

# Green Meetings Update

By Amanda Gourgue, CMP



A year has gone by since I spoke for your chapter regarding corporate social responsibility. What have you done to change your meetings to be more sustainable? Have you started measuring and keeping track of your efforts? Have you been communicating those changes to your vendors, suppliers, staff and attendees?

In the past year, there has been a huge push towards measuring, ROI and accountability. Companies have been taking a look at strategic sustainability. How does it fit into the overall goals of the company? According to 2009 Marketing Media, 51% of independent planners, 46.8% of corporate planners and 44.4% of association planners currently or expect to plan “green” meetings. 64% of MPI FutureWatch 2010 respondents say that their organizations address corporate social responsibility. Is yours one of them?

Certifications have become increasingly popular in the past year. Most companies are afraid of “greenwashing.” Greenwashing is when a company publicly promotes that they are sustainable but they

aren’t really. I encourage you to take a look at the “Six Sins of Greenwashing” by TerraChoice. You can find the link on my web site ([www.startameetingrevolution.com/resources.html](http://www.startameetingrevolution.com/resources.html)). Here is a short list of some certifications for the hospitality industry:

- **The Blue Angel** The Blue Angel is the first and most well-known eco-label worldwide. Since 1978, it has set the standard for eco-friendly products and services selected by an independent jury in line with defined criteria. The Blue Angel is awarded to companies as a reward for their commitment to environmental protection. They use it to professionally promote their eco-friendly products in the market. ([www.blauer-engel.de/en/index.php](http://www.blauer-engel.de/en/index.php))
- **Green Seal** Founded in 1989, Green Seal provides science-based environmental certification standards that are credible, transparent, and essential in an increasingly educated and competitive marketplace. Our industry knowledge and standards help manufacturers, purchasers, and end users alike make responsible choices that positively impact business behavior and improve quality of life. Green Seal issued its first environmental standards in 1991, and the first product certifications were completed in 1992. ([www.greenseal.org](http://www.greenseal.org))
- **Green Globe Certification** Green Globe Certification is the leading worldwide certification based on internationally accepted documentation formed by Green Globe International Inc. and Green Certifications Inc. Environmental and cultural criteria, as well as Corporate Social Responsibilities, are aligned with the agreed international best practice. Green Globe Certification is in complete compliance with ISO 17021 standards. ([www.greenglobecertification.com](http://www.greenglobecertification.com))
- **The Green Key** The Green Key is an international eco-label for leisure organizations. It was originated for hotels in Denmark in 1994; and in 1998, France joined and started labeling camping sites. Today, international baseline criteria are available for hotels, youth hostels, conference and holiday centers and campsites. ([www.green-key.org](http://www.green-key.org))
- **LEED** LEED is an internationally recognized green building certification system, providing third-party verification that a building or community was designed and built using strategies aimed at improving performance across all the metrics that matter most: energy savings, water efficiency, CO2 emissions reduction, improved indoor environmental quality, and stewardship of resources and sensitivity to their impacts. Developed by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), LEED provides building owners and operators a concise framework for identifying and implementing practical and measurable green building design, construction, operations and maintenance solutions. ([www.usgbc.org](http://www.usgbc.org))

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While these certifications are for the facilities and products that are used during a meeting, there is good news to report. In the past year, there has been a lot of work on APEX Green Meeting Standards, BS 8901 and ISO 20121.

The APEX Green Meeting Standards (<http://www.apexsolution.org/green.htm>) are currently in the process of being finalized. APEX is aggressively pursuing the development of best practices for green meetings. Two key partners in this effort are ASTM International and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The goal is to have the standards rolled out by the end of 2010. Currently, six out of the nine standards drafts have been voted on by the ASTM International E60 Committee (<http://www.astm.org/COMMITTEE/E60.htm>). These standards will be in a check list format with requirements that need to be met in order to certify the meeting sustainable.

BS (British Standard) 8901 specifies the requirements of a management system to improve the sustainability of events. It has been written to be applicable to all types and sizes of organizations involved in the design and delivery of events, as well as to accommodate diverse geographical, cultural and social conditions. In order for such a management system to be successful it has to be flexible and integrated within the event management process and not just regarded as an “add-on” component. In 2009, several companies and associations have received BS 8901 certification. Last year, MPI was certified for WEC in Salt Lake City.

The newest member of the meeting standards is ISO/PC 250 (to eventually become ISO 201210). This is the next step up from BS 8901. Currently, there are about 30 countries already involved as participants or observers and the U.S. is included in that list. However, we were one of the last countries to join this project committee. The standard will take a management systems approach requiring identification of key sustainability issues like venue selection, operating procedures, supply chain management, procurement, communications, transport, and others. This is very exciting for our industry!

There are so many exciting greening efforts happening in our industry and a wonderful time to be in sustainable hospitality, because it is such a new concept. You can be creative with your ideas and think out of the box to add green initiatives to your meetings. Don't just plan meetings – plan sustainable meetings!

*MPI Platinum speaker, Amanda Gourgue, CMP, is a revolutionist! She started her own company called Meeting Revolution, a meeting and event company specializing in environmental friendly meetings. Learn more at [www.startameetingrevolution.com](http://www.startameetingrevolution.com).*

MMPI is pleased to offer study groups for the Certified Meeting Professional (CMP) exam. MMPI's CMP Study Course utilizes MPI's Online CMP Study Guide. The Online CMP Study Guide was developed by MPI, in partnership with Arizona State University. MPI's Online CMP Study Guide and MMPI's CMP Study Course provide a focused, flexible approach to preparing for the CMP exam.

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- Personalized mentor assistance

Study group sessions will be determined by interest. Long-distance learning arrangements will be made for those not able to participate in a study group location.

MMPI's new CMP Study Course can help you:

- Stay on track
- Interact with others preparing for the exam
- Learn from other CMPs

Study sessions for the January 2011 Exam begin September 9, with a course orientation on August 19. The registration fee is \$125 and is open to all meeting professionals (member or non-member). The registration fee includes 11 study sessions and supplemental course materials. The Online CMP Study Guide, recommended study texts, CMP application fee and CMP examination fee are purchased separately. Learn more at [www.mmpi.org](http://www.mmpi.org).