

Sustainable exhibition and event management

An introduction to environmental management systems

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Why does environmental management matter?

Today's businesses can have a huge impact on the environment. This impact can be minimised or eliminated by adopting a responsible approach to environmental management.

Today's customers expect an assurance that risks to the environment are minimised, and often insist on their suppliers demonstrating a tangible commitment to environmental management.

The general public think businesses make too much profit and don't pay enough attention to social responsibility. A sustained and systematic approach to environmental risk management will assure all stakeholders of the moral integrity of an organisation.

What's it got to do with the exhibition and event industry?

The industry is expected to have values - behaviour must change in line with public attitude. To maintain good public relations it's essential to demonstrate a systematic approach to environmental risk management.

- The average trade show attendee takes home up to ten pounds of paper.
- A typical exhibition generates the equivalent of 170 trees in waste paper.

Best practice?

Most organisations now save money and enhance their image and reputation by publishing environmental performance information as well as conserving energy and raw materials they can also benefit from improved cost control and increased profit.

Where to start?

The first step is to create a basic environmental policy that includes targets to lessen the impact on the environment.

By compiling an environmental risk assessment, control measures can be identified, enabling key performance indicators to be set to make sure you meet the demands of your customers.

An introduction to BS 8901

Specification for a sustainable event management system

BS 8901:2007

BS 8901 provides requirements for planning and managing sustainable events of all sizes and types. The standard encompasses the entire range of events ranging from large-scale conferences and unique events such as the 2012 Olympics to music festivals and air shows.

The standard is applicable throughout the exhibition and event industry supply chain encompassing venues, organising companies and industry contracting firms and is aimed at the following groups:

- Event organisers
- Venues
- Organisations and/or individuals in the supply chain

BS 8901 provides guidance in the form of easy to understand practical information designed to assist the user to implement the requirements and those in event management to manage their environmental, financial and social risks and impacts spanning all aspects of event management.

By becoming accredited to this new British Standard companies will be able to:

- Improve sustainable performance within available budgets
- Reduce carbon emissions and waste, improving the resource efficiency of the entire event supply chain.
- Present opportunities for more efficient planning and encourage the re-use of equipment and infrastructure.
- Reduce environmental impacts such as carbon usage, waste management and effects on biodiversity.
- Improve social impacts such as community involvement and fair employment.
- Establish economic impacts such as local investment and long-term viability.

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