

BROAD
SWORD.

A Guide to Sustainable Events



Behind Broadsword's Mission

Our mission at Broadsword is to empower the right to speak and be heard, creating events and experiences that inspire positive change. Doing this responsibly is one of our core beliefs at Broadsword.

As a carbon neutral agency, sustainability is placed front and centre of all of our internal operations and services. But for us, giving back goes beyond environment. We support local development, contributing over 500 community hours in 2024 across a range of volunteering and work experience programmes.

To support our core values, we take a collaborative and ongoing approach, having joined Isla in 2021, we continue to benefit from the knowledge sharing, training workshops and suggested approach to policies and KPIs.

As event specialists, we understand the challenges posed in creating a truly sustainable experience however we work tirelessly to ensure we minimise the environmental impact of the events we work on. We now offer a carbon measurement service that is able to predict, recommend, track and offset the footprint across every event by working with some of the top audit and advisory platforms in the industry.



As we continue our journey as a socially responsible business, we are proud to have achieved our B-Corp accreditation - a holistic way to hold ourselves accountable to positive change in the world and to find like-minded organisations and friends in the wider B Corp network.

Looking ahead into the future of events, we predict that a focus on people as well as planet will be key and this is what will drive us forward.

Meet our sustainability team



We'd love to
hear from you

Get in touch at hello@wearebroadword.com

What's Inside

Welcome to Broadsword's guide to sustainable events. As the events industry takes steps towards a more sustainable future, our guide aims to provide a go-to resource to plan responsible events. Read blogs from our sustainability team and discover how, as an agency, we are approaching events with a sustainable focus.

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Understanding Emissions

SCOPE ONE EMISSIONS

Scope 1, Scope 2, and Scope 3 emissions are categories used to classify and account for the greenhouse gas emissions associated with business activities. These categories are defined by the Greenhouse Gas Protocol, a widely used international accounting tool for government and business leaders to understand, quantify, and manage greenhouse gas emissions.

SCOPE TWO EMISSIONS

Scope 1 emissions refer to direct greenhouse gas emissions that occur from sources that are owned or controlled by a company such as emissions produced from operating a company-owned vehicle.

Scope 2 emissions refer to indirect emissions that occur from consumed or purchased energy. These occur at the facility where the energy is produced, rather than at the company's own facilities.

SCOPE THREE EMISSIONS

Scope 3 emissions refer to all other indirect greenhouse gas emissions that occur as a result of the organisation's activities but occur from external sources such as attendee travel, waste disposal, and supplier activities.

Combatting emissions is where the 5 Rs come in. We all know reduce, reuse, recycle but it's also worth considering refuse and repair as not all R's are created equal with recycling suggested as the very last resort.

Removal, similar to offsetting, could also become a key initiative in the events industry. Carbon removal refers to the process of capturing CO₂ from the atmosphere and converting it into alternate forms to reduce the concentration of greenhouse gases.

177kg

the average conference attendee creates around 177 KG of CO₂ emissions per day



5 R'S

REFUSE

Refuse to use single use items, plastics and print items as a standard across your event and find alternatives such as digital products. This also applies to poor quality materials that are likely to only last for one event.

REDUCE

Reducing what you use for an event can mean repurposing materials rather than buying them brand new. Using print over digital or giving a donation rather than physical gifts as giveaways

REUSE

Reuse and repurpose left over items from previous events. For example you can redistribute materials to charities and community projects as well as hiring furniture and plants that can be reused again and again by other companies.

REPAIR

To divert items from landfill and extend the lifespan of event materials consider repairing damaged equipment including purchasing refurbished technology.

RECYCLE

This is the R that is most familiar to everyone, however following the four R's above can reduce the amount of recycling needed after an event. However, with recycling, you can divert food waste and materials from landfill - provide recycling stations with clear instructions at your event.



The Power of Starting Small

Climate change is now firmly on the event industry's agenda. Reduction in waste and emissions is challenging for our sector yet there is a drive to embark on an industry-wide sustainability journey. In 2022, Broadsword achieved the next step on their sustainability journey and one that would transform our entire business; becoming carbon neutral.

