

Recycling at events

A guide for event sponsors

*Guidelines for planning and evaluating your involvement in events
where the management of waste is important*



Environmental Business Action Group
May 2008

The Environmental Business Action Group (EBAG)

The Environmental Business Action Group (EBAG) was formed in October 2004 to specifically address the obligations of the beverage packaging industry under the Packaging Accord 2004.

EBAG consists of the major beverage container producers, manufacturers and distributors in New Zealand including:

- Alto Plastics,
- Coca-Cola Amatil,
- Fonterra Co-operative,
- Foodstuffs,
- Frucor Beverages,
- NZ Juice & Beverage Association,
- Visy Beverage

together with representatives from Ministry for the Environment, Local Government New Zealand, the Packaging Council of NZ, Plastics NZ, Waste Management Institute of New Zealand and Recycling Operators of New Zealand..

EBAG has two main objectives:

- improve recovery rates of recyclable materials
- provide guidance on waste minimisation;

in three core areas:

- Event recycling
- Public place recycling
- Business2Business waste minimisation

The group includes New Zealand's largest brand owners and retailers and as such is in a position of significant influence over brand sponsored events, and extensive supply chains to meet its objectives.



PACKAGING COUNCIL
OF NEW ZEALAND (INC)
(PAC.NZ)



Event Recycling – what is in it for you as a sponsor?

Well-managed recycling services will enhance the profile of any event and the public perception of your corporate citizenship.

As an event sponsor you want people to remember the event and your organisation's support of it.

You also want them to understand and associate your organisation with the positive *values* that the event embodies. Most New Zealanders are accustomed to recycling at home. We believe that more and more they will expect and appreciate the opportunity to recycle at public events.

What do we mean by an event?

Special events are those occasions when people participate in organised activity. They range in size from small gatherings to multi-day events that attract hundreds or thousands of people who may travel long distances just to attend.

All events share the common trait of producing waste. Because events are typically held in a controlled environment, there is an opportunity to reduce the amount of waste generated as well as recover significant proportions of this waste material through reuse and recycling.

As an event sponsor you may or may not be directly involved in managing the event. However it is our hope that sponsoring organisations will take the lead in ensuring that the principles of reduce, reuse, recycle are applied in the areas where the community comes together to celebrate and enjoy good times.

These guidelines provide step by step guidance and resources to assist you evaluating the waste management plans provided for the events your organisation is associated with.

KEY STEPS TO BEING A “RESPONSORABLE” ORGANISATION

1. Prepare and promulgate an events sponsorship policy which includes recycling. This can be as simple or as complex as you like.
2. Ensure all those who influence sponsorship decisions in your organisation are aware that recycling should be part of the waste management arrangements for any event.
3. Discuss your organisation’s policy of recycling at events with the event organisers. Request that they include an Event Waste Management plan as part of their proposal to you.
4. Ensure and insist that any Event Waste Management plan specifies that recyclable materials will in fact be recycled and how this will be achieved.
5. Advise event organisers that you require a report after the event on the quantity and types of materials that were recycled.
6. Publicise your support for recycling at events that you sponsor. Be Proud!

EXAMPLES OF EVENT WASTE MINIMISATION POLICIES:

You can make your policy position as brief or as specific as you wish.

The key is to be perfectly clear and always consistent

Brief and to the point:

We are committed to improving our environmental performance at all events we sponsor.

Specifically focused on waste minimisation:

We recognise that our sponsorship activities have an impact on the environment and we are committed to minimising that impact through best practice waste management

An over-arching policy with specific activities:

We are committed to improving our environmental performance at the events we sponsor. We will achieve this through:

- provision for the recycling of beverage containers
- working with stallholders, vendors etc to encourage the use of less packaging and, where possible, recyclable packaging
- communicating the recycling message to all those involved in the event.

ALLOCATING RESPONSIBILITY

Be sure to identify early on in your planning the appropriate person within the organising team with whom you can liaise about your waste minimisation policies.

This person must be able to fully understand the ramifications of your policy in relation to the event, to oversee the implementation of your waste minimisation policy, formulate an event-specific plan, work with stakeholders, and help keep things organised and on track.

Ensure that this person is in direct contact with your communications coordinator or manager. This interaction can be key to ensuring that your waste minimisation messages are communicated effectively.

