

EVENT VENUE BENCHMARKING



A Look at the Convention Market

prepared by



evolve
environment::architecture

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Observations From The Team

As sustainability has become a marketing point for event destinations and convention centers across the country, green buildings have become a mainstay for these institutions, serving as tactile representations of each destination's commitment to sustainability. This is an inspiring trend, but often these projects are focused on meeting certain rating system thresholds (i.e. LEED) and implementing the most advanced sustainable design systems possible without understanding the full business case or how to sustain the performance of these systems in the long run. After all, this is where the true sustainable value of a green building is realized.

This study gathered specialized knowledge of convention centers and their complex business models. It has identified key market drivers and areas of growth, impact areas, opportunities for improvement, and industry best practices. With evidence showing that convention planners are increasingly demanding green facilities, the study demonstrates how to use sustainability to improve environmental performance, leverage cost savings, and attract more events.

As you will see in the benchmarking report, leading convention centers are:

- Building the business case for sustainability initiatives
- Pursuing certifications such as LEED
- Tracking greenhouse gas emissions
- Performing industry benchmarking
- Implementing internal and external communications strategies
- Refining waste minimization
- Implementing sustainable purchasing
- Exploring alternative transportation
- Testing indoor environmental quality

We hope that this helps you understand your facility's performance. Please feel free to contact us with any questions.

Sincerely,
the evolveEA team

EVENT VENUE BENCHMARKING STUDY

PREPARED BY
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DATES OF STUDY
Prepared in 2010 using data from 2009-2010

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Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania



A Look at the Convention Market

This study, commissioned by the Heinz Endowments in tandem with the David L. Lawrence Convention Center in Pittsburgh, and led by evolveEA, had the purpose of understanding how increased demand for sustainability has affected the industry. The study's focus is on the actions individual facilities are taking to address these demands while increasing their overall performance. We have gathered this information with the intention of sharing best practices and understanding the influence of sustainability in decision making at the facility level.

The survey was administered from October 2010 through February 2011. Over 70 facilities were invited to participate in the process, with 14 thoroughly completing it. Many of the cohort participants were targeted because they publicly promote sustainability initiatives or policies as important to their operations. The survey was administered in two versions, the full length survey (8 respondents), and a focused survey (6 respondents) aimed at increasing participation. The following report comprises the results of both of these versions. As promised during data collection, respondents' information has been anonymized to protect confidentiality. For specific inquiries, please contact evolveEA directly.

PITTSBURGH'S GREEN CONVENTIONS ECONOMY

Value to the region:
\$144M direct spending
2006 – 2010

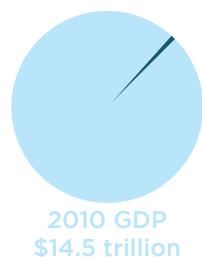


38%
of the DLCC's revenue came from
green-seeking events

26%
of the region's direct spending came from
green-seeking events

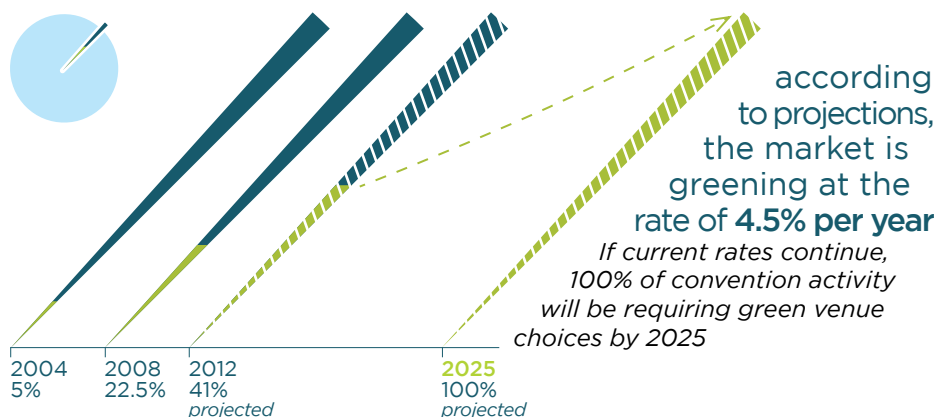
Source: Case Study for the David L. Lawrence Convention Center: A Building in Operation Study, Executive Summary. evolveEA. 2011. www.go-gba.org/dlcc.

