

Green Ribbon Exhibits:

A Manual for Implementing a
Green Exhibit Recognition Program
at Conferences and Events

Revised March 2014



Green Ribbon Exhibits Recognition Program

Acknowledgments

This manual was developed as a collaborative effort between the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC), the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Solid Waste Authority of Central Ohio (SWACO), in preparation for hosting the EcoSummit 2012 conference in Columbus, Ohio. We recognize the assistance from the following partners:

- Angel Arroyo-Rodríguez, Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (Ohio EPA)
- Bob Thomas, Exhibit and Event Management
- Brandi Whetstone, Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC)
- Kathy Lutz, Greater Columbus Convention Center
- Kristi Higginbotham, Solid Waste Authority of Central Ohio (SWACO)
- Kyle Winkler, Zero Waste Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania Resources Council
- Melanie Stanley, Solid Waste Authority of Central Ohio (SWACO)

Special thanks to the Alcoa Foundation for funding the assistance of Zero Waste Pittsburgh in the implementation of the zero waste pilot-project during EcoSummit 2012 and review of this document.

Published online in March 2014.

This manual is intended as a living document. Users are encouraged to share information on actions applicable to their exhibit that were challenging to implement, any other barriers to participation in the program, and any suggestions for additional implementation actions that should be added to the point system. Photos featuring green elements at booths and displays, as well as photos of the ribbons or item used for recognition, are welcome.

Please send your comments, ideas and photos to bwhetstone@morpc.org, angel.arroyo-rodriguez@epa.ohio.gov or kristi.higginbotham@swaco.org.

Green Ribbon Exhibits Recognition Program

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Green Ribbon Exhibits Recognition Program | 4 |
| Exhibitor Invitation Template | 5 |
| Exhibitor Commitment Form | 6 |
| Ideas for Implementing Actions | 8 |
| List of Local Suppliers Template..... | 9 |
| Glossary | 10 |
| Referenced Resources..... | 11 |

Green Ribbon Exhibits Recognition Program

The Green Ribbon Exhibits Recognition Program was developed to encourage conference exhibitors to incorporate sustainability practices into their exhibits. Exhibitors that implement a minimum of practices are recognized by displaying a Green Ribbon identifying the exhibit as a green exhibit. Exhibitors can also be recognized in the conference program and/or website. This manual provides the conference/event planning organization and exhibit managers with a template for implementing a recognition program at their events.

How does the program work?

The program consists of a point system around eight green initiative areas related to common aspects of exhibits and displays. Each green initiative area lists at least one implementation action that has been assigned value points for a total of 120 available points. To earn the green recognition, the exhibitor must select and commit to implement actions totaling a minimum of 75 points. In addition, the exhibitor may submit a brief description (300 words or less) explaining specific efforts taken to implement the action items, as applicable, and any additional efforts to be green at the conference or event.

How is the program implemented?

The program, as presented here, was designed to be implemented by the exhibits manager on behalf of the organization responsible for the event. The program is intended to work on the honor system. The exhibits manager will send exhibitors a brief letter explaining the recognition program and inviting them to participate, along with the implementation actions commitment form and further instructions. Interested exhibitors will complete and submit the implementation actions commitment form to the exhibits manager, who will forward it to the event organizers to ensure they obtain the needed numbers of green ribbons. The point system is clearly provided in the form so the exhibitor will immediately know if they achieved the minimum points needed for recognition. While the program makes reference to a “ribbon,” other items, such as plaques, can be used.

What is included here?

- Exhibitor invitation letter template
- Implementation actions commitment form (point system) template
- Implementation ideas for earning points
- Template for informing about local resources
- Participation submission instructions template



Green Ribbon Exhibits Recognition Program

EXHIBITOR INVITATION TEMPLATE

Dear Exhibitor,

You are invited to participate in the Green Ribbon Recognition Program for exhibitors and exhibit hall displays at the upcoming [CONFERENCE OR EVENT NAME]. This program is an effort to promote exhibits that incorporate sustainability principles, and recognize exhibitors that implement them by displaying a Green Ribbon at the exhibit identifying it as an exhibit reflecting the values embodied in the conference. Participating exhibitors will also be recognized in the conference program and website.

How the program works:

The program consists of eight green initiative areas related to common aspects of exhibits. Each green initiative area includes at least one implementation action that has been assigned value points for a total of 120 available points. To earn a green ribbon, the exhibitor must select and commit to implement actions totaling a minimum of 75 points. The program works on the honor system. The exhibitor will complete and submit the implementation actions commitment form to [NAME], Exhibits Manager at [FAX NUMBER] or [E-MAIL].

In addition, the exhibitor may submit a brief description (300 words or less) explaining specific efforts taken to implement the action items, as applicable, and any other efforts to be green at this event. If there are implementation actions that would be applicable to your exhibit but that you cannot implement, please give us the details. We are also interested in suggestions for implementation actions that should be added to our list for future events. Last, we want to hear about any other barriers to participation in the program so that they can be addressed for future events. The completed commitment form and narrative must be submitted by [MONTH, DATE, YEAR] to the Exhibits Manager.