Getting started is difficult in all aspects of our lives and, when thinking about how small businesses can impact a greener future, it can all feel overwhelming. To transition to carbon neutral, we worked closely with C Free, breaking the project down into bite-sized steps such as calculating the previous year's footprint, offsetting through the purchase and retirement of the CO₂e tonnes of Gold Standard VERS. Alongside this, a carbon management plan would be created to include a commitment to a reduction target, based on the areas where the business is having the most impact.

The highlight that motivates us to continue is when we are able to select a project to offset our calculated carbon into. In 2022, we chose to invest in the Sidrap Wind Energy Farm Project, located in Indonesia.

The power generated by the project will supply the public electricity grid, with an expected net annual power supply of 253,00 MWh.

Of course, carbon neutral is only the start for Broadsword and education remains a key aspect of our sustainability strategy going forward.

Wherever you are in your sustainability journey; continue to educate yourself, evolve and evaluate. Within the industry, there is a growing number of conversations to get involved in and opportunities to collaborate towards larger goals. Small changes in key areas such as travel and catering greatly reduce environmental impact. As shared ideas turn into more sustainable choices, this will also foster a responsible industry.

9 Small steps towards sustainable events and exhibitions

Digital Integration: The digital shift is a step in the right direction for sustainable events and exhibitions. Scannable QR codes have become the efficient tech that is replacing paper almost everywhere we go - menus, invitations, business cards, and seating plans can all be paperless.

If you want to further elevate your digital touch points, interactive signage and mobile apps can be used to engage guests with gamification, polls and important details such as agendas all in one hub.

Go virtual: On that note, virtual events and webinars continue to grow as an engagement tool and a sustainable option. Although they rose in popularity through the pandemic as an alternative solution to in person activities, long-term benefits arose from this format even as a smaller component of a live event (such as bringing together a global audience with zero need of travel).

Sourcing Sustainably: Sustainability isn't limited to your organisation, but also the supply chain you use for example opting for local suppliers is important to reduce transport emissions. Reevaluate your supply chain to include suppliers with similar values to you, accreditations such as carbon neutrality and who can advise you on sustainable best practice.

Gifts that Give Back

There are hundreds of sustainable gifts out there to combat the tote bag epidemic in the exhibition industry. Take biodegradable seed paper or edible straws for example or even adopting an animal in your attendee's name. Handmade gifts by small local businesses or those that reinvest profits into a community or charity are truly purposeful gifts.

Journey Smarter: While we're all thrilled to get back to in-person events, the challenge of attendee travel is no small one. To reduce this, we suggest a choice of venue that is easily accessible by public transport and asking attendees to feedback their transport so that it can be offset, or incentivising them to take a more sustainable journey.

Cater to the climate: It's been estimated that plant-based catering can reduce the carbon footprint of a 500-person event by up to 10 tonnes! Many catering companies offer a fully plant-based menu and sustainably and locally sourced food. Planning the amount of food according to the number of attendees ahead of time also helps to reduce food waste although waste can also be reduced through partnering with food donation or compost programmes.

Re-use and repurpose

Set design is material-heavy but this doesn't mean it needs to be single-use. Fabrics can easily be made into something new, you can opt for reusable signage for your next event, or use projection mapping rather than printing to display dynamic designs.

Utilise nature

Bring the outside in with live plants, which can be hired from a plant rental company to reduce waste. Green decorations, such as up-cycled pallets or recycled paper decorations, are also gaining popularity.

Go Carbon Neutral

Broadsword are now implementing a carbon measurement tool to offer clients the option to offset the carbon footprint of events that can't be reduced. This is measured across key factors such as waste management, transport and energy usage and then offset.

Adding Social Impact to the Equation

Being an events agency, and a remote one at that, we know the power that bringing a team together for an internal event or team building experience can have. We're creative in our approach to connecting our team while creating a social impact in line with our sustainability values. Whether it's a workshop making prosthetic hands for those in need, battling it out to see who can raise the most money at charity shops or helping to conserve a 183 year old local nature reserve - community projects have brought our team together in a purposeful way.

Actively integrating charity and volunteering initiatives into an event agenda is a powerful way to engage employees and event attendees, as well as aligning with CSR goals and the shifting demand towards purpose led brands.