A recently released Convention Industry Council and Pricewaterhouse Coopers study quantified that the US meeting industry directly supports \$106 billion in GDP and \$263 billion in direct spending.¹ This knowledge has proven invaluable to the industry, helping it to understand and capitalize on its reach and influence.



meetings contribute \$106 billion of the US GDP¹
more than the US farming industry² or the total GSP of The District of Columbia³ in 2009

THE GROWING MARKET SHARE OF GREEN CONVENTIONS



- 1 PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, *The Economic Significance of Meetings to the U.S. Economy*. Convention Industry Council. 2 February 2011. Weblink.
- 2 U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis. *Annual Industry Accounts: Advance Statistics on GDP by Industry for 2010*. By Teresa L. Gilmore, Edward T. Morgan, and Sarah B. Osborne. May 2011.
- 3 2009 D.C. GSP, U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis. 2010.
- 4 United States Green Building Council, *LEED Project Directory*. www.usgbc.org/LEED/Project. December 2011.
- 5 Fulvi, Jason. VisitPittsburgh. *Personal Interview*. Pittsburgh, 8 November 2010.



GROWTH IN LEED CERTIFIED CONVENTION CENTERS

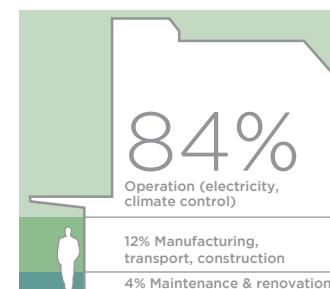
LEED Certified Convention Centers at the end of 2009⁴



LEED Certified Convention Centers at the end of 2010⁴



Convention Centers currently pursuing certification in addition to those already certified⁴










a breakdown of the average building's lifetime energy use

Venues are realizing the cost and energy savings that can result from green operations. Operations make up the overwhelming majority of a building's energy use.

Nearly Half of the convention centers currently pursuing LEED certification are in the **Existing Buildings: Operations & Management (EB)** category, including some that already have certification for New Construction (NC).⁴

EVENT VENUE BENCHMARKING

	facility & space types	8
	staff	12
	energy usage	16
	indoor environmental quality	22
	water usage	26
	transportation	30
	waste	34
	general sustainability	40



waste management

Quantitative Information

Waste production and recycling rates have garnered increased attention from convention centers in recent years, as facilities are attempting to reduce and divert as much waste as possible. Due to the varied nature of events, convention centers must be prepared to deal with pulsed and voluminous waste streams of varying make up to be successful at diversion. Waste materials that facilities typically deal with include plastic, aluminum, glass, paper, cardboard, wood pallets, food waste, cooking oil, and carpet among other things.

