



GMIC PRESS RELEASE

GMIC talks trash, issues challenge for real action

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News Facts

On Earth Day, the Green Meeting Industry Council (GMIC) launches the measurement tool and associated website where participants of the [trash challenge](#) can load data and where the progress of the challenge will be tracked throughout calendar year 2009. "The Trash Challenge is more than a competition, it is a tool for us to use in educating event venues and suppliers on the importance of measuring our event waste and diversion ratios. We hope to enter all of our upcoming global events in the challenge!" Kerrie Sheldon, President, GCG Events.

Why is this issue so important? The average meeting or event produces 20 pounds/9.1 kilograms of waste per person per day. This compares to the on average production of 5 pounds/2.27 Kg of waste produced by individuals daily when at home. With an estimated 700 million event attendees annually in the US and Canada alone, that is an estimated 10.5 ton(nes) of waste annually.

In February of this year, leaders of the GMIC issued a challenge to the event and hospitality industry to take action by diverting, recycling and composting one million tons of waste in calendar year 2009. This action will reduce the amount of waste by approximately 10%.

Organizations with the best recycling and waste diversion rates will be recognized and the results of the challenge will serve as a best practices guide for the entire industry. "We see the trash challenge as a way to build awareness, educate and engage the industry in reducing our environmental footprint. The industry loves friendly competition. This is a great way to challenge your colleagues and competitors to participate in something we all benefit from," says Nancy J. Wilson, CMP, co-founder of GMIC.

Hotel leaders are also seeing the benefits of taking action and measuring the results. According to Steve Faulstick, general manager of the Portland Doubletree Hotel, "It became quite clear that our industry was very wasteful, and we had great opportunities to impact that. We were able to improve our recycling rate from 8% of our total waste to over 30% in two short years. We are committed to joining in on the trash action challenge to increase this percentage in 2009."

When asked if this commitment was an important business objective, Faulstick commented, "Yes. Not only were we able to prevent all that waste from going to our local landfills, we also enjoyed increased staff engagement and made significant improvement on our bottom line. We challenge the industry to clearly identify their current waste....and commit to reducing it by at least 10 percent by year end."

The trash action challenge is possible through a collaboration of industry thought leaders from the GMIC, The Carbon Consultancy, Oracle, Attendee Management Solutions, Meeting Strategies Worldwide, EnviRelation, American Express Business Travel, Sustainable Solutions by Design, The Conference Publishers and MCI Group. For more information on joining or sponsoring the challenge, please send an email to challenge@greenmeetings.info, or visit www.trashchallenge.com

About the Green Meeting Industry Council

The GMIC (www.greenmeetings.info) is the premier global community solely dedicated to sustainability for the meetings and event industry, not only through education, but also by spearheading research, policy and standards. The GMIC's mission is to transform the global meetings industry through sustainability. The GMIC is a full member of the Convention Industry Council (www.conventionindustry.org).

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