



event
sustainability
live

LONDON

#ESLLONDON24

EVENT SUSTAINABILITY LIVE

VOXO AI summary

Wednesday 20th & Thursday 21st, November 2024

Summary

The Event Sustainability Live conference emphasised integrating sustainability into event planning as a fundamental component rather than an optional addition. A recurring theme was the need for a holistic approach, combining environmental, social, and governance (ESG) considerations to address global challenges and ensure resilience in the events industry.

Practical implementation was a major focus, with sessions highlighting the shift from ambition to action. Presenters shared strategies to embed sustainability into all stages of event planning, from setting clear objectives to working closely with suppliers and stakeholders. The emphasis was on making sustainability a core part of business strategy.

Balancing sustainability with cost and resource constraints was another key discussion point. While sustainable practices are often perceived as costly, several sessions demonstrated their potential to save money and enhance brand value. Examples included reducing waste, optimising energy use, and adopting reusable materials, showcasing the need for creativity and innovation.

Data and measurement were highlighted as critical tools for driving sustainability. Accurate data collection, baseline establishment, and progress tracking are essential for reducing the environmental impact of events. However, challenges in data collection and stakeholder engagement were also addressed, emphasising the importance of informed decision-making.

Collaboration emerged as a cornerstone of sustainable practices. Sessions underscored the importance of working with clients, suppliers, and communities to achieve sustainability goals. This collective approach, combined with sharing best practices, was particularly evident in discussions on circular economy principles and renewable energy solutions.

Education and storytelling played a pivotal role in engaging audiences and stakeholders. Transparent communication about sustainability initiatives and leveraging media to shift perceptions were seen as essential for driving change. By embedding sustainability into the core values and operations of events, the industry can reduce its environmental impact, enhance social value, and achieve long-term economic resilience.



Key takeaways

From ambition to action

The conference emphasised the need to move beyond discussions on sustainability and take concrete actions. By integrating sustainable practices into every stage of event planning, organisations can make meaningful progress towards their sustainability goals.

Balancing sustainability and cost

Sustainable practices are often perceived as costly, but the conference highlighted that they can lead to cost savings and enhanced brand value. By innovating and implementing efficient solutions, organisations can overcome budget limitations and achieve their sustainability objectives.

The importance of data and measurement

Accurate data collection and analysis are critical for understanding the environmental impact of events and making informed decisions. Establishing baselines and tracking progress through measurable metrics are essential for driving sustainability efforts.

Key takeaways

Collaboration is key

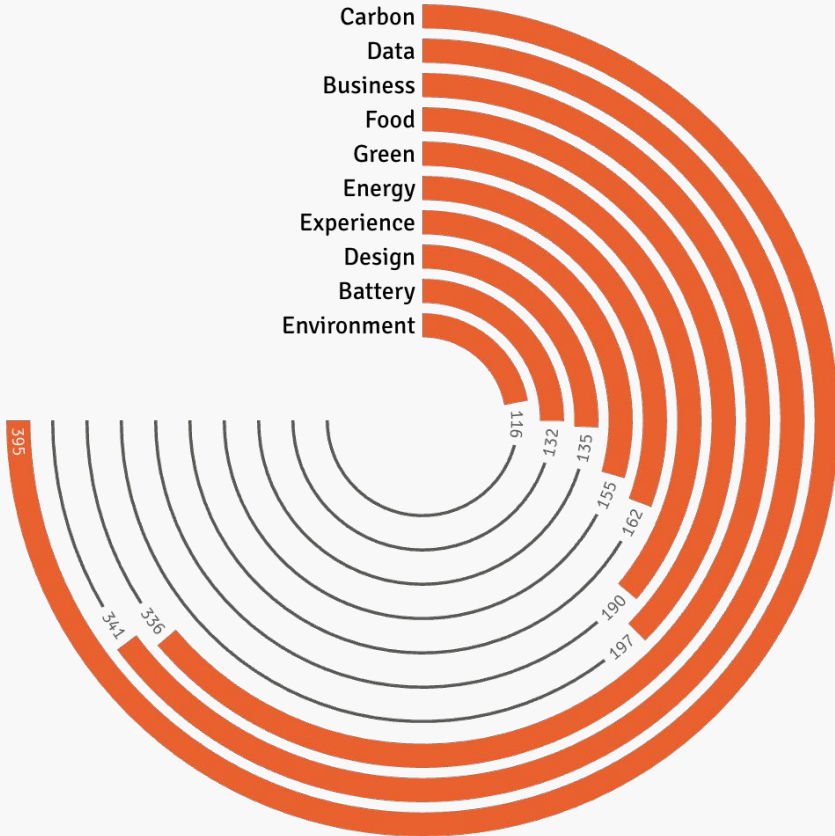
Collaboration with clients, suppliers, and the wider community is essential to achieving meaningful sustainability outcomes. By fostering a culture of collaboration and sharing best practices, the industry can drive collective progress towards sustainability goals.

Education and awareness

Educating audiences and stakeholders about the benefits and importance of sustainability is crucial for driving change. Transparent communication and engaging storytelling can shift public perception towards a more sustainable future, making sustainability a positive and integral part of events.



