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Live Earth New York: Waste Management Initiative Case Study

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Prepared for Live Earth
By Meeting Strategies Worldwide



Case Study

Live Earth New York

Held July 7, 2007 at Giants Stadium, New Jersey

Background

Live Earth was a monumental event with 24 hours of music across 7 continents and performances by more than 100 of the world's top musicians bringing together more than 2 billion people on 7/7/07 to solve the climate crisis. In order to reduce the environmental impact of Live Earth and provide a framework for the live entertainment industry to produce large-scale sustainable events, Live Earth and Meeting Strategies Worldwide co-authored the Live Earth *Green Guidelines for the Live Entertainment and Event Industry*. Through the implementation of the Green Guidelines, Live Earth sought to reduce its impact on the environment by addressing the most critical environmental elements of a concert including waste generation, transportation, the provision of food and beverage, packaging, energy and water use, and the event venue itself.

Overview

In order to minimize and manage waste at Live Earth New York venue, Giants Stadium, New Jersey, Meeting Strategies Worldwide:

- Conducted a site inspection and evaluation;
- Developed a waste management plan based upon the infrastructure available, budget and feasibility with the venue as well as the Live Earth *Green Guidelines*;
- Developed a volunteer program to support onsite waste management initiatives;
- Worked with the venue, concessionaires, and vendors to ensure implementation and measurement of established waste management strategies;
- Managed onsite implementation of waste management strategies;
- Tracked measurable data.

Giants Stadium Waste Management: Approaches and Outcomes

Waste Management: Giants Stadium

Based on information obtained through the onsite inspection and evaluation process and the Live Earth *Green Guidelines*, Meeting Strategies Worldwide worked to establish a three stream waste management system. The chart below illustrates waste that was captured in each of the three streams.

Recyclables	Compostables	Non-Recyclables
PET plastics (including all Pepsi bottles, beer bottles and other beverage containers)	Compostable food service packaging and napkins selected by Aramark; all food waste	All other waste including waste generated in the restrooms and candy wrappers such as those for chocolate bars, cracker jacks, peanuts and ice cream.

Waste receptacles were clustered in groups and signage was placed on each receptacle to indicate to attendees the waste stream that should go in each bin. In addition, volunteers were positioned at each Recycling Station. Overhead signage for Recycling Stations was made from cardboard so that it could be recycled following the event while receptacle signage was made from a PLA material so that it could be composted following the event.

As the Stadium does not employ recycling or composting initiatives on a regular basis, additional receptacles were required. A total of 450 forty gallon temporary cardboard receptacles were purchased. In order to facilitate differentiation and storage of the three waste streams three different color liners for the waste receptacles were used, including a biodegradable liner for collection of the compost stream.

Overall, 28.53 tons (2,000 lbs/ton) of waste were generated over the duration of Live Earth New York. Of this waste, 76% was diverted from landfill. The following table illustrates the breakdown of waste generated at Giants Stadium.

Waste Stream	Tons	Percent of Total
Cardboard	2.89	0.101
Aluminum	0.36	0.013
Plastic	14.52	0.509
Compost	3.91	0.137
Landfill	6.85	0.240
TOTAL	28.53	

Waste Management: Giants Stadium, Surrounding Parking Lots

During the onsite inspection and evaluation, venue managers identified waste generated in the parking lots surrounding the Stadium as a significant issue and challenge to manage. It was estimated that waste generated in the parking lots is twice the volume of what is produced in the Stadium.

The total weight of recyclable materials present in the waste stream in the parking lot can then be calculated based on the amount of recyclables collected at the Recycling Stations and by the street sweepers, for a total of 1.37 tons. Given the efforts of the volunteers, it can be said that approximately 77% of recyclable materials generated in the parking lots were diverted from landfill.

Green Procurement: Onsite Caterers

Aramark and Kevo Catering were provided with guidelines for greening of catering services. In order to facilitate the transition to green food and beverage packaging, Meeting Strategies Worldwide provided ongoing support to both caterers through the provision of resources, assisting with research and identifying acceptable products.

Both caterers implemented green guidelines successfully. In addition to switching out food and beverage packaging for a green alternative, Aramark offered additional vegetarian options on their menu. Kevo Catering not only used compostable food and beverage packaging but also sourced locally produced, organic food and beverage where possible and switched from use of aluminum cans to plastic bottles for provision of beverages to be consistent with established recycling initiatives.

Live Earth New York Green Team Volunteer Program

Overall, Meeting Strategies Worldwide sought to use a team of approximately 800 volunteers over the duration of the show to facilitate the waste management initiatives established for Giants Stadium. In order to reduce the carbon footprint of volunteer transportation and due to parking limitations at Giants Stadium, volunteers were required to use public transportation to travel to and from Giants Stadium. Information on public transit options for the day of the event were therefore integrated into all communications developed in relation to the volunteer program.

Meeting Strategies Worldwide contacted several environmental NGOs with the goal of establishing partnerships to recruit volunteers for Live Earth New York. Meeting Strategies Worldwide developed and provided a volunteer recruitment communication for each of these organizations to use in putting out the call for volunteers. The response to the communications put out by these organizations was overwhelming.

Leaving a Legacy

If leaving a legacy could be reduced to one word it would be education. The experience of “greening” Live Earth provided a remarkable opportunity for the venue, caterers and other vendors to learn about the impact of large scale events on the environment and the actions that can be taken to reduce such impacts. Unfortunately, with Giants Stadium being slated for demolition in the next two years, recycling and composting initiatives will not be carried forward by the venue. Venue management did however express the hope that the facility to be constructed in place of Giants Stadium would include recycling as part of its standard practice. Both Aramark and Kevo Catering indicated they would be integrating some of the biodegradable food and beverage packaging selected for Live Earth as their standard product.

Live Earth also provided a valuable opportunity to educate concert goers who may never have been exposed to concepts like composting, recycling, landfill diversion and resource recovery. Volunteers positioned at Recycling Stations throughout Giants Stadium and surrounding parking lots had the opportunity to engage attendees in conversations around these issues and to encourage them to take part in waste management initiatives established for the event.