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# Identifying Green Meetings in the Hospitality Industry

Shin Yi (Felicity) Chiou

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Identifying Green Meetings in the Hospitality Industry

by

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1999

A professional paper submitted in partial fulfillment  
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## **PART ONE**

### **Introduction**

Paper products and other materials can consume a large portion of the overall meeting or event budget (“How to save money on printing,” 2009). In the view of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the meeting and event industry represents the second most wasteful industry in America. There are several stages to plan and implement a meeting. Specifically, before meetings, the processes of marketing and advertising necessitate a large consumption of office products. During and after meetings or exhibitions, it requires vast freight and human force in the execution of the meeting. While being on site, the audio visual setting, the décor, the catering services, the peripheral commodities all account for an important influence upon the environment because the tremendous amount of items used. Another major problem with live meetings and events is they encourage people to travel and therefore burn more fossil fuels. (Hampton, n.d.). Accordingly, waste, resources consumptions, and great amount of carbon emissions are all responsible for the environment.

The business activities as a whole continually disregard the importance of pro-environmental and eco-friendly issues and damage the environment in a long run. It is the vicious circle that the industry has suffered from the environmental damages. Moreover, many related activities, such as accommodation, transportation, and food and beverage, not only generate waste but also consume a lot of energy that also threaten the natural environment. As many other industries have started implementing their sustainability concepts, the convention industry is now beginning to show its enthusiasm toward green concepts.

Green trends are beginning to make an impact on meetings in the hospitality industry nowadays. Based on Eurac Convention Center, “If we multiply this data (A five-day conference

with 350 participants produces, in terms of waste, around 12,250 napkins, 10,000 plastic cups and 12,600 small bottles of water) by the hundreds of meetings that take place each year all over the world, we can understand the importance of the meetings industry and the responsibility it has with regard to the economics and the safeguarding of the environment. The move from that conventional model of meetings to ‘green’ meetings is not only desirable but necessary” (*Green Meetings*, 2003, para. 1).

Thus, instead of taking advantages of the environment and pessimistically embracing the damages done to the nature caused by human activities, the meeting professionals in hospitality industry should be visionaries and cultivate themselves and the customers. Improving the development of commercial activities in view of all facets so as to recover the environment and enhance return on investments simultaneously becomes the hot topic. For instance, the annually meetings of both International Association of Exhibitions and Events (IAEE) and Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA) have addressed green issues and attempt to evoke special attention on the eco-friendly meetings. Green meetings could be defined as the meetings incorporate the environmental concerns among all the parties and at all the different stages to do no harm or at least minimize the negative influence on the environment. Therefore, this paper is to identify and integrate the related literatures among the leading associations mentioned above as well as other professional resources.

Furthermore, there is a myth that applying green ideology generates higher costs due to the green products and the requirements. Nevertheless, technology innovations, virtual tools, and social media could be extensively considered the branches under the green trends and prevent waste. Besides, corporate social responsibility, ethical issues, word of mouth, branding, and sustainability would be additional key factors not only in eco-awareness but also in

marketing strategies. Accordingly, this paper will also touch upon above notions by observing literature reviews to explore and identify the economic impacts of being green.

“More and more meetings are being combined with exhibitions, resulting in a substantial increase in frequency and attendance as associations venture abroad for their conventions, and corporations recognize a strategic need to interact with employees and clients worldwide (Krugman & Wright, 2007, 130)”. Lastly, this paper will introduce the practices hold the similarities between green meetings and green exhibitions according to existing literature.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this paper is to identify what constitutes green meetings in the hospitality industries with special attentions on the applications of modern technologies and marketing strategies. This professional paper will search and collect the related literature reviews and existent practices with green ideology in hospitality to clarify the myth and difficulties of being green and help the readers or potential advocates better understand green meetings and adopt them.

**Statement of the problem.** According to the EPA, there is a million tons of waste generated in the United States each year. A third of the amount was from paper and paperboard waste. A quarter was organic waste, and another quarter consisted of plastic, metal and glass. The convention industry is beyond question one of the biggest producers of the paper waste that comes from the event handouts and other related printing documents. A great deal of signage use and other disposable designed facilities from various events also place burden to the landfill.

Global warming is caused by the build-up of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere from human activities, primarily the burning of fossil fuels to provide the energy and service that we daily use. Fossil fuels are burned in homes and businesses, cars, airplanes, and to create nearly

everything consumed. “Carbon offsets” enable individuals and businesses to reduce the CO<sub>2</sub> (carbon dioxide, a damaging greenhouse gas) emissions. Carbon offsets typically include contributions to renewable energy efficiency and reforestation projects. As more and more people are concerned about global warming and seeking to reduce the climate impact, carbon offsets, along with personal carbon reductions, provide an important solution to global warming” (Kent, 2006, 500).

In short, the dramatic global warming overwhelmingly affects the climate conditions. The natural contingencies affect or limit the site selections and demand greater cost for highly maintenance of the sites. It goes without saying that green trends under the circumstances becomes one of the concerns that meeting planners will face.

**Justification.** Making the meetings or exhibitions go green should be cost-effective for the organization which creates the reputation, recognition, and branding image as the environmentally conscious organization. Tourism and the hospitality industry have a vital interest in environmental protection and rehabilitation, as they rely to a significant extent for much of its appeal on the health of the natural environment (*Environmental rehabilitation*, n.d.). The practices of green meetings can initiate the subsets of environmental protection and retention, solve the environmental problems, and take a leading edge among other industries.

**Constraints.** The constraints of this paper are stated as below. Due to the business privacy issues, it is sometimes hard to gather or obtain the precise numerical data of the budgets and the profits among the hotels and convention centers between going green and not doing so. It is also difficult to prove or measure, to what degree, that the environment damage is caused by meeting business in the hospitality industry. Thus, it makes an arduous effort to compare the



benefits or return on investment by applying for green ideology into meeting industry as well as to persuade the properties that have not been involved with this green trend to adopt it.

On the other hand, a green meeting requires the corporations and associations from different departments in the on-site properties or the convention centers. Take a simple conference as the illustration, it may need the coffee station setting up by the banquet department, audio visual setup by the AV department, and the classroom setting up by convention service department. It encounters the difficulties to control over different branches. When the meetings or supply chains grow globally or to a tremendous size cross properties or even countries, it is challenging to ensure that all the products and services are produced according to generally accepted social, environmental and ethical standards (“The better tomorrow plan,” 2009). Moreover, there is neither a mandatory regulation nor a united standard for meeting the green needs yet. Both the self imposed disadvantages by the researcher and the externally imposed limitations over which the researcher has no control would be the constraints of this paper.