The Commitment Form can be found in the next page. Ideas on how to meet some of the implementation actions, a list of known local service suppliers and submission instructions are provided following the Commitment Form.

Thank you for considering being a Green Ribbon Exhibitor!

Note for event planners: If providing recognition in the conference program, take into account deadlines for printing. Ideally, inclusion of recognition in the conference program should not result in the need of additional pages. A special symbol next to the exhibitor's name may be sufficient.

Green Ribbon Exhibits Recognition Program

EXHIBITOR COMMITMENT FORM

Exhibitor's Name: _____

Contact Name: _____ Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

| Green Initiative Areas & Points | Implementation Actions (check those to be incorporated in your exhibit) | |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| Promotional Items | | |
| 10 | <input type="checkbox"/> | No promotional items distributed. |
| 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Items made from sustainable materials (recycled content, sustainably produced, bio-based, compostable). |
| 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Sourced locally (manufactured within 100 km of the event location). |
| 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Extra promotional items are returned to exhibitor home base, or donated to a local organization that can make use of them. |
| Staff Apparel | | |
| 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Made of sustainably grown or organic fibers or recycled materials. |
| 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Sourced locally (manufactured within 100 km of the event location). |
| Printed Materials | | |
| 7 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Distributed materials are recyclable and include the recycling logo. |
| 7 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Paper and card stock is made of recycled content with preference for post-consumer content and chlorine-free paper. Consider using Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified paper. |
| 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Use soy or EcoSmart certified inks. Consider additional green printing certifications such as Green Globe. |
| 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Sourced locally (printed within 100 km of the event location). |
| Display Graphics / Signage | | |
| 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Utilizes reusable graphics/signage. |
| 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Paper and card stock is made of recycled content with preference for post-consumer content and chlorine-free paper. Consider using Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified paper. |
| 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Use soy or EcoSmart certified inks. Consider additional green printing certifications such as Green Globe. |
| 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Utilizes biodegradable foam board. |
| 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Repurpose or recycle graphics/signage after use. |
| 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Sourced locally (produced within 100 km of the event location). |
| Display Structure | | |
| 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Reusable structure. |

Green Ribbon Exhibits Recognition Program

EXHIBITOR COMMITMENT FORM

| | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Rented or purchased locally (from a source located within 100 km of the event location). |
| 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Made from sustainable materials (recycled content, sustainably produced, bio-based, compostable) |
| Exhibit Lighting | | |
| 10 | <input type="checkbox"/> | No lighting or Non-AC lighting (no electric connection required). |
| 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> | LED and/or fluorescent lighting. |
| Transportation | | |
| 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Exhibit staff uses a form of transportation other than driving alone to and from the [EVENT LOCATION], e.g. walking, biking, car pool, public transit. |
| 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Air travel carbon off-sets for travel to and from the city of event. |
| Shipping | | |
| 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Ship from and/or to another event to reduce transport to/from home office |
| 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Use shipping containers that are reusable and/or recyclable, such as roto-molded (recycled) plastic containers, cardboard boxes, and green packing supplies (no polystyrene or Styrofoam®). |
| 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Save boxes after set-up for reuse for packing upon leaving the event. Recycle boxes you don't need. |
| 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Plan single shipment well in advance and avoid multiple shipments via express shipping. |
| 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Transport display supplies on a single vehicle or trip. |
| Total Points: | | |

Description of implementation efforts:

Submit your form and narrative to the Exhibits Manager by: _____

Exhibits Manager : _____

E-mail: _____ Phone: _____

Green Ribbon Exhibits Recognition Program

IDEAS FOR IMPLEMENTING ACTIONS

Display Graphics/Signage:

- Use display graphics / signage that does not need frequent content updates or use easily updatable electronic signage or those requiring only printable inserts.

Promotional Items:

- Limit the number of items distributed.
- Select items that have a use or purpose.

Staff Attire:

- When using uniform attire for exhibit staff, avoid clothing designs (printed or otherwise) that are only relevant for a specific conference or event.
- Select items made from recycled, non-toxic, sustainable materials.

Ideas to reduce the amount or replace printed media:

- Use single sheet, double-sided pages for printed material.
- Make generic business cards featuring company website address, QR codes linking to information or appropriate instructions to access information.
- Use electronic data capture for contact information instead of exchanging business cards.
- Include a QR code on display signage linking to website or information.
- Use a computer or electronic display to share information.
- Collect email addresses and follow up with electronic files or links.
- Have information available for immediate transfer to a flashdrive or e-mail.

Shipping:

- Ship minimum necessary quantities.
- Utilize smallest packaging possible.
- Use no, minimal, or recycled packaging.

Green Ribbon Exhibits Recognition Program

LIST OF LOCAL SUPPLIERS TEMPLATE

LIST OF LOCAL SUPPLIERS

Exhibitors are encouraged to purchase printed materials, giveaways and other exhibit components from a source within 100 km of the [EVENT LOCATION OR CITY OF EVENT]. Below is a list of known local suppliers that practice or promote sustainability initiatives. Please let us know of similar suppliers that could be added to the list.

