American Chemical Society
National Meetings & Expositions

Best Actions to Engage Participants Around Sustainability—2016 UFI Sustainable Development Award

April 11, 2016
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Background</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACS Greener Meetings and Expositions Program</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UFI Sustainment Challenge Areas</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Solutions Overview</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACS Sustainability Solutions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Social Media</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ American Forest Tree Planting Offsets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Mobile Application</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Greener Meeting Pledge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Sci-Mix Zero Waste Awareness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Hotel Green Grid</td>
<td>7 – 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion – ACS Impacts</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Next Steps</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Background

The American Chemical Society (ACS) is the world’s largest scientific society and one of the world’s leading sources of authoritative scientific information.

Our Mission and Vision
We are dynamic and visionary, committed to “improving people’s lives through the transforming power of chemistry.” This vision—developed and adopted by the ACS Board of Directors after broad consultation with the membership—fully complements the ACS Mission statement, which is “to advance the broader chemistry enterprise and its practitioners for the benefit of Earth and its people.” Together, these two statements represent our ultimate reason for being and provide a strategic framework for our sustainability efforts.

ACS National Meetings & Expositions
The ACS National Meetings & Expositions are two of the most respected scientific meetings in the world, attracting nearly **27,000 chemical professionals** in 2015. Attendees include chemical engineers, academics, graduate and undergraduate students, and other related professionals. During the meetings, scientists present new multidisciplinary research and hear the latest information in their areas of professional interest. Each meeting features more than 7,000 presentations organized into technical symposia that highlight important research advances.
The American Chemical Society strives to reduce the environmental impacts of its National Meetings & Expositions while enhancing the positive impacts on communities locally and globally. Over the last five years, ACS have invested significant resources to developing and branding our the Greener Meetings Program, which is focused on three key initiatives:

1. Calculating and Offsetting Our Carbon Footprint
2. Increasing Attendee Engagement
3. Collaborating with Event Partners to Improve Performance

In addition to these initiatives, ACS has developed five solutions through the use of social media, tree planting offsets, mobile applications, the Greener Meetings Pledge, and Sci-Mix events to address four challenge areas in engaging participants around sustainability.

ACS Greener Meetings Team
ACS dedicates nine staff members of the meetings & events team, who along with their fulltime meeting planning roles also actively participate in the Greener Meetings team that meets weekly for program planning and collaboration around the ACS Greener Meetings program. In addition, two sustainability consultants and one vendor participant are also active members of the team.
American Chemical Society (ACS) addresses the four UFI Sustainable Development initiatives surrounding actions to engage participants around sustainability:

**Spreading Knowledge**

**Challenge:** Communicating sustainability initiatives, opportunities, and impacts to all attendees in an efficient and “green” manner

**Enhancing Attendee Experience**

**Challenge:** Creating accessible opportunities for attendees to participate in the sustainability initiatives throughout the meeting

**Educate**

**Challenge:** Educating attendees on ACS sustainability practices in a fun and memorable way

**Inspire**

**Challenge:** Inspiring attendees to engage in sustainability practices in every aspect of their participation from registering for the meeting to returning home, post-show
ACS Sustainability – Solutions Overview

ACS addresses these challenge areas by implementing and utilizing the following five solutions:

**Social Media**

**Solution:** Launch a program social media campaign and hashtag (#) to engage attendees to share sustainability practices and gain feedback to enhance the Greener Meetings Program in a fun and more accessible manner

**Impact:** Increased attendee engagement, while gaining knowledge of attendee values and perception of the Greener Meetings Program

**Greener Meetings Pledge**

**Solution:** Create a platform for attendees to follow green practices while attending the meeting

**Impact:** Increased attendee engagement and brought awareness to sustainability efforts before, during, and after the meeting

**American Forests Tree Planting Offsets**

**Solution:** Create partnerships to offset the meeting’s carbon footprint, while creating opportunities for attendees to have a direct impact on mitigating their own footprint during the meeting