## **Glossary**

*Green trends.* It is a statement of mind which refers to a product sustainably produced using environmentally and socially conscious means (“What is Green?,” 2008).

*Return on investments (ROI).* “ROI analysis compares the magnitude and timing of investment gains directly with the magnitude and timing of investment costs. A high ROI means that investment gains compare favorably to investment costs (Schmidt, 2011, para. 1).”

*International Association of Exhibitions and Events (IAEE).* “Organized in 1928 as the National Association of Exposition Managers to represent the interests of trade show and exposition managers, the International Association of Exhibitions and Events is today the leading

association for the global exhibition industry. Today IAEE represents over 8,500 individuals who conduct and support exhibitions around the world (ABOUT IAEE, 2010, para. 1).”

*Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA).* Professional convention management association headquartered in Chicago represents more than 6,000 meeting industry leaders from 17 chapters in the United States, Canada and Mexico. Members include planner professionals, suppliers, faculty and students. Other than students and faculty, members are categorized as the professionals or suppliers based on their occupational positions (ABOUT PCMA, n.d.).

*The Green Meeting Industry Council (GMIC).* The Green Meeting Industry Council (GMIC) is the member of the Convention Industry Council and the premier global community 100% focuses on sustainability in the meetings and events industry through educations and spearheading researches, policies and standards. GMIC is a non-profit professional meetings association with member representation in over 20 countries (“Inspire. Lead. Sustain.” n.d.).

*The Accepted Practices Exchange (APEX).* The Accepted Practices Exchange (APEX) is an initiative of the Convention Industry Council and promotes development and implementation of industry-wide accepted practices to build and enhance efficiencies within meetings, conventions and events industry (APEX Initiative, 2010).

*The Convention Industry Council (CIC).* The Convention Industry Council has 31 member organizations representing over 103,500 individuals and 19,500 companies and properties involved in the meetings, conventions, and events industry. The ultimate goal of the Convention Industry Council is to provide a forum and definition for members to exchange information on global trends and hot topics, promulgate excellence in best practices and

guidelines, collaborate on industry issues and advocate the value of the meetings, conventions, exhibitions and events industry (CIC, 2010).

*Corporate social responsibility (CSR).* Corporate social responsibility is the strongly continuing commitment by corporations to behave ethically and responsibly and contributes to economic development while improving the quality of life of the workforce and their families as well as of the local community and society at large to protect the environment and minimize the negative impact. (Holme & Watts, 2006).

*Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).* EPA was founded to consolidate in one agency with a variety of federal research, monitoring, standard-setting and enforcement activities to ensure environmental protection. EPA's goal is to protect human health and to safeguard the natural environment, such as air, water, and landfill, upon which life depends (History of EPA, 2011).

*Word of mouth.* Word of mouth means an act that consumers providing information to other consumers and accounts for merits of more new and repeat customers (“An Introduction to WOM Marketing with Definitions,” 2010).

*Sustainability.* According to a definition by the United National General Assembly in 1987, “sustainability” means that something “meets the needs of the present, without undermining future generations to meet their needs” (What is Green?, 2008, para. 1).

*LEED.* LEED developed by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) is an internationally acclaimed green building certification, providing third-party verification that a building or community was designed and built using strategies, materials, or constructions aimed at improving performance across all the metrics that matter most: energy savings, water

efficiency, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions reduction, improved indoor environmental quality, and stewardship of resources and sensitivity to their impacts. (What LEED Is, 2011).

*IMEX.* IMEX located and headquartered in Frankfurt is the essential worldwide exhibition for meetings and incentive travel. In 2010, they had 3,500 exhibitors from 157 countries representing national and regional tourist offices, major hotel groups, airlines, destination management companies, service providers, trade associations and more. Over 3,800 hosted buyers from more than 60 world markets visited IMEX 2010, contributing to a total of nearly 9,000 visitors for the show's busiest three days ever (“About us,” 2011).

*RFP.* RFP means request for proposal.

*QR codes.* A QR Code is a barcode on steroids. It is used for encoding information in two-dimensional space (O'Brien, 2011).

*HVAC.* HVAC stands for heating, ventilating, and air conditioning.

*HTML.* HTML, which stands for hyper text markup language, is the predominant markup language for web pages. HTML is the basic building-blocks of web pages.

## **PART TWO**

### **Introduction**

When planning for a meeting or convention, the initial planning stages are now just as important as the event itself. Green meetings have emerged as a big reason for this change. The term “green meetings” has been introduced on the business scene as a central part to the planning stages, the event itself, and also the post-event. Green meetings stress the importance of reducing as much negative impact as possible on the environment. The term has had a universal impact on the way various cultures conduct business in regard to the environment as well as the money it saves in the long-run.

The forces of Mother Nature will regularly threaten, and often breach, an event’s first line of defense (Pinchera & Barber, 2011). The world is finally waking up to the importance of green, including entrepreneurs. They understand and appreciate the importance of going green, but few have the practical roadmap to make it happen (Horan, 2009).

Change in the meeting industry is typical, but the degree of current change is unprecedented, and that rapid evolution will continue for at least the next few years. Meetings will be defined differently as they become more focused on specific objectives and expected outcomes. Content, venue, environment, audience profile, presenters, communications media and technology will all be fine-tuned to assure adherence to stated objectives and outcomes (Voegeli, 2011).

Meetings and exhibitions use a lot of resources and can be extremely wasteful, and exhibitions potentially represent a negative influence on the environment. They use large volumes of electricity, encourage the use of many travel and transportation options, and generate

large amounts of waste. For example, “at an event in the United States, a 500-stand exhibition associated with a conference attended by 8,100 visitors used the following:

- 617,000 kilowatts of electricity
- 28,000 therms of natural gas
- 376,000 gallons of fuel (Kent, 2006, 493)”

In total, over eight million tons of carbons were emitted into the atmosphere. In the U.K., one estimate suggests that exhibition waste exceeds one million tons annually. Other environmental factors to consider are water usage, and the products and services purchased to produce the show. Food and beverage service and restroom usage are the larger contribution to the water usage during an exhibition. Organizers should consider using facilities and caterers who have water conservation practices in place. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates the average conference participant uses 846 gallons of water (Kent, 2006).