[SUPPLIER NAME (SERVICES OFFERED), PHONE NUMBER, WEBSITE, CONTACT PERSON]

[SUPPLIER NAME (SERVICES OFFERED), PHONE NUMBER, WEBSITE, CONTACT PERSON]

[SUPPLIER NAME (SERVICES OFFERED), PHONE NUMBER, WEBSITE, CONTACT PERSON]

[SUPPLIER NAME (SERVICES OFFERED), PHONE NUMBER, WEBSITE, CONTACT PERSON]

[SUPPLIER NAME (SERVICES OFFERED), PHONE NUMBER, WEBSITE, CONTACT PERSON]

Green Ribbon Exhibits Recognition Program

GLOSSARY

List of selected terminology as defined by ASTM International in the standards for environmentally sustainable meetings, events, trade shows and conferences. (Designation: E2741-11, E2742-11, E2743-11, E2745-11, E2746-11, E2747-11, E2773-11, E2774-11)

Biobased, adj—a product determined by USDA to be a commercial or industrial product (other than food or feed) that is composed, in whole or in significant part, of biological products or renewable domestic agricultural materials (including plant, animal, and marine materials) or forestry materials.

Biodegradable, adj—capable of decomposing under natural conditions into elements found in nature.

Compostable, adj—capable of undergoing biological decomposition in a compost site as part of an available program where facilities exist, such that the material breaks down into carbon dioxide, water, inorganic compounds, and biomass, at a rate appropriate for such program.

Environmentally Preferable Products, n—products or services that have a lesser or reduced effect on human health and the environment when compared with competing products or services that serve the same purpose.

Discussion—This comparison applies to raw materials, manufacturing, packaging, distribution, use, reuse, operation, maintenance, and disposal. These products may possess biodegradable, organic, reusable, recycled, or recyclable attributes.

Exhibitor, n—an exhibitor is someone who organizes an exhibit for others to see.

Local, adj—relating to or applicable to a city or town or district rather than a larger area.

Discussion—The exact distance for purposes of sourcing goods (including food and beverage), services, and personnel will be determined by the planner or supplier, or both, and be based upon the event location adjusting for location size and season. No standard definition exists to define local, inherent in this practice is the philosophy to use sources geographically proximate to the event and be practical given wide dispersion of services and products across geographic areas.

Post-Consumer, adj—refers to materials that are reclaimed from products that have already served their intended end-use as consumer items.

Recycle, v—recovering or reprocessing materials for use in the form of raw materials in the manufacture of new products other than fuel for producing heat or power by combustion.

Discussion—The use of the word recycle used in this specification applies to planners and their suppliers which provide event products and services. Recycling, as defined, does not extend to the activities of the suppliers' vendors or suppliers.

Recycled Content Products, n—products that contain pre-consumer or post-consumer materials as all or part of their feedstock.

Discussion—Recycled-content products may contain some pre-consumer waste, some post-consumer waste or both. A product does not have to contain 100 % recovered materials to be considered "recycled," but clearly the higher the percentage of recycled content, the greater the amount of waste that is diverted from disposal.

Supplier, n—purveyor, provider, vendor, or contractor offering facilities, products, or services, or any combination thereof (for example, a convention and visitor bureau [CVB]).

Discussion—For the destination sector, suppliers will be understood to be destination professionals. Destination professionals may include destination marketing organizations (DMOs), CVBs, third-party site-selection companies, destination management companies (DMCs), chambers of commerce, and economic development departments or regional authorities.

Green Ribbon Exhibits Recognition Program

REFERENCED RESOURCES

ASTM International

ASTM International, formerly known as the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM), is a globally recognized leader in the development and delivery of international voluntary consensus standards. Today, some 12,000 ASTM standards are used around the world to improve product quality, enhance safety, facilitate market access and trade, and build consumer confidence. Learn more at: <http://www.astm.org/>

Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)

FSC is a global, not-for-profit organization dedicated to the promotion of responsible forest management worldwide. FSC enables businesses and consumers to make informed choices about the forest products they buy, and create positive change by engaging the power of market dynamics. FSC facilitates the development of standards, ensures monitoring of certified operations and protects the FSC trademark so consumers can choose products that come from well managed forests. Learn more at: <http://www.fsc.org/index.htm>

Green Globe

Green Globe is the global travel and tourism industries' certification program for sustainable tourism. The Green Globe Standard is a structured assessment of the sustainability performance of travel and tourism businesses and their supply chain partners. Businesses can monitor improvements and document achievements leading to certification of their enterprises' sustainable operation and management. Green Globe Members save energy and water resources, reduce operational costs, positively contribute to local communities and their environment and meet the high expectations of green leisure and business travelers. Learn more at: <http://greenglobe.com/>

Please send your comments, ideas and photos to bwhetstone@morpc.org, angel.arroyo-rodriguez@epa.ohio.gov or kristi.higginbotham@swaco.org.