Combining environmental sustainability with social value requires a holistic approach to event planning, with sustainable practices considered at every stage.

For example, connect with local non-profits to supply team building activities such as repurposing event materials into birdhouses to be redistributed to community gardens post-event. There are also a number of suppliers who combine purpose and profit such as Connection Crew and Redemption Roasters, who both provide training, mentoring and employment opportunities for people who have been affected by homelessness.

Supporting a meaningful cause and making a tangible impact creates a positive event experience that extends beyond the event.





Beyond Carbon with event:decision

"Yes, your event has to address the core ROI. But what else can you do that delivers a piece of good while you're there?"

Conversations around sustainability are moving on to a holistic solution with ESG (environmental, social, and governance). Matt Grey, Founder of Event Decision, sat down with Broadsword to discuss sustainability in the events industry, emphasising the need to go beyond green and sharing the tools to measure the broader impact of an event.

There is a disparity between planners integrating the social part into events compared to environmental and governance initiatives such as carbon reporting despite that it's possible to quantify the economic impact on a local area, the accessibility and DEI of an event, as well as the wellbeing of both attendees and the delivery team.

As there is a huge amount for event planners to think about and event:decision provides a way to quantify and simplify some of it. A data led approach is particularly important as it provides a measurable, results oriented way to make changes year on year.

One way to go 'beyond carbon' is to consider the United Nations sustainability goals (SDGs) for events. These goals go hand in hand and are varied across people and planet, requiring collaborative action to achieve each yet only 20% of planners state they try to address at least one of the SDGs within their event scope.

Doing something during your event that promotes just one chosen development goal is a measurable tactic towards more sustainable operations and with event:decision's impact tool this is something that can be measured and compared across the industry, with the goal of setting a new industry standard of reporting across E, S, and G.

"Shouldn't we, as an industry, be able to go 'last year we did it like that, this year we're doing it like this, And for each one we can demonstrate less environmental damage, fewer emissions, but also, the social part of delivery'"

Being More B Corp

By Anna Green, MD at Broadsword



I joined Broadsword in 2014 with a clear vision to transform the organisation into a socially responsible business. As a former teacher with two teenage children, and an individual with a passion for building a better world for young people, my approach to sustainability is personal. I believe that climate-positive action should be at the forefront of how we lead our lives and run our businesses.

In 2023 we embarked on the B Corp accreditation process in pursuit of a mechanism to demonstrate that we value society and the environment as a business. The process has led to the reshaping of all aspects of the company and provided a framework that we can hold ourselves accountable to.

There are various interpretations of the meaning of 'B Corp' - one of which that is comes from Ghandi, "Be the change you wish to see in the world". Or that 'B' can mean "better" - so "better corporation" - which is what companies with B Corp status are aiming to be.

For B Corp certification, a business must score at least 80 out of 200 points on the B Impact Assessment, assessing impact on employees, community, environment, and customers, both locally and globally. B Corps are transparent about their operations and are held to a high standard of accountability.

We hope to achieve our B Corp status later this year. If we are successful, we will have to recertify every three years, and the criteria is dynamic, making sure B Corps are always moving with the times and on the cutting edge of what 'good' looks like in the current world.

But even before certification, the impact has been incredibly positive. Everyone at Broadsword now considers the balance between purpose and profit, as a first step, sharing good practice and guiding our clients, supply chain and each other with practical ideas to leave a positive social and environmental footprint.

The B-Corp framework is helping businesses to navigate the complex path ahead, touching everything from diversity and inclusion to business growth, and meet the highest standards across environmental and social performance.

SUSTAINABILITY ON DISPLAY

Putting our planning into practice at Il Salone Del Risparmio.



One of the annual highlights for our events calendar is the Il Salone Del Risparmio in Milan - the largest exhibition in the asset management sector.

The stand created for our client at the show was designed and built with a focus on sustainability, showcasing a minimalist design aesthetic, yet retaining a powerful message.

Implementing the 5 Rs framework alongside our waste reduction strategy gave us a structured approach to this project. In summary:

- 88.2% of recycled materials used in the build.
- Energy efficient lighting employed throughout the stand.
- Interactive digital display with downloadable information, eliminating the need for printed materials.

