



Overall, 41 percent of the food was grown locally, which is one of the highest percentages Greenbuild has had. Lewis acknowledges that it's easier to source local food in a warmer climate like Phoenix; 41 percent would be extremely difficult to reach in many states.

Cibrian, who works for Aramark-owned Aventura, began preparing for Greenbuild well in advance. Cibrian and his staff had relationships with local farmers but never had been asked to generate this much locally grown produce. Cibrian reached out to growers within a 100-mile radius and told them exactly what he needed them to grow, and how much.

□ The growers knew ahead of time that they had to plant more organic lettuce, tomatoes, and other produce, □ Cibrian says. □ And the people that baked organic bread for me, they secured organic flour way in advance. □ All of it was ready and fresh for Greenbuild.

□ We had a lot of compliments about the food from attendees, □ Cibrian says. □ That's important to us, because it doesn't matter how much you plan, the important thing is to make sure the people who consume the food are happy. □

□ Greenbuild made a tremendous impact on our operation because we established a lot of good relationships with different farmers in the Phoenix area to bring fresh, local produce to the convention center, □ Cibrian says.

New Exhibitor Rules

At the 2009 show, Greenbuild announced the **Greenbuild Mandatory Exhibition Green Guidelines** □ green standards that exhibitors in the future must meet if they want to exhibit at the show. It was a bold step that could cost the show some exhibitors, but Lewis knows the success of the show and its long waiting list of exhibitors gives the organization leverage.

Shawna McKinley, project manager at MeetGreen in Portland, Ore., has not seen standards for exhibitors anywhere else. □ It's quite revolutionary, □ says McKinley, whose company serves as a green meetings adviser to Greenbuild.

The guidelines, which will be mandatory at this year's expo in Chicago, require that exhibiting companies

- have a sustainability policy,

- submit a booth-materials usage report,
- use sustainable elements in signs, and
- reduce the use of printed pieces.

There are guidelines also for shipping of materials, air quality, and water reclamation as they relate to booths.

Chirafisi of Rubbermaid has an eco-friendly Greenbuild booth that already meets many of the requirements, and he welcomes the new guidelines. "We want to show attendees that we are not just talking the talk, we're actually walking the walk," he says.

Before having the mandatory standards, Greenbuild provided exhibitors with a voluntary opportunity to green their booths – the Green Leaders Program. Exhibitors received points for complying with green initiatives – about 30 of them in five categories (booth construction, printed materials, transportation, community partnerships, and shipping).

One of 2009's winners was Cambridge Architectural of Cambridge, Md. "Our team stepped forward and said every decision we make is going to be from a green perspective," says Heather Collins, director of marketing at the company. Cambridge used repurposed materials to build its booth, hired a fuel-efficient "Smartway Hauler" to haul supplies, and bought carbon offsets.

We Are the Champion

The Phoenix event was the first time Greenbuild worked with Champion as its general services contractor. For the first seven years of the show, Stetson Exhibition Services was the contractor, but the growing show required a larger company to handle it.

"We were very committed to Stetson Exhibition Services, because they changed their entire service model to be a green GSC seven years ago when no one else would," Lewis says. Champion had to meet all the requirements that Stetson did to win the contract.

"The biggest lesson we took away from Greenbuild was the need to track everything," says Champion's Jenny Burr. "We can't just say, 'Yes, we recycled this or used that material.' We have to document it. That means knowing what materials are used in everything that's built for the show, how much is recycled, what can be reused, and what gets thrown away.

Burr discovered that Champion already was doing a majority of the things Greenbuild required, such as using sustainable graphics and signs. "That's something we started doing six years ago," says Burr, who heads up Champion's internal green committee.

One thing they weren't doing was using sustainable structures built exclusively for the show. For Greenbuild, Champion had to use recyclable materials. "That was brand-new for us," Burr says.

While Champion integrated green initiatives – like low-energy light bulbs, recyclable shrink wrap, and energy-efficient hauling – into all of its shows, not all of its clients are committed to green events. "It depends on the show and it depends on the item," Burr says. "There are some things that are standard green practice, like graphics, but there are other things that really require us to partner with our clients."

Leaving a Legacy

With the LEED-certified convention center and rooftop solar panels, Greenbuild 2009 probably used less water and energy than past shows. Also, Phoenix likely had a lower carbon footprint than Boston because Phoenix had light rail, fewer taxis, and convention facilities that were in close proximity to each other, McKinley says. Every city is different, she adds, so there is not one standard measure of success. But Greenbuild 2009 is evidence that the meetings industry is evolving.

When you see a company like Champion starting to change to provide green solutions, hopefully as more of a standard practice, that's a sign that it's becoming more mainstream rather than fringe, McKinley says. It does seem to me that green meetings are gaining more and more traction.

For Lewis, Greenbuild is all about leaving something good something green behind. We want to leave a legacy.

Meeting the Rigorous BS 8901 Standards

The U.S. Green Building Council is one two U.S.-based associations (Meeting Professionals International is the other) certified by the British Standards Institution's BS 8901, a standard for planning sustainable events. Certification means that every event USGBC runs, including Greenbuild, meets the rigorous BS 8901 requirements for sustainability.

BS 8901 is designed to ensure that green solutions are integrated into every aspect of planning a convention, and a third party audits the process. The hope is that with the processes in place and audited, sustainable meetings will become ingrained in the culture and mission of conforming organizations, no matter who the meeting planner is.

Is BS 8901 certification for everyone? Shawna McKinley, project manager at MeetGreen in Portland, Ore., says it's invaluable if an organization's mission and mandate include sustainable meetings.

In the U.S., the Convention Industry Council began releasing the APEX (Accepted Practices Exchange) Green Meetings and Events standards in February 2010, which apply to individual meetings. The standards cover nine aspects of planning a meeting: audiovisual, communication, destinations, exhibits, on-site office, transportation, accommodations, food and beverage, and meeting venue. ASTM International, a standards-setting agency, is in the process of approving the standards. The Environmental Protection Agency, which was involved in writing the standards, is also scheduled to adopt the standards for its meeting-purchasing policies.

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