

The Eco Imperative

Why Sustainability is Key to Event Marketing Success—and How You Can Get Onboard

Spiro tested, Mother Earth approved. Spiro tested, Mother Earth approved.



Imagine a marketplace where your organization's commitment to sustainable practices & ESG values cements a bond with your customers that's as beneficial for the planet as it is for your brand loyalty & bottom-line results. **That reality is here.**

Event marketers are especially positioned to help their brands meet the mounting consumer demand for eco-friendly practices. By integrating sustainability standards & processes into your experiential activations & pairing them with authentic brand messages, your audiences can see & engage with your brand's eco-friendly initiatives in real-time.

This focus on sustainability in events can help you demonstrate to your most important consumers & stakeholders your organization's commitment to eco-consciousness. It can also position your brand as an industry leader, enhance customer loyalty, deepen brand affinity, and increase long-term revenue growth.



Sustainability's Impact on Brand Sentiment, Loyalty & Growth

Aligning with sustainability isn't just about being eco-friendly; it's about being customer-focused. Studies reveal a striking trend in consumer preference for sustainability:

- **75% of consumers are willing to pay up to 5% more** for products from brands that are ethical & socially conscious.
- **40% would pay up to 10% more.**
- **70% now value sustainability** more than two years ago.

Yet, today's consumers don't simply hope for greater eco-consciousness from brands—they outright demand it as part of a larger push toward a more environmentally sustainable society. Driven by reduced trust in governments, NGOs & media, brands are increasingly seen as leaders in societal trust & agents of environmental progress.

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According to Nielsen:

- **76% of consumers** expect brands to reduce carbon footprints.
- **45% seek environmentally responsible** supply chains from brands.
- **55% rely on brands** to raise awareness of environmental issues.

Adopting sustainable brand practices leads to higher loyalty & customer lifetime value. Ignoring sustainability may lead to decreased brand sentiment & significant market share loss:

- **81% of consumers** would switch from brands that neglect the environment.
- Young adults (18-24) are **three times more likely to switch** if a brand's values do not align with their environmental concerns.

Market data reflects the importance of sustainability in driving brand growth:

- Natural shampoos that advertised their sustainability **increased their market share by 2.2%.**
- Competitor shampoo brands with less emphasis on eco-friendly practices saw a market share **decline of 3.4%.**
- Chemical manufacturing brands with stronger green initiatives saw up to **three times higher Total Shareholder Revenue.**

Investors prioritize technology & sustainability when assessing long-term company value, too. Seventy-five percent of investors weigh a brand's engagement with sustainability in their decision-making, emphasizing the need for detailed information on sustainability goals & strategies.



Event Marketers, Sustainability is Your Opportunity to Drive Change

As an event marketer, you can play a crucial role in driving sustainability initiatives within your organization via your brand's experiences. Events & activations offer powerful opportunities with maximum immediacy & impact, including:

- Supporting your brand's overarching ESG initiatives.
- Building trust with your most important audiences.
- Showcasing your organization's commitment to eco-friendly practices & positive impact within your consumer communities.
- Helping you secure a seat at the decision-making table in your organization.

Ultimately, meeting consumer sustainability needs can benefit your bottom-line:

- **77% of organizations** say their sustainability approaches increase customer loyalty.
- **63% say** their practices increase revenue.

Capgemini reported a "significant opportunity to gain market share" given consumers' intentions toward sustainable behaviors. How significant? Half of the global population is projected to be "eco-active" by 2030, and this consumer segment is expected to deliver:

- **More than \$1 billion** of value to Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) brands.
- **\$700 billion to brands** in the technical consumer goods vertical.
- An immediate opportunity—as **83% of consumers** increased their sustainable shopping in the last year.



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Start by understanding your customers' & stakeholders' needs—and authentically deliver on them. The path is clear, but there's a sizeable disparity between consumers' eco-friendly preferences & brands' focus on meeting those preferences.

According to Accenture, 95% of global executives say their consumers are changing faster than they can change their business. Sustainability is one of the biggest areas in which organizations do not fully understand how their consumers' preferences & behaviors are evolving.

A Capgemini report revealed:

- **72% of consumers** are concerned about their environmental footprint.
- **79% are changing** their purchase preferences based on that concern.

However, only 36% of organizations believe their consumers are willing to change their preferences based on environmental impact.

That disparity extends to marketing leaders. GfK revealed:

- **73% of global consumers** say it's important that companies take environmentally responsible actions.
- Yet, only **42% of CMOs** list sustainability & environmental protection as an important part of their organization's brand identity.
- Only **30% of global CMOs** believe their customers expect their brands to address sustainability.