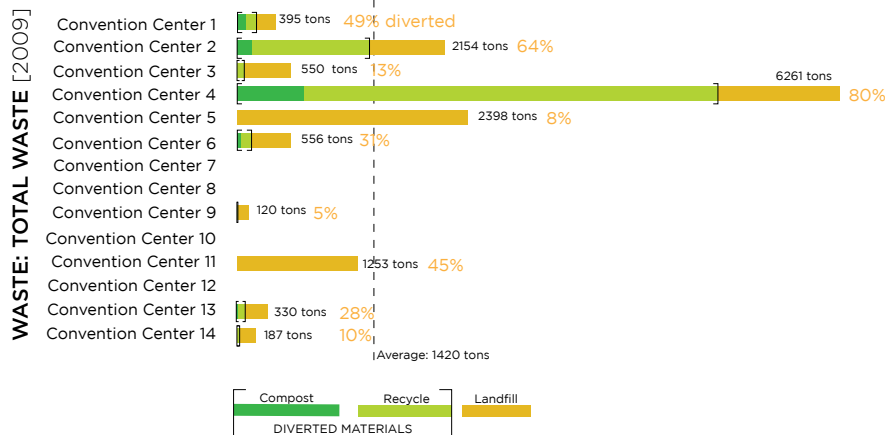


figure 15. Waste: Facility Waste Breakdown

Figure 15 illustrates the total waste produced by each facility in 2009, breaking it down by recycled, composted and landfilled material. It shows that facilities can reach varying levels of diversion depending on devoted resources and local infrastructure.

Diversion rate is not the only waste related metric that is important to track, as it is much more environmentally friendly to reduce waste at the source than to divert it from the landfill once it has been created. To understand how well a facility is performing in terms of source reduction, the best metric to review is the total waste produced per attendee.

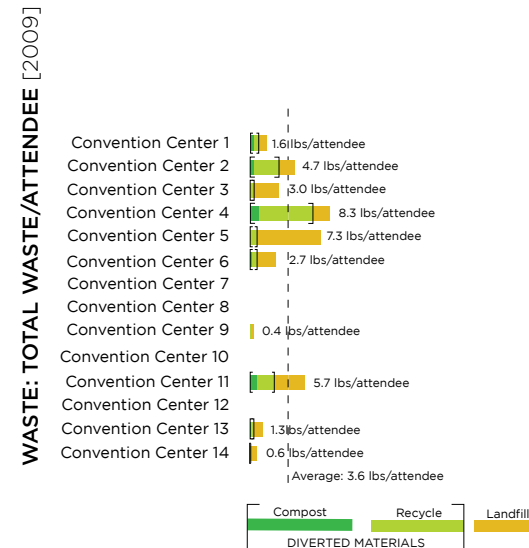


figure 16. Waste: Total Waste per Attendee

Waste Per Attendee shows the amount of waste produced per attendee at each cohort facility, and how it was processed once produced. Some of the facilities with the largest amount of waste created per visitor also have the highest diversion rate. It should be noted that it is more difficult to reach a high diversion rate when source reduction is not effectively practiced. When a facility's first priority is to reduce waste at its source, before it is produced, it has much less recyclable and compostable waste to divert.

Qualitative Information

Recycling waste such as cardboard, metal, plastic, glass and paper is a common practice. However, reaching high diversion rates for materials and quantities unique to convention centers requires a commitment above standard practice. This is especially true in waste streams unique to trade shows, such as carpet, or unique to large crowds, like food waste. The majority of survey respondents say they donate leftover food and reusable materials, while 100% say they try to reduce waste through planning.

Do you have a waste management policy that includes...

8 facilities asked, 7 responded

COMPOSTING? 57% RECYCLING? 100%

Do you...

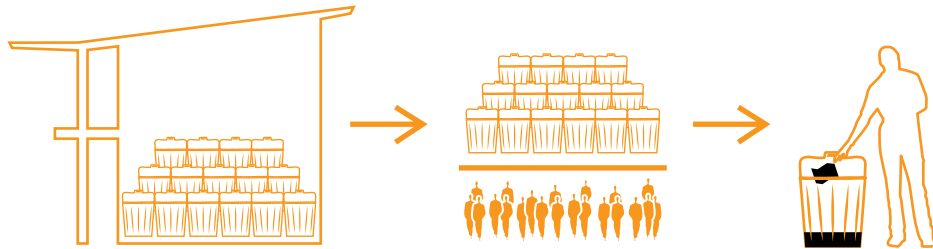
donate leftover food?	86%	yes
donate reusable materials?	86%	
reduce waste through planning?	100%	

Leading convention centers adopt innovative waste practices like source reduction and composting that lead to less waste going to landfill. These actions are made possible by incorporating supply chain strategies like purchasing of materials with less packaging and compostable items like tableware. They ensure the success of these programs by instituting practices that encourage visitors and employees to take action.