At bigger events a waste minimisation spokesperson or “champion” is also recommended. This person may be a high-profile event performer or participant, or may be a sports star, entertainer or other individual with a high media profile. The waste minimisation champion may act as the face and voice of your waste minimisation messages both before and during your event.

AGREEMENTS WITH EXHIBITORS, STALLHOLDERS AND VENDORS

While most exhibitors, stall holders and vendors are quite happy to support any waste minimisation programme, it is a good idea to get them to formally agree to comply with any requirements and procedures. This not only reinforces it in their minds, but also gives you some leverage to exclude those that don't/won't comply.

As an event sponsor you need to ensure the organisers are prepared to articulate your waste minimisation policy and work with vendors and stall holders to see it is complied with.

AGREEMENTS WITH COUNCILS & VENUE PROVIDERS

Councils are usually keen to have events happening in their city. Events are good for the locals as they make life more interesting and they can bring in tourists as well. In return, most councils will be quite happy to support events in their district in some way or another.

Councils play a significant role in waste management and most of them are trying to reduce their waste these days. For example Local Government New Zealand is a signatory to the Packaging Accord 2004.

Venue providers see the event organiser as the customer, and should be happy to accommodate requests for recycling facilities.

As an event sponsor you need to ensure the organisers are prepared to work with councils and venue providers to articulate your waste minimisation policy and ensure it is enacted

INFORMATION GATHERING

Post-event evaluations are critical in determining the benefits gained and the lessons learned for your next event. It is important that event organisers know that post event reports are critical to your support.

They need to be clear that their waste management plan identifies how information will be collected and that it includes :

- Quantities of waste diverted (you will need to know both the amount of materials that are reused and recycled as well as the amount of residual waste that is disposed at the landfill)

- Other key performance indicators:
 - Contamination in recycling bins (amount of non-recyclables)
 - Recyclables in the wrong recycling bin
 - Recyclables in waste bins
 - Litter

COMMUNICATE YOUR POLICY

Communicating your Waste Minimisation Policy to everyone involved in the event is critical to ensure support for the policy and ensure it is “owned” by all involved in the event.

Develop a Communication Plan including key messages to all stakeholders, communication channels and media contacts. Include press releases, advertising, public announcements, and visual communication. Ensure the messages are designed to appeal to the type of patrons expected at the event.

OTHER IDEAS THAT HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFULLY USED:

Reward event participants for “doing the right thing”. Appropriate text might advertise the event or the sponsor but would include acknowledgment of the correct behaviour. This works particularly well where children are participants.

- Encourage event participants to take their rubbish and recyclables home with them for correct disposal. Pack it in – Pack it out is now a well-known principle in regional parks.
- Request that vendors of items in recyclable containers point out the location of nearby recycle containers and ask the customer to place the empty container in the correct bin. Research shows that people who have given a verbal undertaking to recycle are very likely to do so.

Acknowledgments

The most recent version of the guide is available at www.packaging.org.nz/accord.php.

Much of the material in this guide has been taken from the Christchurch City Council guide “Organising a Minimum Waste Event: A step-by-step guide for Event Organisers and Managers”. Permission to use the material was obtained from CCC.

Special Events Recycling Toolkit, Guidelines for Event Planners. City of Eugene Solid Waste and Recycling Program. www.eugenerecycles.org.

Guide to Recycling at Public Events in the Australian Capital Territory. A Simple step-by-step guide for public event organisers. Waste-wise events www.nowaste.act.gov.au.

Other documents reviewed include:

- Waste minimisation for special events - a guide to organising minimum waste events - written and compiled by Julie Dennis and Tegan McIntyre in association with the Hamilton City Council and the Recycling Operators Forum (2005)
- Waste wise events toolkit - EcoRecycle Victoria (2004)
- Event Guidelines - Southern Waste Strategy, Tasmania – www.southernwaste.com.au



The Packaging Accord 2004-2009 The Packaging Council of New Zealand and the Ministry for the Environment brought together brand owners, retailers, importers, manufacturers, recyclers and local government to negotiate a New Zealand Packaging Accord.

The Accord was signed on 10 August 2004 at a function at Parliament Buildings, by the Minister for the Environment, the Packaging Council of New Zealand (PAC.NZ), Recycling Operators of New Zealand (RONZ) and Local Government New Zealand (LGNZ).

Key packaging sectors involved are steel, paper, plastics, aluminium and glass, as well as brand owners and retailers. Over 200 organisations are currently signed up to the accord representing the majority of New Zealand’s packaging production and supermarket business.