

Transforming to Environmentally Responsible Conferences: Planning a Green Meeting

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MCMLA 2005

- Annual meeting of the Midcontinental Chapter of the Medical Library Association
- Fort Douglas in Salt Lake City, Utah
- September 17-21, 2005



Why Green?

- Align conference with our green lifestyles and values
- Conserve materials, reduce waste, and save money
- A fun and different approach

Environmental Policy

Our goal is to heighten the environmental consciousness of participants and to promote the idea that it is feasible to plan an environmentally friendly meeting by consciously rethinking our process, reducing and recycling waste, and reusing or purchasing recycled materials.

We will evaluate this event and celebrate its success by sharing our experiences with others to inspire them to host green meetings.

*Rethink what has
"always" been done!*

Green Planning

- Established Green Team
- Researched green meeting practices
- Wrote environmental policy
- Obtained local planning committee support
- Gained MCMLA approval
- Created green link on conference website
- Developed and presented environmentally aware checklists for committee use
- Assisted committee chairs in transforming checklists into actions
- Checklists addressed
 - Preventing and reducing waste
 - Recycling and managing waste
 - Conserving energy and reducing traffic
 - Contracting food service and lodging
 - Buying environmentally friendly products
 - Educating participants and exhibitors
- Sponsored green activities
- Marketed green conference concept



Green Conference

- Activities
 - BYOB: Bring Your Own Bag
 - Heart healthy walk
 - Dine-a-rounds at locally owned restaurants
- Catering
 - Dinnerware and silverware instead of disposables
 - Provided bulk condiments
 - Offered vegetarian meals
- Education
 - CE course: Becoming a Green and Sustainable Library
 - Classes held in LEED certified facility
 - Encouraged recycling of handouts
- Events
 - Reception with local jazz band
 - BYOB Contest--locally crafted prizes



- Exhibitors
 - Highlighted exhibitor greening efforts
 - Encouraged electronic and on request information
 - Recycled or redistributed materials
- Hotel
 - Selected locally owned hotel near public transportation
 - Worked with management on recycling
 - Linen reuse program

Green Conference

- Program
 - Printed program on recycled paper
 - Provided reusable poster boards
 - Published officer reports online
 - Posted handouts online
- Promotion and Publicity
 - Promoted on Web and through email
 - Highlighted greening efforts



- Registration and Hospitality
 - Minimized tourist brochure distribution
 - Provided recycle bins
 - Highlighted local businesses
- Transportation
 - Selected walkable venues
 - Encouraged carpooling and provided van transport
 - Negotiated donation of 3-day light rail TRAX passes for all attendees



Conference Evaluation

- Question: *How would you evaluate the "greening" efforts of this conference?*
 - 90% responded favorably
 - "Green is the way to go."
 - "Raised my consciousness."
 - "I hope it takes off for all future meetings."



Sustainability

- Checklists available to future program planners
- Green CE course materials shared with conference planners

Outreach

- Promoted outside the profession
- Shared with the mayor's green team
- Shared with local environmental groups
- Presenting MLA poster