- All materials sourced and installed locally.
- Sustainable transport and logistics.

Overall we offset 1.4 tCO₂e, with Zero percent of the build ending up in landfill after the exhibition, which was a real cause for celebration given the issues being faced around single use materials at similar events

Additionally, 178kg of CO₂e was offset via a local planting scheme in line with ISO 20121 certification.

Contact the sustainability team at hello@wearebroadword.com

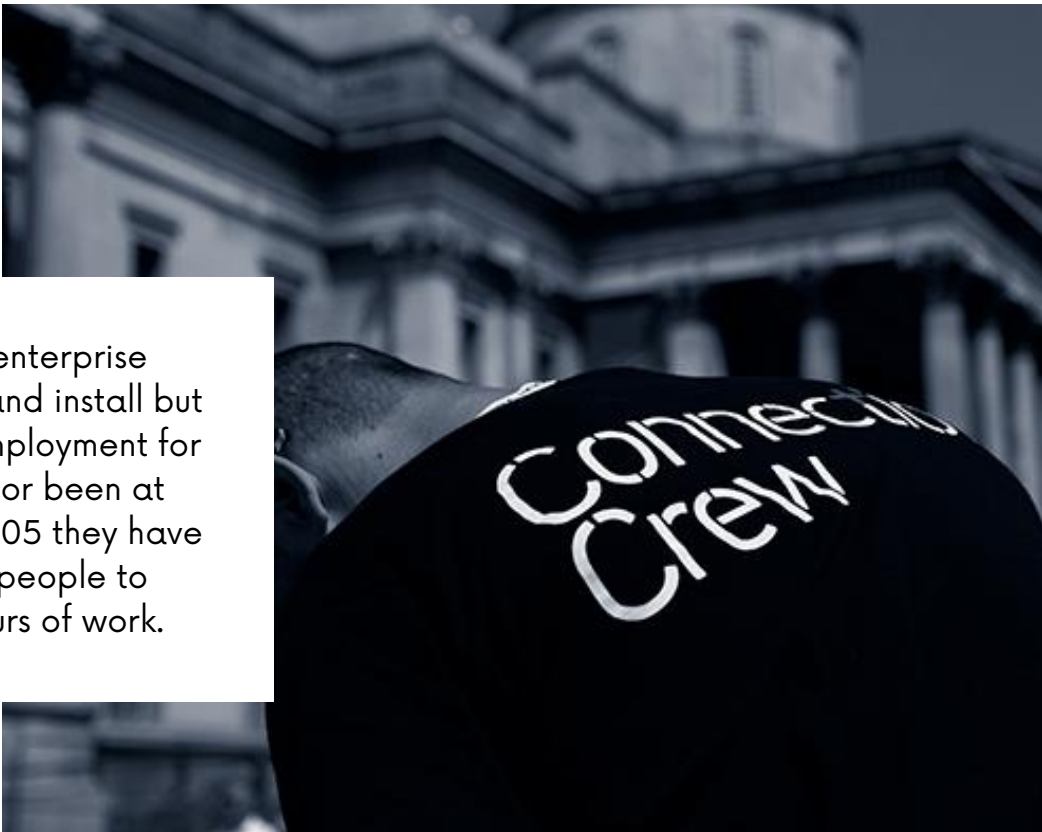


SUSTAINABILITY IN THE SPOTLIGHT

SOCIAL PANTRY

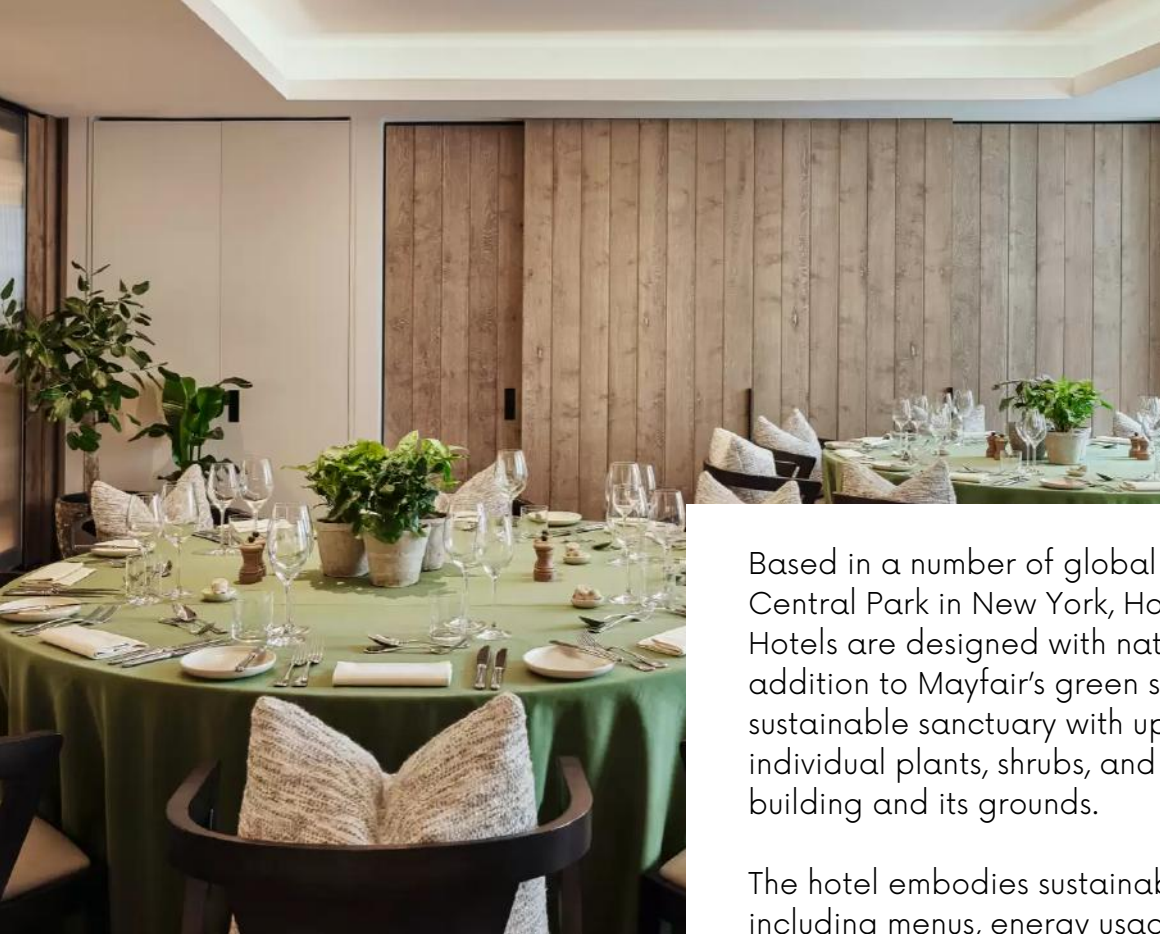
With a mission to deliver extraordinary food while creating meaningful change, Social Pantry is a QMS certified ISO 14001 caterer, in the process of becoming accredited with B-Corp certification. They are leading the way in environmentally friendly catering with a zero-waste kitchen, a zero-to-landfill refuse service, a partnership with food waste charity OLIO and the refusal to use unethical companies in the supply chain in favour of suppliers such as The Ethical Butcher and Wildfarmed.

They are also setting an example in the way they create social impact, being the hospitality industry leader in prison leaver employment, providing training and employment opportunities to people who have served time behind bars.