Fears about the environment, justifiable or not, have prompted a remarkable and dramatic transformation in attitudes towards the environment, from governments down to the people. The wide variance in global environmental policies is the result of highly-disparate political agendas, contrasting cultural views and financial circumstances. In short, the leaders of some countries are more “green-minded” than others. It is easier to be con-sensitive when a country’s economy is relatively wealthy, and the average standard of living is relatively high (Kent, 2006).

Despite the perception that implementing green practices can cost considerably more money for planners and suppliers, savings are actually likely to occur in the long run. According to a comprehensive report on green meetings released in 2004 by the Convention Industry Council (CIC), following the best practices for green meetings and events ultimately saves money for both show organizers and the venues in which they are held. Properties save on

operating costs, including increasingly high energy charges, and both venues and planners can save from the operational efficiencies that are tied to green business practices. “For example, collecting the name badges for reuse at an event in the United States with 1,300 attendees can save the organizer almost \$1,000. There is a growing acknowledgement within the industry that, while it is difficult to calculate the immediate ROI of implementing green practices, the dividends are bound to pay in the long-term (Kent, 2006, 496).”

Added to monetary savings is the opportunity to accomplish the moral high-ground and to inspire delegates and enhance the reputation of the organization. The underlying message is that greener exhibitions need not be a cause of greater workload, extra hassle, or additional cost, and have enormous opportunities within their own right (Kent, 2006).

## **Literature Review**

**Meetings and exhibitions.** More and more meetings are being combined with exhibitions, resulting in a substantial increase in frequency and attendance as associations venture abroad for their conventions and corporations recognize a strategic need to interact with employees and clients worldwide. Organizations with branch offices or counterparts in the host venue find that the problems associated with foreign exhibitions are lessened. Nevertheless, for any group contemplating sponsorship or participation in a show abroad, it is best to conduct a thorough analysis of attendee benefits, completing events, and the availability of services (Krugman & Wright, 2007).

**Green meeting.** Green meetings are about increasing economic and environmental efficiency by minimizing the use of resources and reducing the amount of waste produced from meeting activities.

In the past decades, environmental issues have been of new importance among many industries, with minimized consumption of natural resources or energies, receive the most public attention. Although green meetings have been an increasingly mainstream, only recently have meeting professionals begun to comprehensively consider the influence of environmentally-friendly events (Kent, 2006).

Here are some tips to encourage MICE decision-makers to adopt green-minded approaches to their events:

- Encourage buyers to choose venues where environmental strategies are top-down policy, preferably with formal accreditation, as well as to consider staging part of the conference in a setting strongly identified with conservation work.
- Meals which feature organically-grown food are proposed.
- Purchase carbon offset credits to neutralize the impact of delegate travel on the volume of greenhouse gas emissions.
- Examine the environmental credentials of the airlines, cruise companies and car rental firms under consideration.
- Mark the conclusion of a successful business event with a “legacy initiative.” For instance, a tree could be planted or a donation made to a wildlife cause.
- Include comment cards in selected hotels to question the environmental policies of those properties.
- Recommend hotels within walking distance of the exhibition venue.
- Advise golfers that some clubs observe “greener’ techniques in their course managements than others.
- Highlight partner programs that replace shopping with visits to nature reserves.



- Suggest outdoor leadership training projects that incorporate conservation work as their focus, rather than the traditional pursuits like 4×4-vehicle driving, shooting, or archery (Kent, 2006).

**5R rules in green meetings.** The 5R rules were initiated by Julia Butterfly Hill, an environmental activist and founded an organization called the “circle of life foundation” (Krin, 2008, The 5 “R’s”, para. 2).

**Respect.** Respect in green meetings means to protect the environment and respect life in all forms (“Social responsibility,” 2011).

**Rethink.** Rethink how we go about our daily lives, the things we use or buy, the way we get to where we go, the amount of energy we use. Look at how respectful we are to nature and the environment while doing these activities (Krin, 2008, The 5 “R’s”, para. 3).

**Reduce.** Reduce carbon emission, energy use, plastic bottles, convention trash including meeting paper materials, food and beverage trash and so on. Compared to many other products, meetings and events have many opportunities to reduce its impact on the earth environment by reducing waste and consumption, reusing events facilities such as signage and recycling relevant disposable designed events materials. In order to reduce the event waste, especially the paper waste which considered the biggest waste during a whole event from registration to post-event mailing, many convention planners have considered using electronic advertising, promotion, registration, confirmation evaluation, and other event related documents such as review session materials. In order to reduce energy consumption, convention planners could choose event sites with natural light, or use renewable energy from wind, solar, hydroelectric, and land gas facility.

**Reuse.** Reuse signage and other reusable meeting facility products. Purchasing recycled facility design materials. Green meetings can also be achieved by reusing meeting facilities such

as signage and name badge. In order to reuse event signage, the graphic can be standardized. Event name tag plastic holders can be collected at registration exhibit for later reuse in the future events.

**Recycle.** Furthermore, businesses would appreciate some type of incentive or recognition to offset the extra cost of recycled paper, usually about 20% higher than virgin white copier and computer paper (Swift, 2001). Recycling events related facilities and materials can be done to reduce pollution. Purchasing recycled-designed materials for events should be encouraged. Recycle bins should be placed at the events site to recycle all the paper material, beverage containers, recycled-content posters, and so on.

**Suggestions in green meetings to governmental bodies in host countries.** The most effective public relation policy tends to emerge when stakeholders in a given industry participate in developing and shaping it. Demonstrating this process in action were the IMEX surveys, which invite suggestions from MICE decision-makers in an effort to offer a greener agenda for the future. A brief summary of these opinions include the following recommendations for suggestions to governmental bodies in host countries to:

- further legislation and funding to protect the environment;
- increased use of sustainable energy and reduction in use of fossil fuels;
- more emphasis on advising people in emerging countries on how to benefit from business tourism;
- tighter government policies on procurement as a means of more effective management control; and
- additional sharing of best environmental practices (Kent, 2006).

**Suggestions in green meetings to the wider MICE industry.**

- Become more (financially and practically) involved in the work of eco-organizations.
- Select only eco-sensitive destinations.
- Plan frequent opportunities during events to inform attendees of potential damage to environments.
- Boycott suppliers who do not appear to care.
- Convene an annual eco-conference for the meetings industry (Kent, 2006).

**Suggestions in green meetings to exhibitions.** The choices made by the show organizers, official services contractor, facility, and exhibitors can greatly reduce the negative environmental impact that an exhibition can have. The collaboration between those players is crucial to the success of creating an exhibition or tradeshow that is environmentally responsible (Kent, 2006).

