



## GEM: Greener Event Management



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# GEM: Greener Event Management

## Introducing

Running a green event requires collaboration between the customer, the event management company and the suppliers. Without strong commitment from all three parties, delivering a sustainable event will be challenging with any potential benefits compromised. Experience has shown that many customers are indifferent to sustainable events, the majority have an interest, while a few are enthusiastic. The level of commitment the customer gives to a sustainable event will determine how green the event will be.

GEM was created through this need for a system which recognises that “one size does not fit all” and provides three levels which align to the customer’s commitment to the green agenda.

- 6 **GEM 1:** What we will do for all events, even if the customer is disinterested in sustainability
- 6 **GEM 2:** What we can do by early engagement and support from the customer and key suppliers.
- 6 **GEM 3:** Building on GEM 1 & 2, this level will aim to measure the carbon footprint and offset with an appropriate validated scheme.

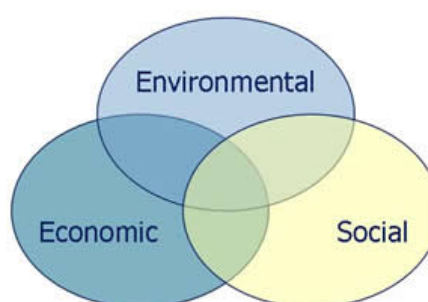
What follows is an explanation of some of the principles used and thinking deployed to underpin GEM.

# Principles

## Triple Bottom Line

Environmental and social impacts are considered in parallel to ensure that you reduce the negative impacts on the environment but you leave a positive footprint behind which has an advantageous effect with the local community. Be clear about the commercial reasons behind running your event and how your sustainable approach will support those objectives.

- 6 People: Social Responsibility
- 6 Planet: Environmental Sustainability
- 6 Profit: Commercial Return



## Commercial Return

Running a sustainable event will have a cost in terms of time, money and resource so this needs to be justified by identifying future commercial returns. Commercial return is not always easily quantifiable so can be grouped into tangibles (easily measured) and intangibles.

### Tangibles

- 6 Reduced power (electricity, gas, oil)
- 6 Reduced mains water
- 6 Reduced transport bill
- 6 Reduced materials cost
- 6 Legislative compliance
- 6 Reduced landfill tax
- 6 Reduced carbon offset cost

### Intangibles

- 6 Improved stakeholder relationships
- 6 PR opportunity
- 6 Positive local community impact
- 6 Improved staff retention
- 6 Improved reputation
- 6 Increased delegate attendance
- 6 Improved delegate feedback

## **Black & White**

Not everything is as it seems and some decisions you might make based on reasonable assumptions could be detrimental to your green objectives. For example, the carbon footprint of a strawberry grown and flown from Spain is smaller than a strawberry grown locally in Scotland. The Scottish strawberry is grown in peat (the harvest of which releases methane), uses polythene tunnels for insulation (made from oil) and can be heated (using electricity).

## **Objective Setting**

In planning your event, start with an overall green aim which clearly articulates what you want to achieve from your greener event. From this aim, list a series of supporting objectives which could be measurable and provide your organisation with a tangible return. Some of your objectives will be commercial while some must be with regard to sustainability. Eg:

- 6 Reduce the carbon emitted by the direct activity of the event including the travelling to and from the destination by guests and associated event staff by x % or tons
- 6 Leave a positive footprint behind by engaging with an appropriate environmental or social programme.
- 6 Measure the cost of running a sustainable event against the value returned delivering a positive return

## **Compromising Objectives**

Both Commercial and Sustainable Objectives may have to be compromised in order to achieve an acceptable balance between the two. For example, surface travel is more sustainable than air travel but your guests may not be able to justify the additional time involved.

## **Early Customer Engagement**

The earlier you can engage with the customer then the earlier you can influence key decisions which will affect the sustainability of the event. Understanding how you can influence the event requires discussion and probing through a series of questions. Using an online survey tool such as survey monkey can influence this. Important early decisions include:

- 6 Live Event: Is there a need for the event or can a virtual event with video conferencing be used?

