives.
- List potential local charities for donations.
- Empower messages with green calls to action before and during the event — this constant drumbeat gives attendees a positive feeling because they can get involved to help make a difference.



GREEN GROUP EFFORT

When you share your sustainability plans and collaborate with attendees, partners (choose vendors who share your green goals), and stakeholders from the start, everybody benefits.

Shout-out sustainability before, during, and after the event



Before: Get the eco word out

- Articulate sustainability goals to audiences and offer ways to get them involved in the cause.
- Notify key stakeholders about your sustainable event plan, including all details and logistics.
- Develop a handbook of sustainability operating procedures (SOP) to share with stakeholders, colleagues, and vendors.
- Ask vendors and suppliers about the supply chain of materials and supplies they provide to ensure they comply with your sustainability standards.
- Since many of the on-site efforts happen in the “back of house,” be sure to include training and briefings on your SOP with labor unions and other staff.

During: Share your eco story

- Use digital signage or recyclable printed graphics to let your attendees, sponsors, and vendors know what steps you are taking to make your event more eco-friendly.
- Promote recycling and composting.
- Highlight rental and/or repurposed materials used for design and graphics.
- Coordinate with your social media team to share eco-highlights using the event hashtag.

After: Eco pulse check

- Share highlights in your organization’s blog, newsletter, and social media outlets to demonstrate accountability.
- While facilities and vendors are often involved in the planning, consider who else needs to be part of future plans.
- Close the loop with design agencies, I&D, and transportation providers in order to expand your sustainability goals to make sure they impact every function of the event.
- Ask for feedback from attendees and partners to determine what worked best and what you can improve next year. Encourage them to also provide their own ideas — make those group efforts count!



Through eco-conscious initiatives large and small, you can make a lasting impact on your audiences, not the environment.

Ready to get your green groove on?

We can help you develop and execute a purpose-driven event plan.

[Go eco](#)