**Show organizers.** Show organizers can start by informing facilities and official services contractors of the exhibition's environmental strategies and initiatives. Ask them about their environmental practices, including specifications like recycling, composting, and energy and water conservation. Show organizers can then inform exhibitors of the green priorities. Ask for their cooperation, or build compliance into their exhibitor contract stating their commitment to comply with the exhibition's environmental requests (Kent, 2006, 496).

The show organizers should also plan to provide accurate attendance expected so exhibitors can bring the corresponding number of materials for distributing to cut down on waste, electronic scan cards for attendee profiles, and a clause in the facility agreement with the facility and/or official services contractor to provide recycling services for cardboard, pallets, paper, cans, plastic, glass and other recyclable materials that are generated; and to provide clean-up crews who are trained to keep recyclable and reusable items out of the garbage (Kent, 2006). "A clause in the exhibitor agreement to comply with could be stated as the following:

- Minimize the use of collateral materials.
- Produce any necessary collateral materials on post-consumer paper stock, using vegetable-based inks.
- Minimize packaging and participate in recycling packaging when appropriate.
- Use recycled or consumable products as giveaways when possible, and do not use gift items made from endangered or threatened species.
- When it is possible, attempt to use locally grown and/or made or fair trade products (Kent, 2006, 497).”

Decisions that show organizers make about products and services can also make a considerable environmental impact. “Here are some examples that were implemented at exhibitions by various show organizers:

- name badges were printed on recycled paper and badge holders were recycled;
- conference base was made of recycled materials;
- programs were printed on 100% recycled post-consumer paper with soy-based ink;
- approximately 31 to 50% of the food served was local and/or organic; and
- all condiments were served in bulk containers, saving approximately 51 to 75% of the cost over serving individually-packaged products (Kent, 2006, 497)”.

***Official service contractor.*** The official services contractor companies can alter the way they do business by incorporating the following environmentally responsible items:

- Energy Star Saver for the registration counters,
- online exhibitor kits,
- printed exhibitor kits made from 35% post-consumer recovered fiber for the binders, recycled paper and soy-based inks with printed materials,

- computer kiosks built with WoodStalk, an engineered fiberboard made from annually-renewable wheat straw fiber that does not contain any wood species and does not use compounds containing formaldehyde, and
- Half of the sign boards made from Cloraplast, 100% recyclable board (Kent, 2006).

The official services contractor can also:

- use recycled or recyclable tradeshow materials, or select drapes and carpets that can be cleaned in a way that is environmentally responsible;
- use recyclable or biodegradable shipping and packing materials, paper and corrugated boxes instead of polystyrene and plastic wrap;
- coordinate with organization to collect donated items; and
- provide carbon-offset program for shipping and freight (Kent, 2006).

***Facilities.*** The venue where the exhibition is being held also plays a crucial role in the ability to implement environmental practices. For example, if the venue does not have a recycling program in place, minimizing the impact of waste will be virtually impossible. To ensure the exhibit hall floor reflects environmentally responsible practices, follow these recommendations. The facility should provide:

- recycle bins on the show floor,
- collection bins for less common materials such as batteries and vinyl table coverings,
- information for exhibitors outlining what material is collected for recycling,
- an area to donate leftover signage, giveaways, and flowers for schools or civic organizations, and
- names of organizations to contact for the donated items, and
- reduced lighting and no HVAC during move-in and move-out (Kent, 2006).

**Exhibitors.** Exhibitors should be asked to adhere to the following guidelines:

- use soy-based ink and post-consumer recycled paper to produce the materials;
- use recycled or consumable products as giveaways;
- avoid bringing large quantities of collateral materials—send them upon request;
- create tradeshow booths from sustainable or reusable materials, designing them to be as environmentally friendly as possible;
- minimize packaging materials and use recyclable, biodegradable shipping and packing materials;
- purchase supplies that have minimal packaging; and
- during move-in and move-out, recycle cardboard, freight boxes and plastic wrap (Kent, 2006).

It is clear that managing exhibitions using environmentally responsible practices offers a significant opportunity to minimize negative environmental impacts as well as save money in the long-term. However, success relies on excellent communication with all parties involved, as well as ensuring that environmental strategies are incorporated in every step of the planning process. Encouragingly, even small changes can make a big difference to the “environmental bottom line,” and it is this key message that organizers should keep in mind at each step of the planning process (Kent, 2006).

**Future eco-tax.** MICE buyers are obviously becoming more receptive to the idea of destination “eco-tax” that would be invested in managing for sustainability. Forty-six percent of respondents to a 2006 poll said they would be willing to discuss the idea, commenting to the effect that “it is our generation’s responsibility to preserve the environment for the future.” (Kent, 2006, 503) Some cautioned that such a levy must be properly explained to visitors, and agreed

with the idea in concept, “as long as we know how it is being spent (Kent, 2006, 503).” In contrast, some organizers worried that corrupt or inefficient governments will waste the money, or that their political mindsets could change. Another option is that an eco-tax should be a general way of life, and not an additional burden on the end-user (Kent, 2006).

**Technology and green meetings.** The hospitality industry can actually boost its bottom line by adopting environmental procedures and policies. Technology has been used in hospitality venues for years. There are new technologies that can make hospitality venues more efficient and provide a better guest experience and contribute to the greening of the hospitality industry (Cassingham, 2004).

**Web and email technology.** The World Wide Web and the advancement of email technology have made it increasingly easier to promote meetings and events. People around the world have become more tech-savvy and reliant on the Internet for information and promotion. Using this dynamic medium to support meetings or events can provide a huge boost to meeting attendance. Promote events and encourage attendance by sending out an HTML invitation. Include an eye-catching design and all of the information that guests needs to RSVP. A simple virtual invitation will be easier to read. Send out regular HTML or text-only email reminders with links back to the website for more information. The Internet and your web page can be a huge asset when it comes to marketing your meeting or event. Using all the tools that are available on the Internet will ultimately help promote your cause (“Using the web to boost meeting attendance,” 2009).

Meeting professionals send and receive millions of emails every week, conducting business solely through electronic communication. Emails are a great way to start a business relationship, so long as you use them for what they are best for, which is conveying information.

Email is toneless and affectless. So if you are going to send a detailed proposal or RFP, email is perfect. The key is to combine technologies so that you use each for what it does best. And to keep this acronym in mind:

1. S stands for Simple.
2. E stands for Effective.
3. N stands for Necessary.
4. D stands for Done (Russell, 2011).

Not only should the green meeting idea be incorporated during the events, it should be marketed during the pre and post events. For example, during the pre-event period, meeting planners can consider selecting convention sites and hotels that meet the green standard. Convention sites with natural light or powered by renewable energy from solar, wind, or hydroelectric and sites with comprehensive recycling collection and mass transit system should be selected.