Buzzwords



How will new environmental legislation impact event planning?

New environmental legislation will heavily impact event planning, requiring transparency in emissions reporting, combating greenwashing, and prioritising sustainability. Organisations must demonstrate sustainability credentials to remain competitive, especially when working with European clients.

The Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) and Green Claims Directive will demand emissions reporting and prevent misleading claims, while the Nature Restoration Law and Ecodesign Directive will influence costs and resource use. UK companies are exempt unless operating in the EU, but global trends push for comprehensive ESG measures. Packaging, waste, and deforestation laws will drive sustainable practices, with SMEs and large firms facing detailed compliance requirements. Future legislation may mandate carbon emissions reporting akin to financial accounts, aligning businesses with net zero goals. Extended producer responsibility schemes will promote product reuse and recyclability, supporting a circular economy. Event planners must adopt early engagement, detailed documentation, and collaboration with suppliers to comply and enhance sustainability.

What strategies can be used to integrate sustainability across the entire event lifecycle?

Strategies for integrating sustainability across the entire event lifecycle were discussed extensively, with common themes emerging across multiple sessions. The importance of early planning and involving all stakeholders was a recurring point, ensuring sustainability is embedded from the outset.

Several sessions highlighted using digital tools to minimise waste and track carbon footprints, emphasising the need for data-driven decision-making. Circular economy principles, such as reusing and recycling materials, were frequently mentioned, alongside practical examples like using modular designs and local suppliers. Collaborative efforts and sharing best practices within the industry were also stressed as crucial for driving meaningful change. Certification systems like ISO standards and sustainability policies were noted as frameworks to guide and verify sustainable practices. Educating and engaging all team members and clients in sustainability efforts was seen as vital for fostering a culture of environmental responsibility. Continuous improvement, transparent reporting, and setting clear sustainability goals were identified as essential strategies to maintain momentum and achieve long-term success. Overall, integrating sustainability into every aspect of event planning and execution was considered crucial for reducing the environmental impact and promoting broader societal changes towards sustainability.

How can data-driven decisions improve sustainability and create lasting impacts?

Data-driven decisions are key to improving sustainability and creating lasting impacts, as highlighted throughout the conference. A recurring theme was the need to measure and track sustainability metrics like carbon footprints, energy use, and ESG factors.

These metrics enable realistic target setting, progress monitoring, and informed decision-making aligned with sustainability goals. Tools such as carbon calculators, real-time data apps, and reporting systems were deemed essential for data collection and analysis. This approach ensures transparency, accountability, and stakeholder engagement, fostering collective commitment to sustainability. Standardised guidelines and external audits are crucial for data accuracy and compliance. Leveraging detailed data helps organisations identify high-impact areas, take targeted actions, and improve practices while avoiding greenwashing and building credibility with stakeholders. Integrating data collection into existing processes and using visual tools, like infographics, enhances accessibility. Emphasising data-driven decisions highlights their role in achieving measurable sustainability outcomes and fostering a resilient, environmentally conscious industry.

Memorable Quote



Anna Abdelnoor - on legislation

"When you're looking at things in the right way, legislation acts as a catalyst for innovation."

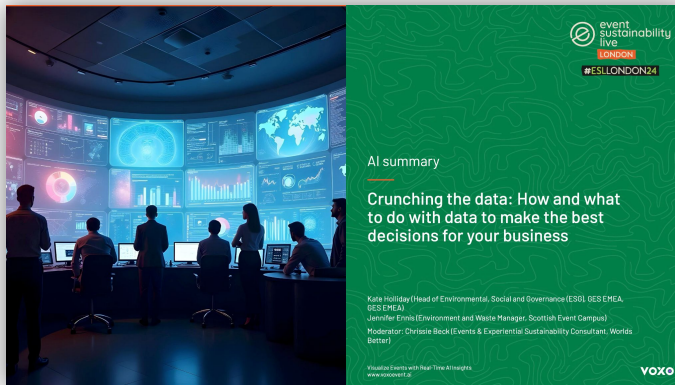
Memorable Quote



Joseph McDonnell – on asking for advice

"If you are ill, you would go to a hospital. If you want to get fit, you would go to the gym. So with sustainability, you're not an expert. You don't know what you're doing—that's fine. Just go and speak to someone and ask them. We could just tell you what the path is and it's free."

Memorable Quote



Kate Holliday – on social sustainability

"Social sustainability becomes the heart of your business. It becomes why people come to work, whether they enjoy their work, and what they give back to the communities that we work within."

Potential future topics:

Sustainable event design: technology and best practices for a greener future

Explore the cutting-edge technologies and best practices shaping sustainable event design. This session provides actionable strategies to reduce environmental impact using energy-efficient platforms, eco-conscious digital planning tools, and waste-minimising innovations. Learn how sustainable event technology supports both environmental goals and cost-efficiency, helping you create impactful, eco-friendly events.

Carbon-reducing innovations in event production

Learn about the latest technologies and strategies designed to minimise the carbon footprint of events. This session showcases cutting-edge energy-saving solutions, such as low-emission power sources and sustainable material innovations, that can reduce environmental impact while maintaining quality and efficiency in event production.



See you next event!