**Impact:** Educates and inspires attendees to engage in sustainability practices

**Sci-Mix Zero Waste Awareness**

**Solution:** Promote sustainability awareness through a key event/platform to engage with attendees

**Impact:** Sci-Mix attracts thousands of ACS members and highlights sustainability through event branding and signage

**Mobile Application**

**Solution:** Create a sustainable and effective way to communicate to attendees

**Impact:** Significantly reduced attendee program printing and created an instantaneous way to communicate and promote the Greener Meetings Program during the meeting

**Hotel Green Grid**

**Solution:** Offer attendees with sustainability information of their hotel choices

**Impact:** Builds awareness of sustainability among hotels and gives attendees the option to choose green
In 2015, ACS strived to make Greener Meetings messaging more fun and accessible by launching a program hashtag (#ACSGreenerMeetings) and engaging attendees at photo booth stations set-up throughout the conference.

**ACS Solutions**

- ACS used social media to launch a program hashtag (#), to encourage attendees to document their green practices and enthusiasm to the program by tagging photos #ACSGreenerMeetings

- ACS uses their website and Greener Meetings email (greenermeetings@acs.org) to communicate greener meetings program initiatives to attendees and gain feedback from attendees before, during, and after the meeting

**Impact**

- For the 251st ACS meeting in San Diego, more than **275 pictures** were tagged using #ACSGreenerMeetings

- Promotion of the pledge helped drive **3,094 unique visitors** to the ACS Greener Meetings Website in 2015

**Challenges**

As a result of an attendee email about room temperatures and misalignment with the ACS Greener Meetings Program, we established a departmental policy to set all room temperatures at the convention center and hotels to 70 degrees Fahrenheit.

**Challenges Addressed**

- Spread Knowledge
- Enhance Attendee Experience
- Educate
- Inspire
Through ACS’s partnership with American Forests, attendee sustainability support and engagement has increased dramatically. Attendee donated funds now account for over 50% of the trees planted by the ACS Meetings & Expositions Department for 2015.

**ACS Solutions**

- ACS offsets GHG Emissions through tree-planting partnership with American Forests to offer attendees an opportunity to donate $1 toward their registration to plant a tree to indirectly offset their GHG emissions during each show.

- ACS works with American Forests to select projects located in regions where the meetings took place.

**Project Name:** West Fork Fire Complex Restoration ReLeaf Project  
**Location:** Rio Grande National Forest, Colorado  
**Key Activities:** Planting 75,500 Engelmann spruce across 255 acres and repopulating with native spruce species  
**ACS Carbon Offset:** 4,411 trees

**Impact**

- Data provided by American Forests shows that the average tree will sequester 910 lbs. of CO2 over its lifetime. To date, over 7 million lbs. of CO2 will be sequestered through ACS’s tree planting program.

- In San Diego, 2,169 attendees donated to tree planting. Over 4,000 trees were offset by attendees were planted through American Forests in 2015 and over 9,000 trees have been planted since 2014.

**Challenges**

- Spread Knowledge
- Enhance Attendee Experience
- Educate
- Inspire
ACS uses the Meeting and Expositions mobile application to increase and promote sustainability efforts, while engaging and communicating the Greener Meetings Program.

ACS Solutions

- ACS uses the Mobile Application to enhance attendee experience by using it as a key communication channel to promote the Greener Meeting Program and serve as a channel to communicate information.
- ACS uses the mobile application to reduce the Meeting’s environmental impacts of printing and shipping materials.

201644941816800.jpg

Impact

- This resulted in over 12,700 mobile application downloads.
- Reduced our programs printed per attendee by 52% since 2011. Starting in 2016, we will be aggressively trying to reduce printing by charging $10 for the printed program before the meeting and $20 per program onsite, further reducing our environmental impacts of printing and shipping these materials.

