Sample Event Sustainability Moments

Whether you’re hosting your event in a barrier-free venue, serving your guests local food, or replacing disposable swag with reusable, socially-responsible gifts, you’ve thought carefully about how to make your event as sustainable as possible. Sharing your motivations and your rationale with your guests throughout the event will help demonstrate what sustainability looks like in action and may inspire your guests to make sustainability a priority at their next conference, event or meeting, too.

The following Event Sustainability Moments are examples of short education and discussion points that you can share with your guests at any point in your event program. You may wish to use these examples as written, or to use them as models to draft your own Event Sustainability Moment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decision</th>
<th>Event Sustainability Moment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We are serving a meal using reusable dish- and silverware, rather than disposable options made from styrofoam, plastic or paper.</td>
<td>“We’ve chosen to serve today’s meal using reusable dish- and silverware rather than disposable options. Over their lifetime, ceramic dishes and stainless steel cutlery will use less energy and water to produce, ship, maintain, and dispose of than any single-use items on the market, including compostable dishes and cutlery. Because they can be used over and over, these reusable dishes will also generate less waste and fewer greenhouse gases throughout their life cycle than disposable alternatives.”</td>
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<td>We have invited our guests to bring a reusable water bottle, mug or plate to use throughout the event.</td>
<td>“Thank you for bringing your own [water bottle, mug, plate] to our event! Your efforts allow us to serve tap water, drip coffee, and snacks without providing disposable cups and plates for the group. By planning ahead, you’ve all helped us to minimize the paper and plastic waste produced during this event.”</td>
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<td>We have made compost bins available for our guests to use throughout the event.</td>
<td>When there are compost bins in the space: “Please note that there are compost bins situated throughout the event today for you to use. [Point out locations.] [Highlight as appropriate: all items/all food waste/all compostable dishware] at today’s event can be disposed of in these bins.”</td>
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</tbody>
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AND/OR: We are working with Conference and Event Management or MacEwan Conference and Event Centre, who compost as much pre- and post-consumer food waste as possible behind the scenes.

When event staff are composting behind the scenes:
“As you enjoy your meal, please note that our [CEM/MCEC] event staff will be composting as much pre- and post-consumer waste as possible behind the scenes. The University of Calgary is dedicated to reducing its landfill waste by 80% by 2020. Composting your food waste at this event brings us one step closer to that goal.”

We are working with Aramark (Conference and Event Management) and have employed serving strategies to maximize how much unserved food remains for donation after the event.

“When Aramark and the University of Calgary have partnered with the Leftovers Foundation, a local non-profit that helps Calgary businesses and institutions donate leftover food to local charities. For food safety reasons, Leftovers can only accept donations of unserved food. To make sure that we are donating as much food as you know you can eat. That way, we can maximize how much unserved food we’re able to donate to charities right here in Calgary after today’s event is over.”

We have chosen to host this event in an accessible venue.

“We’ve chosen an accessible venue today to help to make sure that all people who would like to attend this event are able to do so. [Identify key accessible features: ground floor space, proximity to single-stall all-gender washrooms, etc.] By hosting events in accessible spaces like [venue name], we hope to invite a broader range of ideas and perspectives into this space today.”

We are using videoconferencing to include long-distance guests in our event program.

“By opting for videoconferencing over travel, we are able to invite the world to join us without generating the emissions associated with long-distance air travel. We would like to begin our program today by welcoming all of you who are joining us at a distance, and to recognize the contribution you are making to reducing the carbon footprint of today’s event. Thank you!”

We have sourced local, reusable or sustainable gifts for our speakers or honoured guests.

“Thank you for joining us at today’s event! Please accept this [local, reusable, sustainably-sourced, ethically-produced, carbon-neutral or socially-meaningful gift] as a token of our gratitude. The University of Calgary aims to be a best-practice leader in environmental and socially-responsible purchasing. By offering [this gift], we help to advance this goal.”

AND/OR: We have provided sustainable swag for our guests instead of disposable giveaways.

“We are hosting our event in a LEED-certified venue.

“Thank you for meeting with us today in the [name of LEED-certified building: EEL Building, CDC, TFDL, Taylor Institute, etc.]. This building is LEED [Platinum, Gold, Silver, Bronze]-certified, which means that it has met the high sustainability standards met by the Canada Green Building Council’s Leadership in Efficiency and Environmental Design program. [Name of building] is one of 12 LEED-certified buildings on University of Calgary campuses.”