Here are ways that speakers can connect with attendees early and often, using the latest tech tools. It goes without saying that engaging attendees is always one of the top goals when producing an event. Today's attendees are tech-savvy and want higher-value contents, delivered in fresh, relevant, and fun ways. Here are a few ideas ("Using social media to promote meetings and events, 2009).

***Before the event.*** Today's pocket video cameras, like the Flip, make it easy to create short (two- to three-minute) messages. Your team can provide information such as travel tips, applications that can be downloaded, Twitter tags, and social sites to get people connecting early. Ask each of the speakers to send you the short welcome video introducing attendees to their topic. It is a great way to create buzz. We are a video-consuming society. Instead of sending



text-heavy messages to your groups that typically get ignored, create a series of videos that can be sent out and then archived on your Facebook page, website, blog, and elsewhere (“Using social media to promote meetings and events,” 2009).

***During the event.*** Geo-location-based mobile tools, including Foursquare, Gowalla, and SCVNGR, can get your attendees checking in for fabulous prizes. Create contests, ask your speakers and vendors to give away prizes, or create check-in spots around the event center. Tips, trivia, and learning facts can also be embedded in each location for attendees to find (“Using social media to promote meetings and events,” 2009). Also, QR codes are one of today’s hottest mobile trends. These odd blotches were designed for inventory management, but once smart phones entered the picture, the codes suddenly took on a new purpose. When scanned, the codes take attendees to a website or social site for content or more information (“Using social media to promote meetings and events,” 2009).

***After the event.*** Host a virtual event, such as a Q & A webinar, a week or two after your participants return to their regular schedule, to allow them to share what they took away from the face-to-face meeting. Arrange for the speakers to be part of this webinar so they can answer any follow-up questions attendees may have (“Using social media to promote meetings and events,” 2009).

**Examples of technologies being used.** Electronic contracts, programs, agendas and digital signatures should be used to eliminate the express mailing of multiple copies of paper contracts. More specific technologies being used in green meetings would touch upon as follows.

***Electronic databases of meeting facilities.*** Free databases of meeting venues are available online, eliminating the need for printing, mailing and storing all of the paperwork that goes into these databases (for example, [www.mpoint.com](http://www.mpoint.com), [www.cvent.com](http://www.cvent.com), [www.sitevisit.com](http://www.sitevisit.com)).

Email promotion and web marketing can target audiences more directly and with much less expense than printing and mailing paper promotions.

***Electronic request for proposals for securing meeting space.*** Word documents are faxed or emailed by planners to venues when meeting space is needed. Site such as meetingsites.net provides web-based means of requesting and booking space.

***Online housing and room block management.*** Managing room blocks is often highly paper/fax intensive task that does not give the meeting planners or convention and visitor bureaus a good real-time view of what was happening. Online room block management tools can help manage these blocks electronically and efficiently with sites such as Travel Planners ([www.tphousing.com](http://www.tphousing.com)) and eMeetingsOnline ([emeetingsonline.com](http://emeetingsonline.com)).

***Exhibit sales and floor plan management.*** Some tradeshow floor plans are still managed with a large sheet of paper. Electronic tools can completely manage the floor plan online and greatly assist in managing exhibitor details as well.

***Near field communication for registration and lead retrieval.*** Near field communication (NFC) is a mobile phone standard in Europe for mobile payments and exchanging contact information. This technology could be adopted as a natural for e-ticketing, automated kiosk form filling, and lead exchange. Existing forms of lead exchange, anywhere from business cards to barcode or badge scanning at exhibitions, may be obsolete.

***MP3 downloads for conference recordings.*** Conference cassettes and CD recordings have been a mainstay of large meetings for years. Companies such as Conference Archives, Inc., [www.conferencearchives.com](http://www.conferencearchives.com), is replacing these “auto-based” recordings with digital MP3 files that can be previewed and downloaded from a website.

**Social media marketing.** Promoting meetings and events is one of the most important aspects of the event planning process. The introduction of social media techniques as a way to promote events has changed the way that many meeting professionals are advertising and marketing upcoming conventions, trade shows, and other events. Social media is a term describing changing trends in the use of World Wide Web technology and web design that aims to enhance creativity and the functionality of the web. Examples of social media concepts include web-based communities and hosted sites, such as social-networking sites, video-sharing sites, wikis and blogs (“Using social media to promote meetings and events,” 2009, 62).

Online social networking has become part of our daily lives. Thankfully, it has also become a great way to do some good for the planet. It might seem counterintuitive, considering how much energy sites like Facebook consume as they try to support all the data of millions of users. However, when we are diligently using social networking for green activism, it is energy well spent (Heimbuch, 2009). “Social networks such as LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube are about having a presence to create awareness and marketing gravity for organizations and/or meetings (Nour, 2011, Listen Louder, 26). And social media is the platform or the vehicle; it encompasses more than social networks. Social media involves being more searchable, paying for unique placement positions online, and employing conversion strategies to take information-buyers, potential attendees, from being merely interested to becoming engaged (Nour, 2011).

The following applications are used in social media marketing:

- blogs: bloggers and livejournal;
- wikis: Wikipedia and PBwiki;
- social networking: Facebook, Myspace, LinkedIn, and Bebo;

- video sharing: YouTube, Viddler and Revo; and
- events: Upcoming.org, Eventful and Meetup.com (“Using social media to promote meetings and events,” 2009).

All of these applications offer great ways to help promote events. They also prove to be very valuable to attendees, sponsors, exhibitors and others involved (“Using social media to promote meetings and events,” 2009).

**Virtual tools.** Virtual-event business models and value propositions are evolving quickly. When crafting the strategy, we can always look to the organization’s mission and strategy. Often those include educating or advocating for the profession. Organizations that take a gamble and deliver value with a virtual-event strategy will be rewarded with loyalty, retention, and future purchases. Associations that go down the hybrid road, and make it financially attractive for participants, are putting their profession ahead of profit and will reap long-term benefits (Lutz, 2011).

Virtual tools can help planners narrow down their options without visiting every potential meeting facility. This saves the company time and reduces travel cost and environmental impact. Furthermore, using virtual tools to hold meetings or conferences can extend the reach of businesses and enrich relationships with friends and family. Such meetings are the future, as more people consider the environmental impact, costs, and inconvenience associated with travel. For example, more than 40% of IBM's 400,000 employees worldwide work from locations other than a traditional office, and more than 10,000 of these employees collaborate in virtual worlds (Dawn, 2010).

