

Manchester Central 

ConferenceNews

Shaping a Sustainable Future

one year on



Conference News and Manchester Central have once again teamed up to measure how the industry is embracing and investing in sustainability

In 2022, we spoke to organisers about how sustainability is impacting their business practices. In 2023, we polled over 100 planners on social media and Guild, our community platform, about how things have changed.

How sustainable are we?

In our most recent audience survey, it was revealed that **78%** thought they had become more sustainable over the last 12 months and **69%** were investing in sustainable training. It's also encouraging to see that **75%** have invested more in sustainable initiatives.

However, only **66%** have made sustainability a priority within the procurement process to support sustainability targets. This is a critical area we identified for improvement a year ago and it still requires investment if the industry is going to make meaningful change.

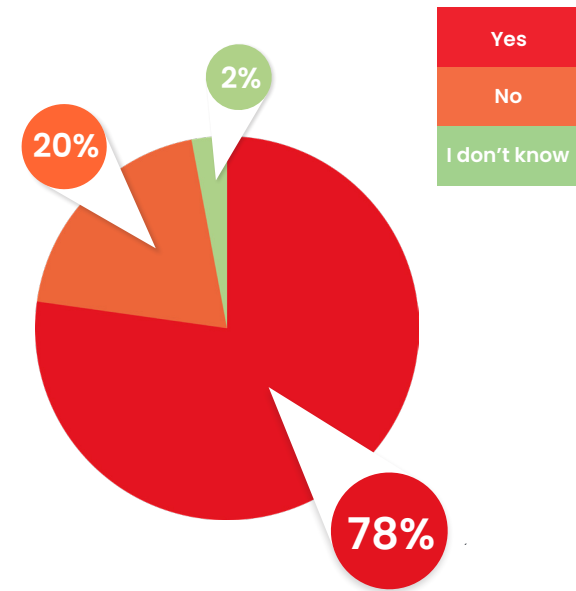
“Collaboration between event organisers, venues, and suppliers is crucial for sharing best practices and driving collective action across the industry. Most venues like Manchester Central have sustainability champions to assist in achieving sustainability goals; don’t hesitate to seek their expertise.

“Engage early with venues to explore support options, from promoting local suppliers to tracking emissions for carbon reporting. Both venues and organisers play a pivotal role in reducing emissions. To underscore the importance of these efforts, partnerships are critical; we must all align our objectives to create actions and initiatives that drive tangible and lasting change.”

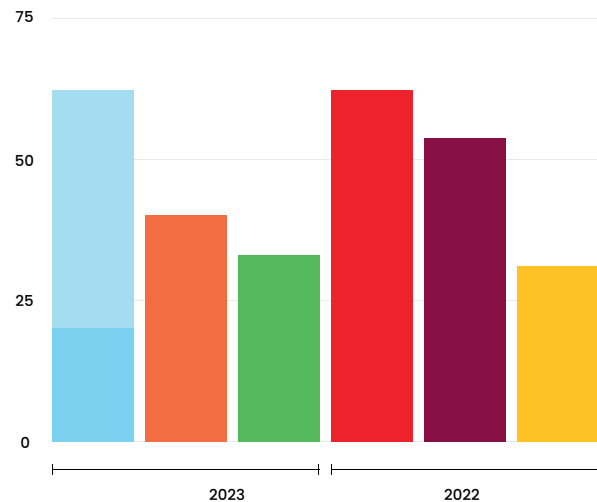


Lauren Hudson
sustainability and safety advisor
Manchester Central

In the last 12 months, would you say your organisation has become more sustainable?