Challenges Addressed

- Spread Knowledge
- Enhance Attendee Experience
- Educate
- Inspire
The Greener Meetings Pledge allows attendees to actively support our efforts through five easy sustainability actions, and continues to be our flagship attendee engagement initiative.

**ACS Solutions**

- ACS created the Greener Meetings Pledge for attendees to support efforts through 5 easy sustainability actions. Attendees sign up for the pledge, as part of event registration, or onsite at the Greener Meetings Booth.

- ACS uses the Greener Meeting Pledge event stories to reward pledge participants

**Impact**

- In 2015, over 3,935 attendees made the Greener Meetings Pledge either through event registration, or onsite at the ACS Greener Meetings Booth. For the 251st National Meeting and Exposition in San Diego (2016), 7,719 attendees made the pledge.

- Over 229 attendees visited the Greener Meetings booth at the 250th National Meeting in Boston and over 479 attendees visited the Greener Meetings booth at the 251th National Meeting in San Diego.

**Challenges**

At the close of the meeting, attendees submit their “sustainability event stories” and the top 7 most impactful stories, ideas, or suggestions were awarded a S’well reusable water bottle. The stories of the Boston Greener Meetings All-Stars can be read at [www.acs.org/greenermeetings](http://www.acs.org/greenermeetings) in our 2015 Sustainability Report.

**Challenges Addressed**

- Spread Knowledge
- Enhance Attendee Experience
- Educate
- Inspire
**Sci-Mix Zero Waste Awareness**

Promote sustainability awareness through, Sci-Mix, which is designated as a zero waste event to educate attendees.

**ACS Solutions**

- ACS uses the Sci-Mix poster session to educate students about sustainability through a zero waste event in which little to no waste goes to landfill and all food and disposable items are either recycled or composted.

![Image of Sci-Mix poster session]

**Impact**

- Sci-Mix attracts **2500-3000 ACS members** each year as a flagship initiative of the Greener Meetings Program.

- Sci-Mix works to target undergraduate students and inspire millennials to live sustainably.

![Image of Sci-Mix event]

**Challenges**

- **Challenges Addressed**
  - Spread Knowledge
  - Enhance Attendee Experience
  - Educate
  - Inspire
Hotel Green Grid

The Hotel Green Grid builds awareness of sustainability among hotels and gives attendees the option to choose green accommodations.

**ACS Solutions**

- ACS’s Hotel Green Grid provides attendees with access to sustainability practices among hotels in the meeting destination.
- The Hotel Green Grid is achieved through hotel surveying and auditing, which provides attendees with green lodging options while attending the meeting.

**Impact**

- Since 2013, a total of 130 hotels (100%) have been surveyed. 89 out of 130 hotels (68%) have been audited through hotel sustainability walkthroughs.
- The Hotel Green Grid builds sustainability awareness among hotels from both the event planning and guest perspectives.

**Challenges**

- Spread Knowledge
- Enhance Attendee Experience
- Educate
- Inspire

Challenges Addressed
Conclusion – ACS Impact

7 million lbs. of CO2 sequestered through ACS’s tree planting program.

47% of attendees took the Greener Meetings Pledge for the 251st ACS Meeting and Exposition in San Diego, CA.

Over 275 Pictures uploaded to social media using #ACSGreenerMeetings for the 2016 San Diego Meeting.

12,700 ACS Meeting and Exposition Mobile Applications Downloaded.

3,094 Unique visitors to the ACS Greener Meetings Website in 2015.

# of trees planted from attendee donations:

- 4,013 Denver, 2015
- 1,867 Boston, 2015
- 2,169 San Diego, 2016

# of Attendees who took the Greener Meetings Pledge:

- 2014: 172
- 2015: 3,935
- 2016*: 7,719

*Note – 2016 figures only account for the ACS San Diego Meeting. All other figures represent 2 ACS meetings per year.