**Marketing strategies and green meetings.** Green marketing refers to the process of selling products and/or services based on their environmental benefits. Such a product or service

may be environmentally friendly itself or produced and/or packaged in an environmentally friendly way (Ward, 2000).

A reputation for sound environmental practices which preserve a pristine countryside and coast attracts significant interest. In the future, it seems probable that “greenness” will become if not the unique selling point for a property or destination, then certainly an important marketing advantage. Eco-credentials will become an increasingly important part of the entire promotional package (Kent, 2006).

Also, selecting hotels providing recycling and waste prevention program such as linen and tower cards program and energy reduction program is important to conduct a green meeting event. In order to market green meeting idea, meeting planners can educate exhibitors and attendees starting from providing all the pre-events information electronically to incorporating green policy for any promotional materials into request for proposal or contract as this paper has mentioned above.

Furthermore, marketing green meeting can be achieved through educating exhibitors and attendees in advance all the green programs that would be implemented during the whole event. During the post-event period, any post event evaluation and event report can be publicized online. Meanwhile, any efforts and achievement made during the green meeting can be reported to exhibitors and attendees to enhance their awareness of the importance of green meeting to our planet.

**Branding.** The American Marketing Association (AMA) defines a brand as a certain signature, a design, or a combination of them intended to identify the products and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of others. Therefore it makes sense to understand that branding is not about getting your target market to choose you over the

competition, but it is about getting your prospects to see you as the only one that provides a solution to their problem (Lake, n.d.).

While the on-site properties to host meetings or as the meeting planners to create events, both the parties could employ pro-environment values as the integral parts of their unique branding image. The pro-environment brand may become the long-term strategic benefits to the corporations, the personal belongings to their staff, and the affection or accountability to the whole society.

***To the on-site properties.*** Pro-environment training offers specific job skills and also cultivate the employees how to provide outstanding customer services to uphold the company's quality and the pro-environment standards. By educating the employees, a company can reach higher profits, possess a pool of qualified employees, and prevent the qualified employees from turnovers. The employees will not only work for living but also work for their recognitions to the company. That means the company's brand is now the employees' belief and mission, too.

***To the local residents.*** By helping the local economy, protecting the local nature, the properties can gain admirations among the customers and the local residents and therefore re-enforces their brand. That is also one of the successful parts of the marketing strategies to be green.

***To the customers.*** The irreplaceable brand can earn customers' trust, support and loyalty. The strong brand will allow the customers to support the value and be more willing to pay for the service with the brand recognition.

**Corporate social responsibility.** Corporate social responsibility (CSR) refers to operating a business in a manner that accounts for the social and environmental impact created by the business. CSR means a commitment to developing policies that integrate responsible

practices into daily business operations, and to reporting on progress made toward implementing these practices (Corporate Social Responsibility, 2010).

CSR is also how companies manage the business processes to produce an overall positive impact on society to protect the environment, not only in the domain of physical but also of human, behaving ethically and responsibly. On the other hand, CSR with green philosophy is to minimize the potential negative impact of development and the influx of wealthy foreigners by treating local communities and traditions with respect and by offering employment opportunities to local residents. Green ideas create a different segment of market. Namely, green ideas could be used to maintain a sense of corporate responsibility, design and construct human-scale, low-rise building using indigenous architectural styles and materials. Moreover, CSR with green thoughts can extensively infuse a sustainable development into environment, education, community, and health. Everything that green ideology has been involved with could be driven by innovation and social accountability. Thus, the strong commitment to protect the environment and to behave ethically and responsibly could make the on-site properties or the meeting planners different from other corporations and be unique in the marketplace.

**Sustainability.** A clear understanding of the issues surrounding climate change, global warming, air and water pollution, ozone depletion, deforestation, the loss of biodiversity, and global poverty is essential for every manager in the hospitality industry. Present and future hospitality executives need to know how sustainable management systems can be integrated into their businesses while maintaining and hopefully improving the bottom line (Chen, Sloan, & Legrande, 2009).

*Sustainable practices with technology from Expo 2010.* The Expo's green efforts were often as varied as the pavilions themselves. From exhibits made from recycled, or recyclable,

components to energy-efficient LED lighting. Green practices are already making their way onto the trade show floor. Expo 2010 reminded us that the green trend is here to stay and is likely to drive designers to push the envelope a bit. Even in an expo that generated 200 tons of garbage per day, there were some designers who took green to an intensely verdant level (Stanto, 2010). Here are the sustainable practices with technological applications in Expo 2010 in China, Shanghai.

1. Finland constructed part of its glacier-shaped pavilion with 25,000 injection-molded shingles made from recycled paper and plastic (Stanto, 2010).
2. Vietnam built its entire 10,764-square-foot structure from 80,000 bamboo poles. Now that the Expo has run its course, the poles will be reused in building schools and other social-welfare projects in Vietnam (Stanto, 2010).
3. The India Pavilion, built with tens of thousands of low-environmental-impact bamboo poles, now ranks as the world's largest bamboo dome. Additionally, a complex grid of ropes and wires with close to 150,000 plants and herbs covered the 115-foot-diameter domed roof. While the herbs acted as a carbon sink, scrubbing and even scenting the surrounding air in one of the world's most polluted cities, a small roof-mounted "windmill" and solar cells generated energy for emergency lighting (Stanto, 2010).
4. Built from the steel remains of a boat scuttled in Shanghai's shipyard, Denmark's two-story velodrome was green in more ways. Its white-painted exterior reflected sixty to eighty-five percent of the sun's rays that hit it, compared to the twenty percent that a dark façade would bounce back, thereby reducing the energy needed to cool its 5,900-square-foot interior. The 3,500 perforations in the structure's exterior were filled with LEDs that not only lit it up like a Christmas tree at night, but generated only about 4%



of the heat of incandescent bulbs and required only about 3% of the electricity. The hole's ventilation also cooled the pavilion in a country where an estimated 60% of percent energy is used for air-conditioning (Stanto, 2010).