"Events are not mere gatherings; they are statements of brand values, community connection and windows into a company's essence. The audiences of today are informed, concerned and invested in the sustainability efforts of the brands they support. They demand transparency and action."

- Jordan Kaye,
Founder & CEO, Analog Events

As an event marketer, you have the opportunity to strategically use current audience insights & create brand experiences that make a powerful impact. This impact can extend far beyond your brand's relationship with your audience, positively impacting the industry & global communities.



How You Can Achieve Sustainability—Sustainably

The need for eco-friendly events & experiences is paramount, but it's important for event marketers to focus on progress over perfection.

Adopting sustainable event practices does not need to happen all at once. Strategically incorporate eco-conscious measures one initiative at a time, continuously strengthening brand/consumer relationships & building brand reputation with each step.

From venue selection to your choice of suppliers, there are numerous opportunities to infuse sustainability into every aspect of your event marketing. From small, focused efforts to event- and city-wide initiatives, every eco-friendly step forward can yield significant results:

2024 Mardi Gras celebrations incorporated recycling bins & waste-collecting volunteers along the parade's route & beyond with its initiative, Recycle Dat! Partnering with 25 organizations, the initiative diverted more than 10 tons of materials from landfills, including plastic bottles, glass, aluminum cans—and nearly 14,000 pounds of beads & throws.

Music festival Outside Lands diverted nearly 162 tons of refuse (87% of the festival's total waste) from landfills. How? It sold compostable single-use cups, recycled on-site metals & plastics & sent its used cooking oil to partnering restaurants following the event.

HubSpot's INBOUND 2023 selected an event venue that was within 1 mile of half of its partnership hotels, encouraging attendees to walk or bike to the conference.

At SXSW 2024, Delta Airlines swapped single-use plastic dishes & utensils for reusable glassware & used primarily repurposed sets & furniture, significantly cutting down on the activation's footprint & deepening trust with the 4,500 attendees that visited its lounge.

Drinkware brand Stanley launched a indoor/outdoor pop-up shop on L.A.'s Venice Beach, elevating the experience via a partnership with nonprofit Heal the Bay to clean up 45 pounds of trash & collect over \$4,000 in donations. The activation attracted more than 3,000 attendees & racked up more than 593 million influencer impressions.

Image
Courtesy
of Delta



Image Courtesy of
MardiGrasNewOrleans.com



Image Courtesy
of Alive
Coverage/
Outside Lands



Events & experiences are powerful opportunities to authentically highlight your brand's sustainability initiatives in ways that strengthen audience relationships. As event marketers, you have an opportunity to play a pivotal role in championing sustainability in your organizations by leveraging events as platforms for positive change.

By strategically integrating sustainability into your events & activations—and transparently communicating your efforts to your audiences—you can create impactful, eco-friendly experiences that enhance your brand loyalty & long-term value.



We can help you get started on your sustainability journey with a strategic roadmap for success.



CITATIONS:

Accenture: The Life Centricity Playbook

Adweek: Concerts Have Always Left Hidden Wastelands. This Music Festival Puts Sustainability on the Main Stage

Adweek: The Delta Lounge Bucked Recent Experiential Trends at SXSW—and People Loved It

BizBash: 6 Smart Event Strategies From HubSpot INBOUND 2023

Capgemini: How Sustainability is Fundamentally Changing Consumer Preferences

Deloitte: Managing Reputational Risk in an Activist World

Edelman: 2024 Trust Barometer: Innovation in Peril

Event Marketer: How Drinkware Brand Stanley Mobilized Its TikTok Fans for an IRL Pop-Up In L.A.

Forbes: Why Events Need to Be More Sustainable

GfK: CMO Outlook Report: Data Decisions and Optimism: How CMOs are Driving Change in an Evolving World

Meetings Industry Association: Vision 2025 Event Industry Green Survey 2022 Results Reveals Opportunities and Challenges for Sustainability in Live Events

Nielsen: Consumers Care About Sustainability—and Back it Up With Their Wallets

Nola.com: Hotels to Host Recycling Bins for Mardi Gras Beads During Carnival Season

Ovation Global DMC: Net Zero Carbon in Events

PwC: Global Investor Survey 2023: Trust, Tech and Transformation: Navigating Investor Priorities

PwC: On Sustainability, Consumers Have Made Up Their Mind

World Economic Forum: Gen Z Cares About Sustainability More Than Anyone Else—And Is Starting to Make Others Feel the Same

