

Five ways

to make your event kinder



“The key to customer engagement is transparency and a commitment to positive action...”

Anna Sheppard is CEO of Bambuddha Group, a social enterprise that brings the humanity back to business through leadership education, coaching and corporate kindness programs. Anna has a long history in the events industry and here, she shares her top tips on creating kinder events.

As the events sector navigates the ‘new normal’ in 2022, we are working with a consumer that has evolved dramatically since the start of the pandemic. A global survey conducted by Accenture in 2020 found 60 percent of consumers are making more environmentally friendly and ethical purchases. The Circular Event Experience, a UK-based platform for sustainable event solutions, talks about the shift from the old linear model of Take-Make-Dispose to Reduce-Reuse-Recycle. So, what is the next chapter for sustainable and ethical events and how can you get it right?

1 Kindness to customers
Get better at communicating the things that make you unique. Why do you exist and what do your services do to positively contribute to the world? Consumers are concerned about environmental and ethical issues – climate change, inequality and immigration – and they expect brands to be the same. Make sure you authentically align your values and vision for a kinder events industry.

2 Kindness to community
Use suppliers that actively support the community. Go a step further and support suppliers who work with underrepresented groups. They will help you build mutually beneficial relationships and support social enterprise, food recycling and reconciliation. There are comprehensive lists of these organisations accessible through directories such as Social Traders.

Bambuddha Group’s new progressive event and studio space at Working Kind Collective in Sydney’s Inner West offers a responsible event venue, training spaces and full end-to-end serviced production studios all within the world’s first kind business centre. Event revenue goes into programs that work to reduce inequality and under-representation in leadership and business.

3 Kindness to environment
Eco events agency Events On Purpose run by industry veteran Dan Udall states that the average conference attendee produces over 170 kilograms of CO2 emissions per day! This is where Reduce-Reuse-Recycle comes into play and there are sustainable event checklists available online to guide you. How about opting for a locally sourced vegan event menu? The Plant Based Food Association reported a 90 percent spike in the sale of plant-based products during the 2020 lockdown.

4 Kindness to workers
Not all workplaces are created equal. Hospitality workers continue to be at high-risk of COVID-19 and are vulnerable to ‘Modern Slavery’. COVID-19 drove millions of people out of the workforce in 2020. What steps can you take to ensure your workforce is fair and compliant? Research your supply chain, ask for evidence of workers’ rights and pay, and don’t be afraid to ask the team directly. Ensure employees are treated with respect and in-line with your organisational values. Inclusion in leadership is a key part of creating a sense of belonging and a great start to supporting women and underrepresented groups.

5 Bringing it together
Create a kinder event policy centred on optimism and purpose. Look at the products you are using, find environmentally friendly alternatives and reuse or donate. Ensure your team and supply chain are reflective of the impact you want to make in this world and hold everyone accountable to these values. The key to customer engagement is transparency and a commitment to positive action – be honest with your customers and build genuine connections. Educate your delegates on your commitment to kinder events for the environment and community. ■

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