5. Not only was the Shanghai Corporate Pavilion constructed of recycled CD jewel cases, whose thermoplastic material can be melted down and reused, but its roof featured a 17,000-square-foot solar heat-collecting tube that could heat the water inside the pavilion to 95 degrees Fahrenheit (Stanto, 2010).
6. The Broad Pavilion used just 20% of the energy other pavilions of a comparable size required. The building accomplished that feat due to a series of passive solar-design techniques: exterior shading, 6-inch thick insulation, and triple-layered nonmetallic framed windows (Stanto, 2010).
7. The Japan Pavilion employed solar energy-collection batteries hidden inside the double-layer membrane that covered the structure. The pavilion also collected rainwater via funnel-shaped tubes built into the roof. The brown water was then sprayed on the pavilion's exterior surfaces to keep temperatures inside the space cool and comfortable (Stanto, 2010).

**Word of mouth.** Word of mouth is the sound of new ideas—conversations, stories and shared experiences that sort passing fads from lasting trends. Word of mouth uncovers what is new, what is next and what will affect lives and the world (Prescott, n.d.).

**Rewards and awards for green meetings.** Exhibitions can lead by example in sponsoring carbon emission offsets for aspects of travel associated with the event. Another opportunity is for trade fairs to reward the implementation of good green practices. As a case in point, IMEX presents environmental awards each year in recognition of achievement in green

exhibiting. Undertaken jointly with professionals in the responsibility sector, such as the Green Meetings Industry Council (GMIC) and The Wuppertal Institute, these awards seek evidence not just of worthy efforts, but in quantifiable results that minimize the environmental impact of attendance at the show. IMEX provides a focus for this environmental emphasis with a Corporate Responsibility pavilion that is staffed by specialists on the main tradeshow floor including representatives of GMIC, Green Globe 21, Louise Hall-Reider & Co., Give Instead of Take, and The Wuppertal Institute. This pavilion gives both exhibitors and visitors to the exhibition a chance to increase their awareness and knowledge of environmental and social responsibility. In addition, the on-site experts give their time in helping them to set up, create or improve their corporate social responsibility practices (Kent, 2006).

## **PART THREE**

### **Introduction**

First of all, this paper has discussed green meetings in hospitality based on the ideology that is an environment-first policy. With the literature reviews associated with technologies, this paper explored practices on both tangible constructions and intangible services among the on-site properties which host meetings and the exhibition sides which conduct or participate the meetings. By specific examples which employ technologies to reduce, reuse, and recycle the resources consumed for meetings, this paper helps readers to respect nature and green power for next generations and to rethink the myth or the merits of being green. Second, this paper also introduced existing rules and practices for readers to better understand the applications of green meetings in different stages and different roles.

Innovative marketing strategies advocated that a green image increases the value of brand reputation and maximizes financial return and social good. The attendees, the staff, the environmental experts, and the society could be all involved the green trends and benefit as a whole. The green image gathers loyalty, the strength and the support from both the internal company employees and the external society. The concrete contribution and participation of protecting the environment has also been stated in this paper.

### **Results**

**Technology version.** Technology is constantly changing the process and the experience of the MICE industry and also altering the way the MICE industry communicates with the attendees, the exhibitors, and the host properties before the event, during the event, and even after the event. Different views were casted according to the different angles in this paper to show that each participant has the unique way contributing to conduct a green meeting. On one

hand, the hosting properties applying technologies effectively offer specific job skill trainings to the staff and cultivate the employees how to provide outstanding customer services to uphold the meeting's quality standards and set up the bright reputation of be pro-environmental. On the other hand, meeting planners can also initiate a unique business environment and a remote segment of market efficiently by adopting the technological by-products, such as the electronic files, web and the email technology, even the dominantly powerful social media, or the innovative virtual tools. In brief, green meetings actually reach higher profits as well as save cost effect among all the parties to create the reciprocal situation in a long run.

As in the practices mentioned above from the literature reviews, the meeting industry and the hospitality industry are able to adopt technologies based on the 5R rules for the sake of being pro-environmental. The design, the construction, and the materials of today's green meetings and the on-site properties are all considered to prevent the resource waste, the energy waste, the soil erosion, and the damages of the sea, the marine life, the water resource, the trees, and the local ecology. Exercising the innovation tools of technologies certainly becomes the current trend and the most efficient means to operate a successful green meeting.

In 2005, when a poll was taken, MICE buyers were already reacting more thoughtfully to environmental concerns. Specifically, when asked which green practices they have applied to their events, respondents (totaling more than 70 from 11 countries) answered:

- Recycling of conference material: 80%
- Viewing wilderness or animal conservation areas: 73%
- Selecting a hotel known for its environmental program: 71%
- Involving an inspirational speaker on green issues: 53%
- Selecting an airline or cruise company known for its eco-credentials: 51%

- Undertaking fund-raising or other support for green causes: 41% (Kent, 2006)

Furthermore, a significant majority (74%) of these buyers commented that they thought the environment would become a bigger issue in the future. This, they suggest, is because of the attention given environmental issues by the media, the role of education in fostering a generation of well-informed young people, and because of the continuing danger and destruction from industrial contamination, strip mining, and mass deforestation. Interestingly, 58% argued that delegates and participants will show their concern in the future if environmental issues are not sufficiently taken into account when planning events (Kent, 2006).

In the 2006 IMEX survey involving over 100 buyers from over 25 countries on three continents, it is clear that attitudes have become even more pro-green. A majority (56%) acknowledged that they now consistently take environmental credentials into account in event planning and destination selection (Kent, 2006).

**Marketing strategy perception.** Equipping with the foresight to strengthen the return on investment, a meeting planner needs to be a responsible developer for the cleanliness, hospitality, accuracy, maintenance, quality, speed, and booming transaction. Completed and efficient marketing strategies assist the meeting planners in preventing from being subject to the setbacks and make their events brilliant show business over the competitors. One of the key issues for a meeting to be successful among the competitions is the irreplaceable branding. The strong brand image and good praise of being green among customers are definitely the significant strengths for business and genuinely reap profits in the long-term management due to the unfulfilled customer need of pro-environment wants. During the steps and devotions to be green, the unique brand occurs and becomes a successful marketing strategy. Exercising the

green ideas is not building the castles in the air but redefines the future with plans to expand the potential of sustainability and to make profits in hospitality industries.

The major shift in expectations around sustainability and corporate social responsibility (CSR) in the wider world cannot be denied. In a recent MPI FutureWatch survey of over 1,800 members, more than three-quarter of meeting planners (76%) reported that CSR would be a focus for their organizations in 2010, along with sixty-three percent in the U.S. and 60% in Canada. Nearly three-quarter of corporate planners and over 48% of association planners said CSR will be on their organizations' radars over the next year. Among suppliers, CSR is a focus for 61% in North America (Goldman, 2010).

