



A Green Seal of Approval

Looking to ramp up your environmental commitment? A new certification process can make it worth the effort

by Michelle Warren

Event planners know attention to detail is what makes for a stellar event, but the team at Timewise Event Management also recognize that details are the key to a genuine greening effort.

The Edmonton-based company, which has outposts in Vancouver, Calgary and Toronto, is the first event company in Canada to attain the Institute for Green Business Certification (IGBC). “[Being environmentally friendly] is something we believe in and now our processes are geared around this,” says green meeting strategist

Debbie MacLeod, who spearheaded the IGBC certification.

The process took MacLeod and her colleagues several months and involved 24 eco-friendly steps, from switching to unbleached coffee filters to embracing Bullfrog Power and printing event programs using soy-based inks.

Why certify?

Third-party verification of greening practices adds credibility, says Dale Bonke, environmental

analyst and IGBC’s Canadian representative. “It sets your business apart.”

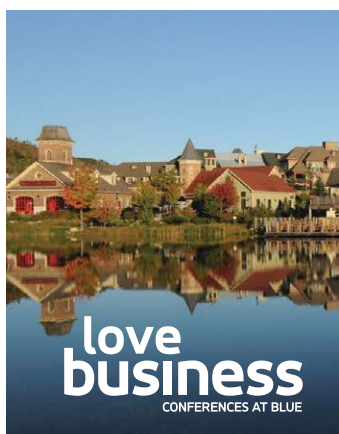
The IGBC was founded in the United States in 2006 and has since certified more than 3,000 companies globally through its Green Audit; it started in Canada in January. The audit evaluates organizational practices across 10 categories: waste reduction, recycling, reduction in office material use, purchasing, energy saving, water conservation, pollution prevention, reduction in chemical usage, proper handling of pollutants and reduced emissions.

The process involves an initial phone interview/assessment, a checklist with a timeline and the audit, which includes an inspection—on site or via webcam. Cost is based on the number of employees, starting at \$200.

“You need to score 70 per cent to get certified. If you don’t, we help achieve your goals,” says Bonke, adding the “Green Business Certified” seal helps recipients build public image, attract like-minded clients, boost employee engagement and reduce operational/overhead costs. Businesses apply for recertification every two years and make ongoing improvements.

The Timewise team is already working on next steps, such as a recycled content purchasing policy. It’s a commitment, but with sustainability increasingly top of mind for internal and external stakeholders, MacLeod says it’s worth it. “It changes our profile and we’re proud we have done this.” *

For more information, visit www.gbpcertified.ca.



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