- 6 Number of events: Will one large central event have a lesser or greater carbon footprint than a series of smaller localised events
- 6 Destination: Overseas or at home? Choose a destination which is accessible to the majority of the guests.
- 6 Location: City centre or countryside? The location will impact on accessibility to public transport
- 6 Venue: The green credentials of the venue will have key impact on the ease of delivering a sustainable event.

### **Managing Guest Expectations**

Managing your guest's expectations and opinions are vital success criteria. For example, if your event selects a five star hotel, your guest may expect regularly refreshed bottled water and towels changed daily. Communicating such service adjustments to your guests with the reasons why will avoid disappointment. You can manage your guest's expectations up or down through pre event marketing considering:

- 6 Promoting the "sustainability" of the event
- 6 Business reasons behind a sustainable approach
- 6 Listing green aspects of the event that will effect the guest.

### **Carbon Offsetting**

We do not believe in nor use the term *Carbon Neutrality* as it is a misleading term which suggests the activity of organisation has perfectly balanced its carbon emissions with offsetting and that there are no negative consequences of the activity. We do not believe that this is a realistic scenario. We do support Carbon Offsetting when appropriate and on condition that the following process is adhered to:

- 6 Measure: The carbon emitted from all aspects of the event are measured before any reductions have been carried out.
- 6 Reduce: All areas of the event are scrutinised for an opportunity to reduce the carbon footprint. This is measured and calculated.
- 6 Offset: The reduced carbon emitted is considered for offsetting with an appropriate validated and well managed scheme.

The Carbon Trust web site offers practical advice in this area.

### **Validation & Accreditation**

If you are to avoid “green washing”, your event should be open to scrutiny by the guests, the customer and any other stakeholder. You can achieve this through validation and accreditation. Options to consider include:

- 6 Select a venue accredited by the *Green Tourism Business Scheme* (Gold or Silver)
- 6 Use suppliers that are accredited with an EMS such as ISO 14001 or similar.
- 6 Consider running your event to British Standard 8901.
- 6 Measure accurately direct and indirect carbon emissions and offset using a validated and appropriate offsetting scheme.
- 6 Publish a summary report on carbon reduction, cost savings and other sustainable events achieve. Communicate this to all guests and stakeholders.

## GEM Check List

The GEM Check List should be used early in the planning process. Decide which GEM level is appropriate for the customers needs.

What	How	GEM	GEM	GEM
		1	2	3
	<i>Tick to action</i>	✓	✓	✓
GEM Level	Not concerned with sustainability			
	Yes, will collaborate on key decisions			
	Yes, build on GEM 2 and carbon balanced event			
Customer	Send on line survey			
	Agree green objectives & benefits			
	Agree CO2 targets			
	Agree offsetting vendor			
	Agree measuring and reporting methodology			
	Agree accreditation scheme for event eg BS 8901			
	Consider validation by external accredited auditor			
Venue	Recycles event waste, check recycle stations			
	Will provide tap water with jugs			
	Access by good public transport links			
	Location central to majority			
	Request environmental policy and review			
	Usable heating / air con controls / opening windows			
	Select rooms with natural light			
	Energy and water efficiency systems			
	Will use local and fair-trade produce			
	Accredited by EMS eg GTBS			
	Food waste to charity or anaerobic digester plant			
	Set up mechanism to measure venue / event CO2			
Location	Central to majority of guests			
	Walking distance to train or bus station			

What	How	GEM 1	GEM 2	GEM 3
	<i>Tick to action</i>	✓	✓	✓
Transport	Car share encouraged and communicated			
	Coaches collect from pre arranged pick up points			
	Surface public transport pre arranged			
	If flying, use scheduled, economy, low burn engines			
	Set up mechanism to measure guest transport			
Caterer	Agrees to provide tap water and jugs			
	Do not over produce causing unnecessary waste			
	Will use only seasonal fruit & veg and local produce			
	Will use Fair Trade for 3 <sup>rd</sup> world produce			
	Discourage unnecessary packaging - portion packs			
	For fish use Marine Stewardship Council approved			
	Don't use meat as higher CO2 in production			
	Food waste to charity or anaerobic digester			
	Has an accredited EMS in place			
Suppliers	Use local suppliers to cut down travel, local impact			
	Send suppliers support pdf for best practice			
	Use suppliers accredited with and EMS			
	Measure supplier CO2			
Guest	Use digital media for pre event communication			
	Send guests pdf of sustainable measures taken			
	Set up web site for pre event DMS & communication			
	Consider per event on line survey to assess buy in			