Take Banyan Tree Hotel & Resort as the example. The founder, Ho Kwon Ping, views corporate social responsibility as how companies manage the business processes to produce an overall positive impact on the society. His belief is to protect the environment, not only in the domain of physical but also of human, behaving ethically and responsibly. His pro-environmental and socially responsible philosophy creates and operates the vivid brand image of Banyan Tree. Therefore, Ho's belief makes Banyan Tree Hotel & Resort different from other corporations and be unique in the marketplace.

The data showed and supported the great occupancy rates of Banyan Tree Hotel & Resort even at the tough time while other properties may suffer from the external risks and the economical recession:

1. In 2001, there was September 11 in the U.S.
2. In 2002, there was the terrorist bombing in Bali Island.
3. In the end of 2002, there was SARS all over the world, especially in Asia which Banyan Tree Hotel & Resort first launched.

4. In 2003, there was the small-scale bird flu occurred in Asia.

But even being subject to those setbacks, Banyan Tree still had the occupancy rates more than 53%. Those are the achievements and milestones of the successful brand of Banyan Tree. Moreover, during the Asian economic crisis, Banyan Tree even upped rates instead of dropping rates because the strong brand truly allows the customers to support the value and be more willing to pay for the service with the brand recognition. Banyan Tree Hotel & Resort whose pro-environmental policy to increase the value of brand reputation has not gone unnoticed, winning more than 250 awards and accolades and possessing about 20 to 30% of customers who are repeat visitors (Banyan Tree Hotel & Resort, 2002).

We can learn by the case of Banyan Tree Hotel & Resort that using pro-environment branding and corporate social responsibility as one of the marketing strategies is prevalent and does generate great profit while being applied in hospitality industry.

**APEX.** “The Accepted Practices Exchange (APEX) standards take a three-fold approach to sustainability, considering the economic, environmental, and social aspects of meetings and events. The goal is to create a voluntary, industry-wide set of standards that would act as a veritable roadmap for planners and suppliers in organizing sustainable meetings (Goldman, 2010, Three-Ford Approach).” In addition, APEX generates the guidance that there are nine individual areas comprising the standards, and nine separate committees were charged with developing them for hosting a green meeting (Hasek, 2009). They are accommodations, audiovisual and production, communications and marketing, destinations, exhibits, food and beverage, meeting venue, on-site offices, and transportation (Goldman, 2010)

**BS 8901.** The British Standard BS 8901 was released in 2007 and was developed with a purpose of helping the events industry operate in a more sustainable manner. It is important to

note that the two standards are different in their approach to defining a sustainable event standard. The BS 8901 standard is a management system written to inform the process of organizing an event, while the APEX standard provides definitions of specific operational actions with key performance measures. The standards will work well independently or in collaboration as frameworks for sustainable events (Goldman, 2010).

**LEED certification.** Launched by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) is an internationally acclaimed certification, LEED represents the streamlining of building efficiencies. Many projects receive real government dollars for meeting LEED standards. Grants, low-interest loans, and even tax exemptions can be found for LEED registered projects around the country. More than just satisfying environmental niche markets, LEED-registered building has been known for both its short and long-term financial advantages (“Will LEED training help me get a job?,” 2011).

There are five categories:

1. LEED AP Building Design and Construction,
2. LEED AP Interior Design and Construction,
3. LEED AP Building Operations and Maintenance,
4. LEED AP for Homes, and
5. LEED AP for Neighborhood Development (*The Five Categories of LEED Certification*, 2010).

In the hospitality industry, Doubletree, Hilton, and Marriott are the three brands which are certificated as the Green Lodging Buildings by LEED. And David L. Lawrence Convention Center in Pittsburgh with 100% natural lights in Primary Hall is the convention center which gained LEED Gold Certification.



## **Conclusion**

Green trends definitely have a strong commitment to meetings, conferences, trade shows, or incentive businesses in the hospitality industries nowadays. Under the direction of novel technologies, the hospitality industry, the convention centers, or expo pavilions as the on-site properties could easily meet the needs to reduce, reuse, and recycle the products generated for the activities within the meetings as well as cut down the cost of hosting the meetings. In addition, go beyond the financial savings, it is another benefit to relish of moral, ethical, and social responsibility.

Furthermore, technological policy includes not only the physical environment but also the human environment. The related impacts touch upon the people and the nature that are affected by a meeting's appeals and businesses. Other than essentially protecting or restoring the nature, the on-site properties can also employ some sorts of technologies to build up the integral brand images of their meetings.

The green ideology and philosophy should be viewed to minimize the potential negative impact of development and the influx of the hosting properties, attendees, or the exhibitors. In light of the results drawn by the literature reviews, green-oriented meetings infusing sustainable developments into environment, education, community, and health will definitely create the win-win situations between the commercial activities and the environment and gain the profit among different MICE parties in the hospitality industry.

We have learned that the meeting and event industry represents the second most wasteful industry in the U.S. Therefore, the conclusion is drawn that the main attributes of green meetings should provide the following policies in different stages (the planning stages, the event itself, and also the post-event) among different participants (the host properties, the wider MICE

industry, show organizers, official service contractor, exhibitors, and even the mass media) while holding meetings to advantage the entire business:

- energy efficiency,
- waste control,
- water use efficiency,
- greener transportation alternatives,
- the use of environmentally-friendly products,
- excellent indoor air quality, and
- the education of guests and staff (“What makes a convention center green?,” 2007).

## **Recommendations**

There has not been a united and compelling standard or inspection for the industry to follow and conduct a green meeting. The recommendation for implementation of the solution to green meetings lies in the official regulations which should be mandatory to the entire meeting and hospitality industry. The truth and the difficulties is, for example, LEED Certification by U.S. Green Building Council is more an index than officially mandatory regulation. The Convention Industry Council’s (CIC) APEX Panel on Green Meeting and Event Practices has specific lists of practices in nine areas for hosting a green meeting and could be available online. Nine individual topics comprise the entire standard and nine separate committees were charged with developing the standards. But CIC has not possessed a certification system (*APEX/ASTM Green Meetings and Events Standards Final Draft Ready for Comment*, 2009).

And the biggest concern or difficulty to comprehensively transform all the meetings into green meetings is the cost issue. Before the higher managements or the authorities of all the related parties involved with the meeting industry can ascertain the profit of going green greater

the cost of it, the merits of green meetings will still need more efforts and advocations in the long-term. After all, the ultimate goal of implementing the meetings is to generate the actually financial profits. The meetings and the hospitality industry are still weighting the pros and cons of going ideally pro-environmental meetings, especially with the currently prolonged recessions.

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