Connection Crew

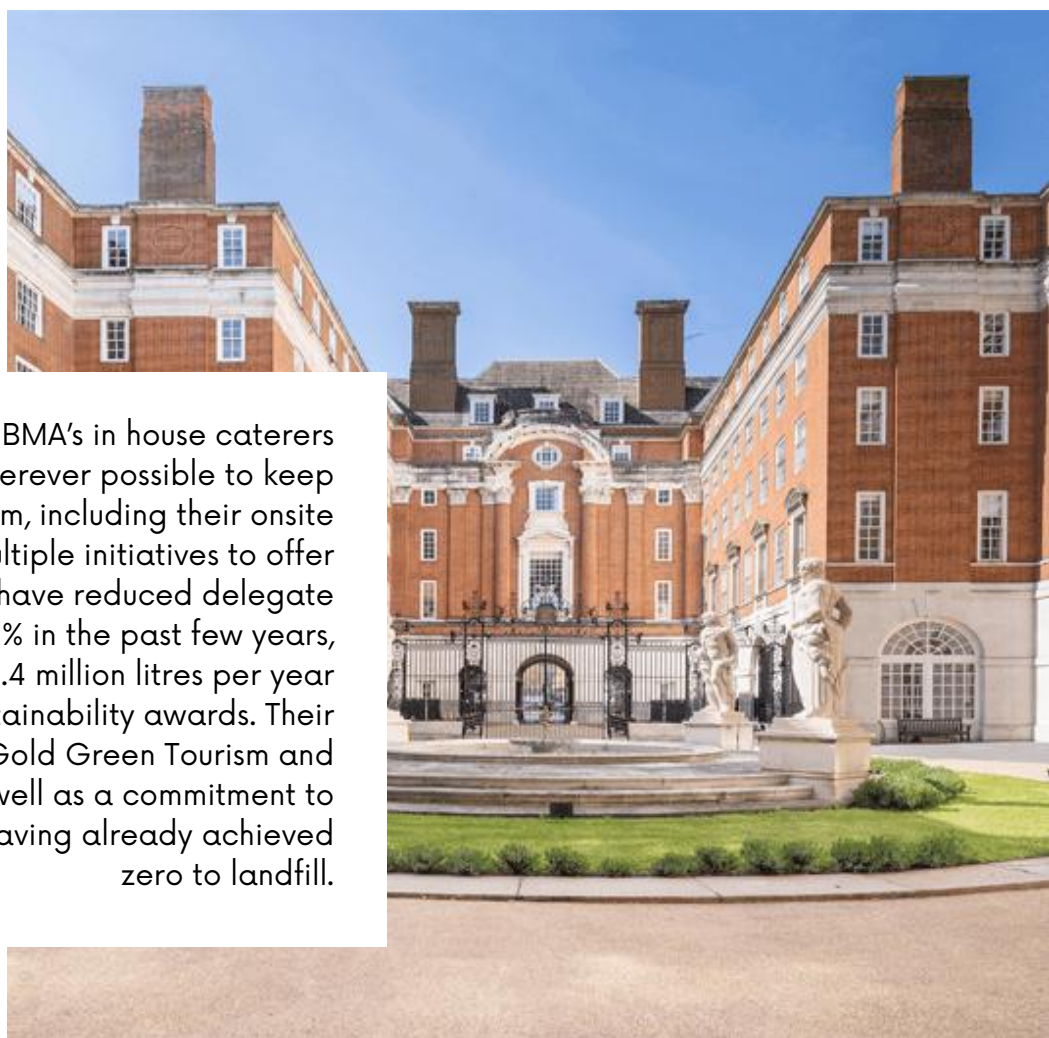
Connection Crew is a social enterprise that provides crew for build and install but also provides training and employment for those who have experienced or been at risk of homelessness. Since 2005 they have employed almost 400 at risk people to complete over 200,000+ hours of work.



1 HOTELS

Based in a number of global locations including Central Park in New York, Haitang Bay in China, 1 Hotels are designed with nature in mind. The new addition to Mayfair's green surroundings is a sustainable sanctuary with upwards of 1,300 individual plants, shrubs, and trees populating the building and its grounds.

The hotel embodies sustainability in every detail including menus, energy usage, and waste management, and materials selection all informed by sustainable policies. The lighting programme uses 50 percent less energy than typical UK hotels.



In the heart of London, BMA's in house caterers source produce locally wherever possible to keep their food miles to a minimum, including their onsite herb garden. Through multiple initiatives to offer lower impact events they have reduced delegate carbon footprint by 69% in the past few years, reduced water usage by 5.4 million litres per year and have won multiple sustainability awards. Their accreditations include the Gold Green Tourism and Platinum ECOsmart as well as a commitment to become carbon zero, having already achieved zero to landfill.

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