

# JUMP TO IT!

## Is Sustainability at the top of your list?

**Well it probably depends on the year you were born, for clarification, the generation to which you belong.**

We all know about the various generations: the Traditionalists, the Baby Boomers, Generation X, GenY... and where they fit in to the decades. In order to understand where we are going however, we need to recap where they, within a murky generalisation, fit into the sustainability scheme of things.

The Traditionalists, in the main now retired, definitely did not have sustainability high on their list of priorities as they struggled with the aftermath of the Second World War and the meteoric rise of technology in their latter years. The Baby Boomers, having drifted through the late 60s, the Beatles and carefree living, whilst highly aware of the need to preserve the planet, did not perhaps engage with it as much as they should as far as their workplace was concerned. Generation X, currently in the height of their careers, are often characterised as “managing” with the ability to control, to advance, to create, often at the cost of sustainability, which is not necessarily the highest point on their agenda.

### **LOOKING GOOD**

Which leaves us with Generation Y, the youth of today, starting out on their chosen career paths and who are, as a generalisation, nothing less than demanding, wanting, and expecting, instant gratification and constant feedback. By 2025, around three quarters of the world’s working population will be Generation Y:



Sue Daugulis, Venue West, visiting a Grade 3 class at Mt. Currie 1st Nations Reserve

what are those characteristics that will shape the future, and will it include sustainability at their core? Moving away from the Gen X philosophy of all work, Gen Y seeks to create a more sustainable work-life balance, added to which they are social and environmentally conscious.

It is therefore looking good for the planet with Generation Y. They care more about Corporate Social Responsibility and green issues, and in principal expect to have some interaction with the local community - giving back.

At home, pretty well all of the generation categories automatically recycle their household materials. It is not something to have to think about, the average person just “does it”; the paper in the paper-bin,

the cans in the cans-bin, the plastics in the plastics-bin, the bottles in the bottle-bank, and so on. It is essential that that second nature extends into the workplace.

And from the very outset. When putting out an RfP, potentially from an International Association to a PCO, one of the many questions to be asked should refer to their in-house CSR policy, and to their active sustainability programme. Does the company have a CSR project, such as, for example, JUMP (Junior Undiscovered Mathematical Prodigies), where since 2000, PCO Venue West has been spearheading an initiative to spread the work of this non-for-profit charity to many inner-city schools in Vancouver, helping turn children from failure to success.

# GENERATION



The foundations for JUMP were laid in 1998, when Dr John Mighton, who has a PhD in mathematics and philosophy, volunteered to tutor failing children in inner-city Toronto in mathematics. With his support, the children's marks improved dramatically,

initiatives, how green is their venue? Generation Y want different things from their venues today: they want chill-out zones, natural daylight, outdoor areas, green policies... all contributing to the second-nature of their sustainable culture.

To find out "more", regardless of the sector within the meetings industry from which one emanates, before engaging/contracting with any PCO, company, venue, client, insist on receiving a tangible demonstration as to how they are more sustainable than others. This will keep everyone on their toes and help shift the green movement along. By creating competition everyone will think of ways to improve their working practices.

Whilst it might be that it is the Generation Y within today's companies and meetings industry that is propelling the drive towards CSR and Sustainability, it should be second nature to all of the generations.

## WHEN PUTTING OUT AN RFP, POTENTIALLY FROM AN INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION TO A PCO, ONE OF THE MANY QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED SHOULD REFER TO THEIR IN-HOUSE CSR POLICY, AND TO THEIR ACTIVE SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAMME

from failing to 95% or above, on average. Perhaps the most significant benefit of Dr Mighton's intervention was that the children, having mastered the challenging subject of mathematics, approached the rest of their education with enthusiasm and confidence as well. In 2011, Dr Mighton was awarded the Order of Canada for his JUMP program. Recently the charity has attracted the interest and support of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Bill Gates himself was of the Baby Boomer generation. This is just one of many hundreds of CSR projects continually supported by companies in the meetings industry. What's yours?

Tenders sent out to venues should ask similar questions. What are their sustainable

### NOT JUST A CHECKLIST

Sustainability within the meeting industry is not just a checklist of "Do's and Don'ts", it is, and has to be, something permanent and essential. If there is nothing in place, it should either be put in place or the business will be taken elsewhere.

Much is common sense: turn off unwanted lights and electrical appliances when not required, apply technology for marketing rather than printed materials, utilise venues with excellent public transportation networks, increase use of conference apps for communication... This we know and implement. But is there more? Of course there is. And generally it will also assist the budget by making savings!



*This article was provided by the International Association of Professional Congress Organisers, author Sarah Storie-Pugh, Executive Director of IAPCO. IAPCO represents today 116 professional organisers, meeting planners and managers of international and national congresses, conventions and special events from 40 countries.*  
**info@iapco.org / www.iapco.org**