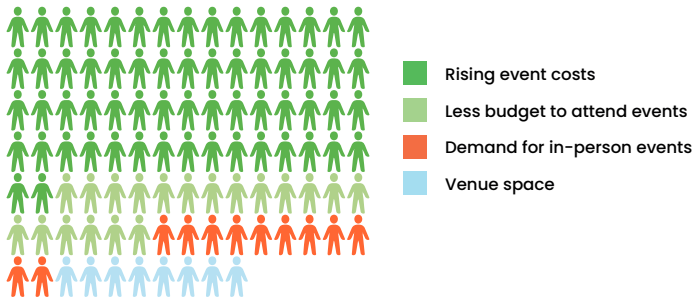


Sustainability priorities 2023 vs 2022



- 62% are focussing on their sustainable initiatives, and 23% have been focussing on carbon reporting
- 40% believe it's important to review exhibition materials
- 33% believe it's important to acquire venue carbon data
- 63% believed waste management was their priority for venue selection
- 52% thought sustainable accreditation was vital
- 32% wanted supply chain partners to monitor their energy usage

What do you consider to be the main barrier to your organisation's sustainable growth?



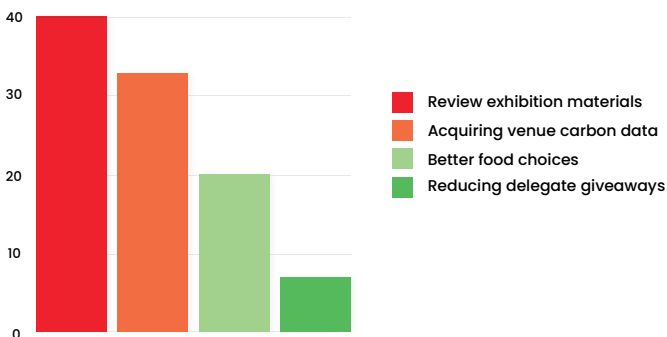
62% of our respondents agreeing that the monetary impact of sustainability was a prohibiting factor. This is compared to just 42% in our previous survey, proving the cost of being sustainable is impacting progress.

"It is undoubtable that inflation is having a huge impact on event budgets, but sustainable practices requiring costly budget line items is simply a misconception. Sustainable improvements to event design can be applied in many ways that don't cost money, for example committing to have conversations with suppliers to understand the impacts of the materials they use and choose a more carbon-efficient option."



Hannah Jarvis
junior event sustainability consultant
Worlds Better

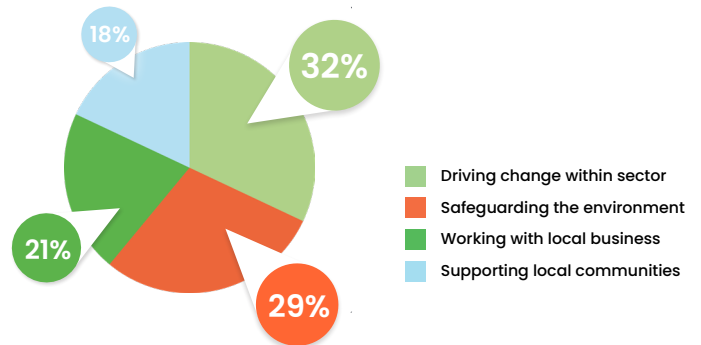
When considering sustainability at your event, what is the most important sustainability initiative to you?



Leaving a legacy

In our survey, 90% of our audience believed that leaving an event legacy was either important or very important. Driving change within the sector was an important point to 32% of our respondents. This demonstrates a desire from planners to create inspiring content that has a lasting impact and motivates players within their respective sector to take action.

Which is the most important factor when trying to create an event impact/legacy?



"The events industry has enormous potential to make substantial, positive impacts regarding social justice issues by educating and galvanising the communities that we serve. What will be key going forward is establishing precisely how we can go about strategically planning and measuring this sort of impact over time. This sort of diachronic and metric-oriented approach promises not only to provide tangible insights that can inform event strategies, but to also create a culture of accountability within our sector."



Hannah Burke-Tomlinson
senior programme manager
Outstanding Schools

A year on from our first Sustainability Report, it's clear that many of us are moving in the right direction. However, many challenges identified from our 2022 findings still remain. Cost continues to be one of the largest barriers facing planners and driving sustainability through the supply chain is still a roadblock on the way to a net-zero future. Undoubtedly, there's a shared commitment to maximising the positive and minimising the negative impacts our industry create. We must continue this momentum to achieve our collective sustainability mission.



Like these insights? Download our sustainability report using the QR code to the left.

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