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Green Meetings on the Rise, Despite Down Economy

AMC Connection, June 2009

By: *Greg Schultz*

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AMC Institute, the independent international trade association that represents the Association Management industry, recently conducted a survey of member AMCs representing 400 associations and not-for-profit organizations. The results are in, and the news is good for the environment and for business. According to the survey, four out of five meetings in 2008 were *greener* than in 2007. And looking forward, one-third of organizations planning meetings are willing to increase their expense budgets to ensure a greener meeting.

According to the Green Meeting Industry Council, a green meeting is one that incorporates environmental considerations to minimize the negative impact on the environment. This goes beyond the basic "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle" mantra to incorporate other innovative, eco-friendly activities. AMC-managed associations are making the most of their meetings platform, increasingly greening materials and meeting activities, and sending an eco-friendly message to millions of attendees.

Many meeting planners are going paperless, using electronic communications to drive attendance, taking registration online, and advertising via the web. Some have started converting printed programs to CDs to further cut paper and postage. When printed materials are necessary, they can be published on recycled paper, on both sides of the page, using soy or vegetable-based inks.

More and more, meeting attendees are encouraged to eat right and drink responsibly. Planners are doing away with Styrofoam cups and paper plates, and switching out plastic utensils for good old-fashioned silverware. More organizations are serving pitchers of purified water at meetings, instead of individual bottles. And many green meetings offer guests a taste of locally grown or sustainably-sourced foods—from farm-fresh salad greens and vegetables to organic chicken. AMC green meeting planners also save energy by coordinating with the venue to turn off lights and air conditioning when rooms are not in use.


Beyond being good stewards for the environment, forward-thinking associations and AMCs know that going green can save green. By scaling back on paper handouts, sharing water from pitchers, and staying plugged in to energy usage, AMC meeting planners can shave thousands off associations' conference costs.

Want to reenergize your meetings, or even your office space? Here's a bright idea to get you started: Replace standard light bulbs with high-efficiency florescent bulbs. This simple switch can save up to five times the energy, and each bulb lasts 10 times as long. For more tips and green meeting myth-busters, go to www.greenmeetings.info.

AMCs are a natural choice for associations pursuing a green meeting strategy, or simply looking to maximize efficiency and return on investment. Visit www.AMCInstitute.org for more information.

Greg Schultz is chair of the AMC Institute Market Expansion Task Force, and Vice President of The Sherwood Group in Deerfield, Illinois. E-mail: gschultz@sherwood-group.com

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