*Note – 2016 total figure only accounts for the ACS San Diego Meeting. All other figures represent 2 ACS meetings per year.
In 2015, ACS faced the moral dilemma of figuring out the best ways to raise awareness of our programs while still being mindful of the environmental footprint of such efforts. ACS does not want to just give away free promotional items to raise awareness and create unnecessary waste through t-shirts, buttons and other free giveaways.

The ways in which we have been most successful in growing our attendee engagement numbers has been through utilizing and leveraging existing technologies within our event management processes:

- Invest in new systems and technologies for 2016 and beyond
- Integrate the ACS Greener Meetings Pledge with attendee registration
- Invest in a more efficient photo distribution system to further promote social media

We look forward to our future journey where our attendees are more aware, engaged and conscious that we are doing our part to make their experience a more sustainable event.
Appendix
ACS meeting attendees at the Greener Meetings Photo Booth
ACS Social Media Attendee Engagement

ACS meeting attendees at the Greener Meetings Photo Booth
ACS Social Media Attendee Engagement

*ACS meeting attendees posting to social media about their own sustainability initiatives using #ACSGreenerMeetings*
ACS Greener Meetings Signage and Branding

ACS Greener Meetings booth and signage
## Greener Meetings Program Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Results (Strongly Agree &amp; Agree)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendees believe it is important for the ACS to participate in green initiatives for its National Meeting &amp; Exposition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendees believe it is important for the ACS to pick 'green' venues for its National Meeting &amp; Exposition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendees perception of the ACS National Meeting &amp; Exposition as an environmentally sustainable event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendees perception of the ACS as a leader in 'greening' its National Meeting &amp; Exposition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How familiar were you with the Greener Meeting Challenge? (Somewhat familiar &amp; Very Familiar)</td>
</tr>
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*Results from the 2015 Greener Meeting Program post-show survey*
## Hotel Sustainability Green Grid

The Hotel Green Grid allows attendees to see the sustainable best practices of the hotels before they book their accommodations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hotel Name</th>
<th>Crown Plaza Denver Downtown</th>
<th>The Curtis - a DoubleTree by Hilton</th>
<th>Denver Marriott City Center</th>
<th>Embassy Suites</th>
<th>Grand Hyatt Denver</th>
<th>Hampton Inn &amp; Suites Denver/Downtown - Convention Center</th>
<th>Hilton Garden Inn Denver Downtown</th>
<th>Homewood Suites Denver Downtown - Convention Center</th>
<th>Hyatt Regency Denver at Colorado Convention Center</th>
<th>Magnolia Hotels Denver</th>
<th>Renaissance Denver Downtown City Center</th>
<th>The Ritz Carlton, Denver</th>
<th>Sheraton Denver Downtown Hotel</th>
<th>The Westin Denver Downtown</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hotel’s energy usage is tracked on a regular basis (at least quarterly)</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A towel/linen reuse program is in place</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If yes, linens are changed every 3 days by default except upon guest request or check-out</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A recycling plan is in place which recycles at least two types of waste</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least 75% of lighting is energy efficient (LED or CFL) in guest rooms, public areas and back of house</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information is provided for guests on your property’s green practices</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspapers are not delivered automatically to the guestroom; but will be available in lobby or central guest floor areas when provided, unless part of a brand standard for preferred guests</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electronic (paperless) check-in and check-out is offered to the guest upon arrival or is the default practice (paper bills only provided upon request)</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carbon offsets or renewable energy certificates are purchased</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
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<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please indicate hotel's level of TripAdvisor GreenLeaders Label Designation (None, GreenPartner, Bronze, Silver, Gold, Platinum)</td>
<td>Bronze</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The hotel has achieved an additional sustainability label or certification such as Green Key, LEED, ISO 14001, ENERGY STAR, a national, provincial or state green lodging designation or another third party verified program and is revenue-neutral and compliant with the green label</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
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Questions?
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