# Ivey Sustainable Events
# Staff Training Guide

## Why this matters

Every event is a chance to reduce waste, lower emissions, support local partners, and show Ivey's leadership in sustainability. The goal is simple: make the sustainable choice the default choice.

## Core principles

1. **Use less.** Avoid single-use items whenever possible.
2. **Reuse first.** Borrow, share, and repurpose before buying new.
3. **Choose local.** Prioritize local vendors, products, and services.
4. **Reduce waste.** Plan food, decor, signage, and supplies carefully.
5. **Make it easy for guests.** Clear communication helps attendees understand and participate.
6. **Track impact.** Record what was saved, reused, or avoided so we can improve.

## Before you plan an event

Use these questions at the start of any meeting, reception, conference, orientation, panel, or celebration.

### Define the basics

- What is the purpose of the event?
- How many people are attending?
- What are the essential items only?

### Check sustainable defaults

- Can we use existing decor or signage instead of buying new?
- Can catering be plated instead of buffet-style to reduce waste?
- Can we reduce the meat offerings on the menu, replacing with high-protein alternatives?
- Can we use digital communications instead of printing?
- Are there local vendors who can provide what we need?
- Can guests be encouraged to bring reusable water bottles?
- Is public transit, carpooling, or walking realistic for attendees?



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# Sustainable event practices

## 1) Decor: reuse before you buy

### Preferred approach

- Use reusable decor from shared inventory whenever possible. Contact events@ivey.ca if you need access to events team inventory.
- Choose durable items that work for multiple event types and venues. Think ahead for what you may need for future events when choosing décor.
- Favor synthetic plants, reusable floral arrangements, and versatile decor pieces.

### Avoid

- Single-use decor that is thrown away after one event. Amazon is convenient and sometimes necessary; however, these items often end up in a landfill.
- One-off custom items unless they can be reused repeatedly.

### Staff action

- Return borrowed items promptly so other departments can use them.
- Record damage, missing items, or reordering needs after each event.

## 2) Food: reduce waste first

### Preferred approach

- Plan portions carefully.
- Use plated meals when possible instead of buffet service.
- Order only what is needed based on confirmed attendance.
- Redirect leftovers quickly and safely after the event.

### Best practices

- Work closely with Great Hall Catering.
- Build food rescue or donation pathways for surplus food when feasible. Offer to students or have a plan for what to do if that is not possible (i.e. call Ark Aid, Mission Services, Anova).
- Use attendance estimates, RSVP data, and previous event history to guide quantities.
- Avoid over-ordering "just in case."

### Staff action

- Ask: *What is the smallest amount that still gives guests great experience?*
- Track how much food was served, leftover or donated.

## 3) Menus: choose vegetarian when appropriate

### Preferred approach

- Use vegetarian menus for events where they fit the audience and purpose.
- Highlight local and seasonal ingredients.
- Work with Great Hall Catering or other venues to create appealing, high-quality vegetarian options.

### Works well for

- Symposiums, lectures, receptions, staff gatherings, student events, and networking events.
- Events where menu flexibility is easy and guest expectations are broad.

### Staff action

- Communicate the sustainability benefits in a positive way.
- Choose menu items that are inclusive, well-balanced, and crowd-pleasing.

## 4) Vendors: prioritize local first

### Preferred approach

- Source catering, decor, A/V support, and other event needs locally whenever possible.
- Use vendors that align with ethical and sustainability standards, such as B-Corp certified businesses.
- Build a vetted list of preferred local vendors.

### Why it matters

- Shorter transportation distances reduce emissions.
- Local suppliers often offer faster service and stronger community connections.
- Supporting local businesses strengthens Ivey's broader ecosystem.

### Staff action

- Keep a running directory of trusted local vendors.
- Share successful vendor recommendations across departments.

## 5) Plastics: avoid single-use items

### Preferred approach

- Use reusable or compostable alternatives for cutlery, plates, cups, and packaging.
- Use china when logistics and budget allow.
- Prohibit single-use plastics whenever possible.

### Staff action

- Confirm with vendors that items are compostable or reusable before ordering.
- Encourage guests to bring their own water bottles and direct them to fill-up stations.
- Brief event staff on the no-single-use-plastics expectation.

## 6) Balloons: use sparingly and sustainably

### Preferred approach

- Avoid balloons unless they serve a clear purpose and no better option exists.
- If balloons are used, choose natural rubber balloons that are compostable.

### Staff action

- Confirm that any balloon supplier meets compostability standards. Ivey's vendor is Real Event Designs (Laura Beharrell) — **info@realeventdesigns.ca**
- Use signage or messaging to let guests know the balloons are natural rubber, not plastic.
- Limit balloon use to specific occasions, not default decor.

## 7) Signage and printing: go digital first

**Preferred approach**

- Use QR codes for programs, maps, schedules, and event details.
- Replace printed handouts with digital documents whenever possible.
- Use reusable signage systems for recurring events.
- Avoid including event dates on reusable signs.

**Staff action**

- Ask whether the information can be shared online instead of printed.
- Check whether signage can be displayed digitally on Ivey screens, such as the South Entrance, North Entrance, Rosen Lounge, Leenders Lounge, and Brock Pavilion.
- Keep a digital archive of templates for future reuse.
- Print only what is truly necessary.

## 8) Water: make reusable easy

**Preferred approach**

- Provide water refill stations at event venues.
- Encourage guests to bring reusable water bottles.

**Staff action**

- Include a reminder in pre-event communications.
- Add a note on invitations, registration pages, or event websites.
- Make refill options visible and easy to find on-site.

## 9) Transportation: reduce travel emissions

**Preferred approach**

- Encourage carpooling, walking, and public transit when appropriate.
- Include transportation guidance in invitations and event pages.

**Staff action**

- Add transit-friendly messaging wherever you communicate event details.
- Offer parking only where needed and avoid over-emphasizing driving.

# Event planning workflow

## 1) Plan sustainably from the start

Ask early:

- What can we reuse?
- What can we eliminate?
- What can we source locally?
- What can be digital instead of printed?
- What food and beverage choices will minimize waste?

### 2) Coordinate with suppliers and partners

- Share Ivey's sustainability expectations with vendors.
- Confirm food, decor, packaging, and waste handling details.
- Align with Great Hall Catering where food service is involved.

### 3) Communicate with attendees

- Tell guests what to expect.
- Encourage reusable bottles, transit use, and vegetarian options when relevant.
- Use positive language focused on convenience, quality, and impact.

### 4) Run the event with sustainability in mind

- Keep reusable items in circulation.
- Make recycling and compost streams clear.
- Monitor leftover food and waste.
- Use visible signage to reinforce the message.

### 5) Capture the results

After the event, record:

- What was reused.
- What was avoided.
- What food was left over or redistributed.
- Whether the menu was vegetarian or mixed.
- Whether digital tools replaced printed materials.
- Any supplier or attendee feedback.

## What success looks like

A sustainable Ivey event should:

- Look polished and professional.
- Feel easy for attendees.
- Reduce unnecessary waste.
- Support local partners.
- Leave staff with reusable tools for next time.

## Closing message for staff

Sustainable event planning is not a separate task — it is part of excellent event planning. By making a few intentional choices, every department can help Ivey host events that are smarter, cleaner, and more responsible.