What	How	GEM 1	GEM 2	GEM 3
	<i>Tick to action</i>	✓	✓	✓
Materials	Paper will be FSC approved and recycled			
	Use white & chalk boards. Recycled flips			
	Recyclable or reusable name badges			
	Print two up, double sided, b&w			
	Make note pads from scrap paper			
	Reduce the use of guest hand outs and gifts			
	Use recycled guest hand outs and gifts			
	Use locally produced guest hand outs and gifts			
	Use gifts produced by charities or fair trade			
	Consumables purchased from Green Wholesalers			
	Discourage disposable plates, cups, cutlery			
	If disposables necessary, use recyclable			
	Soaps & cleaners are eco friendly & biodegradable			
	Reuse old pens and pencils			
	Donate unused materials to charity at end of event			
	Consider gadgets that support sustainable message			
Carbon	Measure event staff transport, CO2			
	Measure event waste recycled			
	Measure event waste to land fill / CO2			
	Measure guest transport, CO2			
	Measure supplier transport, CO2			
	Measure venue energy, CO2			
	Offset scheme selected – accredited / appropriate			
Reporting	Guest feedback on line			
	Produce carbon report (reduced by, saved, offset)			
	Review tangible and intangible benefits			
	Secure CO2 offsetting certificate			
	Communicate to guests, stakeholders, suppliers			

## Green Linking

The following links might be helpful in planning your green event.

### Environmental Management Systems

- ISO 14001: [www.british-accreditation.co.uk/ISO-14001-certification-services.htm?qclid=ClatkbSd4pECFQ93MAoduVpPXg](http://www.british-accreditation.co.uk/ISO-14001-certification-services.htm?qclid=ClatkbSd4pECFQ93MAoduVpPXg)
- BSI 8901: [www.bsi-global.com](http://www.bsi-global.com)
- EMAS: [www.emas.org.uk](http://www.emas.org.uk)
- GTBS: [www.green-business.co.uk/](http://www.green-business.co.uk/)
- Green Globe: [www.ec3global.com](http://www.ec3global.com)

### Advisory

- Energy Saving Trust: [www.energysavingtrust.org.uk](http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk)
- Business Environmental Partnership: [www.thebep.org.uk/](http://www.thebep.org.uk/)
- Carbon Trust: [www.carbontrust.co.uk](http://www.carbontrust.co.uk)
- EnviroWise: [www.envirowise.gov.uk/](http://www.envirowise.gov.uk/)
- Edinburgh Centre for Carbon Management: [www.eccm.uk.com](http://www.eccm.uk.com)
- Ethical Junction: [www.ethicaljunction.org](http://www.ethicaljunction.org)
- Event Sustainability: [www.eventsustainability.com/](http://www.eventsustainability.com/)

### Retail

- Green Shop: [www.greenshop.co.uk/](http://www.greenshop.co.uk/)
- Green City Whole foods: [www.greencity.co.uk](http://www.greencity.co.uk)
- Green Building Store: [www.greenbuildingstore.co.uk/](http://www.greenbuildingstore.co.uk/)
- Ethical Superstore: [www.ethicalsuperstore.com](http://www.ethicalsuperstore.com)
- The Green Store On Line: [www.thegreenstoreonline.co.uk](http://www.thegreenstoreonline.co.uk)

### Event Industry

- Eventia: [www.eventia.org.uk/one\\_future.asp](http://www.eventia.org.uk/one_future.asp)
- ISES: [www.isesuk.org/](http://www.isesuk.org/)
- MPI: [www.mpiweb.org](http://www.mpiweb.org)

### Carbon Offsetting

- Carbon Trust: [www.carbontrust.co.uk](http://www.carbontrust.co.uk)
- Which: [www.which.co.uk](http://www.which.co.uk)

## Green Glossary

An explanation of some terms relating to sustainability:

Term	Description
<b>Anaerobic digestion Plant</b>	This is a process in which micro-organisms break down biodegradable material without oxygen. As part of an integrated waste management system, anaerobic digestion reduces the emission of landfill gas into the atmosphere.
<b>Biodegradable</b>	How organic substances are broken down. Mainly by bugs!.
<b>Carbon Footprint</b>	This is a measure of the impact human activities have on the environment in terms of the amount of green house gases produced, measured in units of carbon dioxide.
<b>Carbon Emissions (Carbon dioxide is a Greenhouse Gas)</b>	Carbon Dioxide emissions are emissions released when fuel is burned, e.g. burning fossil fuels releases carbon dioxide stored millions of years ago. We use fossil fuels to run vehicles (petrol, diesel and kerosene), heat homes, businesses and power factories. Deforestation releases carbon stored in trees and also results in less carbon dioxide being removed from the atmosphere.
<b>Carbon Offsetting</b>	A carbon offset is a financial instrument representing a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. Carbon offsets are measured in metric tons of carbon dioxide-equivalent (CO <sub>2</sub> e). Maximillion's Carbon Offsets are part of the voluntary market, we purchase carbon offsets to mitigate Max's greenhouse gas emissions from transportation, electricity use, and waste. Offsetting is good way to balance necessary carbon emissions.
<b>C. S. R</b>	'Corporate Social Responsibility' OR 'Corporate Citizenship', and 'Responsible Business'. A company considers the interests of society by taking responsibility for the impact of their activities on customers, suppliers, employees, shareholders, communities and other stakeholders, as well as the environment.
<b>Eco-friendly</b>	A term used to refer to <a href="#">goods and services</a> that inflict minimal harm on the <a href="#">environment</a>
<b>E-communication</b>	EDMs (Email direct Marketing), E shots, Email invites. Emailed

	delegate information, Internet booking system. Cuts down the use of printed collateral.
<b>Energy Efficient</b>	A system that allows homes, vehicles, and equipment to run at the same rate but using less energy. Most new white goods are rated on their efficiency. A+++ etc.
<b>Environmental impact</b>	A companies/ individuals impact on the environment: made up of calculations in: waste, transport, energy. E.g. for every new building project, companies must complete Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA), this measures the impact a project on the environment (habitat, landscape etc).
<b>Environmental Management System</b>	An Environmental Management System (EMS) is a system made up of specific competencies, behaviors and procedures that allow a company to deliver and implement an operational environmental policy.
<b>Fair Trade</b>	Fair Trade is a social movement and financial based approach to alleviating global poverty.  It ensures that producers get a fair price for their goods. It also implies a better working environment for the producers.
<b>Food Miles</b>	The distance food is transported from growth, to production, and then finally reaching the consumer.
<b>Green Washing</b>	Is used when a company / business is misleading consumers regarding their environmental practices.
<b>Locally Sourced</b>	Produce that is bought from / or near the source of production –e.g. If your event is in Glasgow, you would look for produce that’s grown in the surrounding area. This supports local producers and reduces food miles.
<b>Reduce Reuse Recycle</b>	This is a cycle in order of preference.  Reduce: don’t create waste in the first place.  Re-use: find new uses for materials previously thrown away, saving valuable energy and resources.  Recycle: transform waste back into something valuable.
<b>Sustainable</b>	Sustainability means how long a product will last. In environmental term it means how long our vital resources will last E.g. The climate, agriculture, industry, forestry, fisheries, etc.
<b>Triple Bottom Line</b>	Sometimes referred to as TBL or 3BL. = <b>People, Planet, Profit</b> . It’s a criteria of values and ideas to measure a companies Corporate Social

	Responsibility. E.g. How a company conducts itself in line with the 3BL.
<b>Waste neutral</b>	To become waste neutral a company must purchase products that are made from recyclates, and then enter into the Reduce, Reuse, Recycle chain – therefore creating a perfect unbreakable chain. If after reduction and reuse, the weight of recyclates and residual waste leaving the company is equal to / or less than the weight of products made from recyclates bought in, then a company can claim waste neutrality.
<b>Waste Management</b>	The collection, transport, processing, recycling or disposal of waste materials.

