

Sustainability Toolkit for Meetings and Events

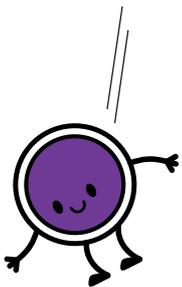
Goal

Our goal is to minimize the amount of materials and waste generated at events and to follow Humber College's Sustainability Value which is, to preserve our collective future by embracing the social, ecological, and economic impact of our decisions.

Why Green Your Event?

Events and meetings typically generate a tremendous amount of waste. The following scenario is typical when it comes to meetings and events at Humber College:

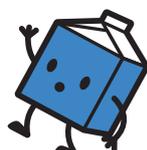
- Excess refreshments and catering are usually provided, thereby creating needless food waste;
- Catering is by default served with disposable dishes and cutlery, which are largely produced with virgin materials;
- Contaminated disposable dishes and cutlery are unrecyclable and end up in the landfill;
- Presentation material is usually printed, which result in added costs, energy usage, and consumption of non-renewable resources; and
- We are often keen to purchase and provide promotional items for giveaways, which are usually produced in developing countries in unsafe and unfavourable working conditions; and
- Events are often held in locations away from public transportation and no effort is made to incorporate carpool or virtual meeting options.



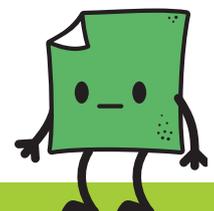
According to Statscan, 83% of commuters drive alone to work, and only 17% carpool.

(Statscan, 2011)

Greening events and meetings can significantly decrease the negative impact we have on society, our budget, and the environment. Taking a green approach will help us influence those in our sphere of influence to take a direct and practical step towards sustainability.



Fuel, a non-renewable resource contributes significantly to greenhouse gas emissions which is the leading cause of climate change.



How to GREEN Your Event

Ultimately, the degree to which sustainability is implemented is up to you and may be affected by cost, convenience, and availability. Meeting and event attendees are likely to be more mindful of waste when they understand that sustainability is of importance to your event, so ensure to communicate your message at all steps. The following checklist is provided as a tool to guide your event planning process but is by no means exhaustive:

Checklist

Communications and Marketing

- For events, have guests RSVP online rather than by paper.
- Promote your event online through email, websites, Humber Marketing, Communiqué, HTV, Eventbrite, and social media.
- Avoid using hardcopies of handouts, such as printed agendas and presentations. Circulate soft-copies ahead of time and request participants to review them online.

For unavoidable printing:

- Ensure that you have formatted material so that it minimizes the amount of paper used. For example, use Xerox's Earth Smart Printing, print double-sided, and do not print in colour.
- For professional printing requirements, request at least 50% Forest Stewardship Council or Post-consumer recycled paper, limit multi-colour printing, and request vegetable-based inks.
- Avoid using labels by printing directly on envelopes or cards and limit the amount of glossy, goldenrod or fluorescent paper which are difficult to recycle.
- Avoid printing dates and event names on signs and nametags to ensure reuse is an option.

Catering

**Approximately \$65,000,000 worth of food was sold at
Ontario's 24 Colleges in 2015.**
(Canadian Institutional Food Service Market Report, 2015)

- Communicate with catering services to let them know that local and organic food is important to your event.
- For offsite events, choose caterers who have made a commitment to sourcing sustainable foods, and speak with your caterer to inform them of your priorities related to food sustainability.
- Ensure that food is served in a way that minimizes waste (i.e. sandwiches and desserts on trays as opposed to individual packaging).
- Prioritize a low-carbon meal through local, organic, vegetarian, and/or vegan options.
- Request Fairtrade certified products, such as coffee, tea, sugar, cocoa products, and bananas.
- Request reusable glasses, silverware, chinaware, and cloth tablecloths to avoid plastic waste and also to add elegance to your catered meal.
- Request pitchers of tap water and juice and refuse individual plastic water and juice bottles to reduce waste, fossil fuel use, and greenhouse gas emission generation.

[We can collectively use our purchasing power to drive positive change.]

- Request milk, cream, sugar, and condiments to be served in bulk containers and avoid single-serve packaging which is often unrecyclable and end up as landfill waste.
- Have guests confirm attendance for meals to better estimate quantities. Use a 1.5:1 ratio; for every 1½ participants, order only one meal.

**Did you know that in Canada \$31 billion worth of food is wasted every year?
That's about 40% of total food produced!**
(Value Chain Management International, 2014)

- Combat food waste by sharing leftover food, unused tea, and unopened beverages with the meeting and event attendees or with colleagues in your department. Even encourage guests to bring containers for unused food.

Catering Aid

To simplify your greening process when using catering services at Humber College, we suggest copying and pasting the instructions below directly into your online catering order's "Special Instructions" section:

We are requesting Fairtrade coffee and tea (ex. Numi Fairtrade Tea) with signage. Please do not provide any water bottles. Instead, provide pitchers of water. Please do not provide condiments, sugar, milk, mustard, ketchup or jam in single serve packaging, but provide these in jugs or bowls instead. Please provide metal utensils and china (plates, glasses, and cups). There should be very little plastic wrap used, please use containers with lids and avoid anything disposable. Please confirm this order with me.

Waste Management:

As Canadians, we generate the most waste in the world per capita.
(Conference Board of Canada, 2013)

- Reduce, Reuse, Recycle** – Make it easier for your participants to follow this golden rule by providing identifiable receptacles that are conveniently located throughout your event.
- Use compostable décor like flowers, and following your event, donate décor to local organizations or shelters.
- Use recyclable and reusable materials wherever possible, and prioritize Fair Trade items, such as flowers.
- Avoid giving away swag, such as branded bags, apparel, or office supplies and give sustainable gifts, such as experiences.
- Always opt for quality, durability, and versatility when purchasing items to support your event so that they are reusable and less likely to break down and turn into waste.

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle - The order is of key importance to our waste reduction goal.

Sustainable Transportation

- Consider the use of teleconference services, such as WebEx as an alternative to in person attendance.
- Promote alternative transportation options such as carpooling, biking, walking or public transportation. Provide maps where possible.

For offsite events:

- Choose the location closest to your participants so that they do not have to travel too far.
- Prioritize event centres with LEED, BOMA Best, PassiveHouse, or WELL building certification.
- Suggest nearby hotels that have met minimum sustainability criteria for multiple day conferences and encourage sustainable entertainment by promoting sustainability events or organizations in the area.

Energy Conservation

- Turn off lights and projectors when not in use.
- Purchase renewable energy credits to power events, such as www.bullfrogpower.com.
- Consider purchasing offsets for emissions generated at your event through www.carbonify.com.
- Consider using your event as an opportunity to donate useful and unused materials to local sustainable organizations.
- Consider ethical purchasing products or services through certified underrepresented diverse suppliers such as the Canadian Aboriginal and Minority Supply Council, Women-owned enterprises, and the LGBTQ-owned businesses.
- Promote third-party certified labels such as Fair Trade, organic, and Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil products (www.rspo.com).
- Prioritize suppliers that have verified environmental commitments.

Sustainability is a joint effort and every step in the right direction leads to a positive outcome.

**For more information visit www.humber.ca/sustainability or www.greenmeetingninjas.com.
For questions please email sustainability@humber.ca**



HUMBER

Office of Sustainability

humber.ca/sustainability

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