

Zero Waste Events



Who am I?

- City of Santa Barbara Environmental Specialist



- GreenProject Consultants Co-founder



GreenProject Consultants
Sustainable Solutions for Sites & Structures

Events are great but...

- They produce a lot of waste!
 - Events are the second largest waste producing industry!
 - Often, little thought goes into where the waste is actually going after the event



What exactly *is* the problem with waste?

Waste Goes to Landfills



- Limited landfill space
- Limited resources
- Energy use
- Pollution

Organics in the Landfill...



- Food and other organics slowly break down in the landfill
- Methane is the result
- Methane is 70x more potent as a greenhouse gas than CO₂!

Waste 101



- Types of event waste
 - Trash (landfill)
 - Recycling
 - Compost/foodscraps
 - E-waste
 - C&D waste???
 - Clean waste stream???

Steps to a successful waste-free event



- Waste management isn't only a factor *during* the event...
- Pre-event
- During event
- Post-event

Pre-event:

- Waste minimization starts here
 - Think about NEEDS not WANTS
 - What NEEDS to be there?
 - What can you compromise on to make your vendors happy?



Pre-event

- Event planning charrette
 - Establish a waste goal
- Available waste services
 - Foodscraps?
 - Recycling?
- Vendor contact list – introduce yourself and the idea of zero waste
 - Understand where they're coming from – what's their waste background?



Pre-event: Set the Rules

- This is the time to establish limits
- Policies:
 - Pack it in, pack it out
 - Single-use ban
 - Event-provided materials, take it out of the vendors' hands
 - Waste fees



Event Time

- If possible, have waste staff present during the event
 - This will maximize your diversion
- Get back with the vendors
 - Remind them of the goals
 - Be a resource
 - Enforce the pre-established rules



Event time: Talkin' Trash

- Opportunity to educate event-goers
 - Building a zero waste legacy
- Make it interactive
 - Pictures
 - Skits
 - Education kiosk
- Talk, talk, talk



Post-event

Time to get dirty: Sorting is a must

- Mistakes will happen
- Classify waste
- Added value – your board/stakeholders/clients will love this
 - More bang for their buck
 - Added credibility

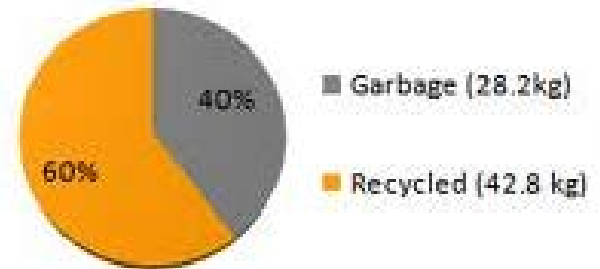


Post-event: Measurements are King

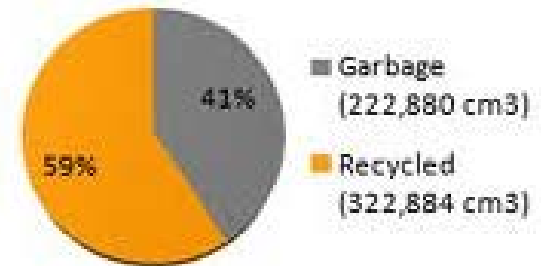
- Data collection

- Baseline for subsequent year
- Way to grade your event
- Raise waste awareness
- Something to brag about

Trash by weight

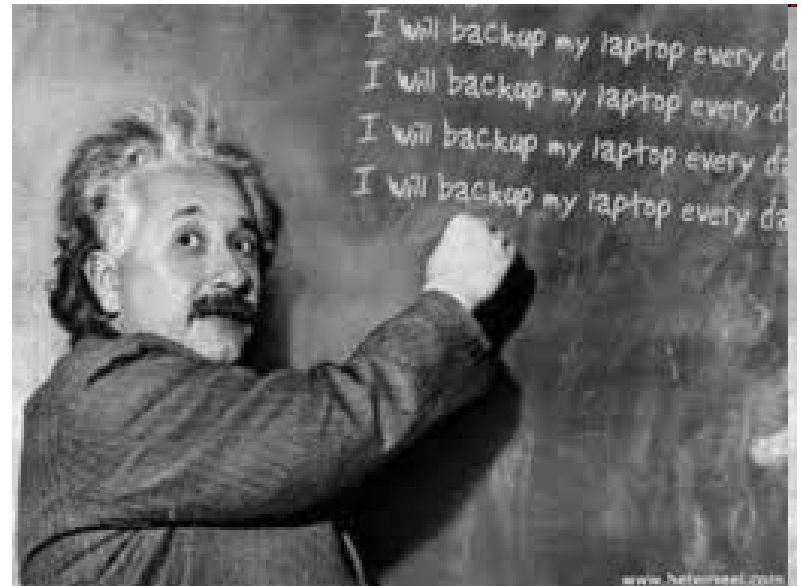


Trash by volume



Post-event: Prepare for Next Year

- Use data to set goals for next year
- Supply suggestions based on this year
 - Replace Styrofoam cup with reusable
 - Reusable vs Single Use
 - Etc.
- After event wrap up
 - Lessons learned
 - What worked, what didn't



Obstacles

- Vendor buy in
 - Might have to win their love...
- Perceived cost
- Lack of:
 - Knowledge
 - Interest
 - Organization



Solutions!



- Event-specific signage
- Tips
 - Dos and don'ts
- Always take the time to explain
 - People are scared of what they don't know
 - Be the hero!