HOW MUCH WASTE DOES A CONVENTION CENTER CREATE?

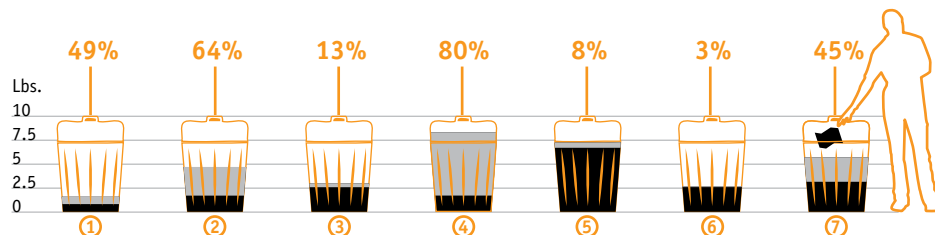
In order to make a fair comparison, we divided each venue's total annual waste by its annual visitor count. This shows us the **average waste per visitor**.



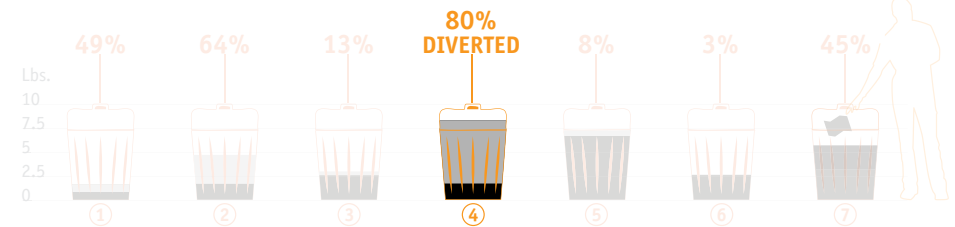
We calculated the amount of waste in **pounds per visitor** for seven convention centers.



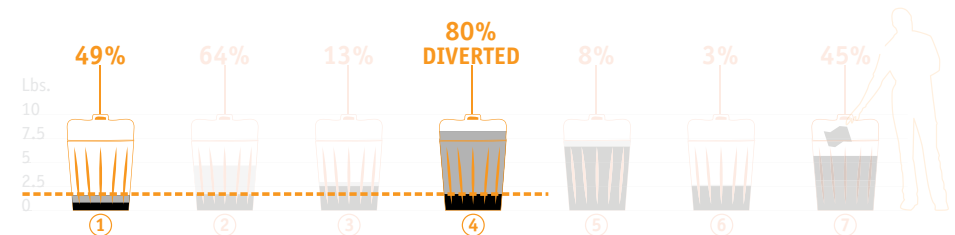
Some of this waste is **diverted** for recycling or composting...



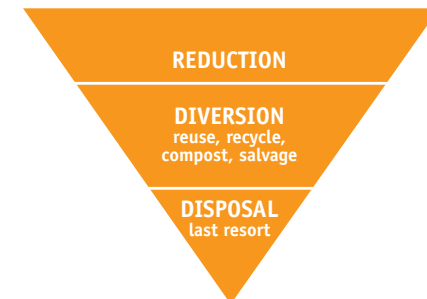
Venue 4 diverts more waste than any other facility.
But **are we measuring the right thing?**



Venue 1 may not divert as much...
But thanks to **source reduction** has less waste to manage!



Source reduction remains the most effective method of cutting waste and shrinking environmental impact.



evolveEA is a nimble multidisciplinary consulting firm situated at the intersection of sustainability and the built environment. We help facilities, organizations and communities create their own paths to sustainability through planning and implementing strategic initiatives.

evolveEA has led the greening efforts in over 100 projects including the construction of new buildings, the improvement of buildings in operation, organizational sustainability, and urban strategies. We enable our clients to become leaders in sustainability and find triple bottom line value in their initiatives.





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