2017 UN Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development

Telling the story of the power of events

June
Summary of the month

We are half way through the UN Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development and our campaign to 'tell the story of the power of events'. Now is a good time to pause to identify what is and is not working, figure out why, and adjust our approach. From our results so far, we can see that the event industry understands the importance of education and has a strong infrastructure to share education. We are on track to reach our goal to provide two million education opportunities to the event industry with the support of our association partners who continue to share the education.

During June, we attended MPI's WEC and The Meetings Show, and at each event, we gathered more ambassadors. Anecdotally, we are hearing that people often do not think they have the expertise to be an ambassador for sustainability. This could explain why we are behind in our goal for ambassadors, so we see it as our responsibility to continue to explain that becoming an ambassador is an opportunity to make a difference (and practically, we have made it easier to sign people up to be ambassadors because less emails is always a good thing). In June, we sent communications materials out to over 150 existing ambassadors, to empower them to be in action to inspire and educate their local communities. We continue to innovate on our ambassador programme, and with commitment, passion and focus, we will reach the goal of gathering 1,000 ambassadors by December 2017.

The first draft of our research, was created by five academics and led by James Musgrave of Manchester Metropolitan University. This will launch later in summer 2017 and will be used to provide content for a number of event industry events, most notably IBTM World which will take place in Barcelona.

Our target to have two million best practices shared is moving slowly with 1,028 examples this year (or 0.05% of our goal). Anecdotally, we have heard various suggestions for the cause of this. Could it be the hashtag is too long? Are people unable to share because of confidentiality reasons? Are people worried they will share one good action and receive criticism for not being sustainably perfect? Are people more interested in watching others than sharing their own initiatives? This target is essential in creating evidence for the role of the event industry in creating a world that works for everyone. In other words, this target is evidence which people will point to in a world of growing technological capabilities when the value of coming together face-to-face is questioned. Over the remaining six months, the Positive Impact team will focus on using the sharing of best practice ideas as a way to demonstrate the business case for the event industry, so event professionals understand the business opportunity of telling the story of a sustainable event industry. One practical example is VMware, who have displayed community engagement at their events. Sharing this example and demonstrating that all events have this potential social, economic and environmental impact will provide a case for an increase in face-to-face meetings in the world, and an understanding that time and budget used on events delivers a more impactful result than any other initiatives.
Our final target of providing 10 examples of events making a difference has not advanced over six months, so at this stage, we will stop working towards and taking actions around this target (but we will remember it for our future Positive Impact campaigns!). Over the last six months, we have spoken to hotels, conference centres and event planners who have amazing initiatives taking place to provide fair work to refugee communities, who have unique healthy menus and innovative food waste techniques or who engage with the local community to fulfil needs. The passionate individuals behind these initiatives are all eager to share, but businesses are slow in connecting the brand-building and business development opportunities behind their stories and do not commit the time or budget for it to happen.

As an increasing number of millennials and aspirationals continue to put their money behind products that have a positive impact on the world, the marketing approach of the event industry will change. However, for the moment, our focus for our campaign to 'tell the story of the power of events' during the UN Year of Sustainable Tourism will be on inspiring people to step forward to be ambassadors for a sustainable event industry and to create an industry-wide low cost, low time investment habit of sharing best sustainable practice.
Our targets

These are the targets we created for our campaign for telling the story of the power of events. Monthly, we will show an update as we progress towards these targets.

**Target 1**

"Provide 2 million education opportunities"
Cumulatively, we’ve provided 1,435,982 educational opportunities.

**Reason for this target:**
Meeting this target will create a foundation so the event industry is continually learning how to be sustainable

**Action taken**
- Our monthly 5 Minute Education piece was sent to 18 associations each month since January totalling 444,899 educational opportunities.
- 5 Minute Education addressing the question "Is the event industry leading in the global goal to implement the Paris agreement and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)?"
- This included snippets of sustainability news and top tips to help the events industry lead in the global goal to implement the Paris agreement and SDGs.

* Due to the online nature of our campaign, it has been difficult to confirm that the education provided has been viewed by the event professionals it has been sent to. Therefore we changed the goal from 'educate 2 million event professionals' to 'provide 2 million education opportunities.'

**Target 2**

"1,000 ambassadors"
Cumulatively, the number of ambassadors is: 161

**Reason for this target:**
Meeting this target will create a foundation of communicators to inspire the creation of a sustainable event industry

**Action taken**
- 148 ambassadors asked to take the action of encouraging people to take one less journey and share transport with other attendees when travelling to an event.
- We gained 13 new ambassadors in June!
**Target 3**

**Reason for this target:**
Meeting this target will create a business case for a sustainable event industry.

**Action taken:**
- The research areas are Hunger (SDG 2), Gender Equality (SDG 5), Reduced Inequalities (SDG 10), Responsible Consumption and Production (SDG 12) and Climate Action (SDG 13).
- Have received drafts of research commentaries off the 5 academics.
- In the process of formatting the research commentary.

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**Target 4**

**Reason for this target:**
Meeting this target will create a foundation of ideas and best practice actions to take to create a sustainable event industry.

**Action taken:**
1. 14 universities requested their students to participate in the campaign by becoming ambassadors, and being active on social media using the hashtag #shareapositiveimpact while sharing their best sustainable practices.
2. 102 new sustainable practices were shared on Twitter in June.
3. 18 endorsers with total network of over 93,496 event professionals received call to action.
4. Four materials created - Newsletter, 5-Minute Education, Guest Interview and TopTips.
5. Our #shareapositiveimpact campaign has had a Twitter reach of 523,792.

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* May's 'cumulative result' for the goal "2 million best practices shared" was incorrectly measured. The correct result for May's report is 926 shared examples.
Take just one step

Bauer continues: “If every exhibitor and every attendee at both IMEX in Frankfurt and IMEX America took just one more practical step to help reduce waste or operate more sustainably at our shows then the entire industry’s contribution to greater sustainability, its legacy, would increase immensely. If they don’t know how, just ask. We’re here to help and cheer them on.”

The IMEX Group works closely with partners including GMIC, Messe Frankfurt, Meet Green and The Venetian®, The Palazzo® and the Sands Expo® in Las Vegas.

USEFUL RESOURCES
Positive Impact Events and the United Nations Year of Sustainable Tourism
Global Destination Sustainability Index Whitepaper
IMEX Online Inspiration Hub – Sustainability stories
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#IMEX17 #shareapositiveimpact

Featured in IMEX's June Press Release

Best Tweets

Positive Impact
@Plrients

Great to be speaking about sustainability @MeetingsShow today. Everyone welcome! #eventprofs #shareapositiveimpact

EventSustainability
@EventsTool

Eating meat has a major impact on climate change so why not consider having a amazing veggie meal on #WorldMeatFreeDay 🌱🌿(nameofimage2)
“Reed Exhibitions and IBTM World are proud to be the first platinum sponsor for the Positive Impact Campaign, created to tell the story of the power of events during the UN Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development. We are very aware that our social, economic and environmental approach has a strong influence on how our future attendees engage with our events. Supporting this campaign is an opportunity for us to work together with a team of experts in this field to raise awareness of the importance of taking a sustainable approach to business as well as to share our own sustainability journey and be part of the vital conversation on the global role the events industry plays in bringing people together to create solutions for our future world.”
University partners

Vistula University
Madison College
University of Westminster
University of Nottingham
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Durham Students' Union
Enabling Students
Leeds Beckett University
Sheffield Hallam University
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If you want to get involved as a sponsor, endorser, ambassador or partner then please contact info@positive-impact-events.com