



THE BULB

**SUSTAINABILITY, SAFETY AND EVENTS
IN A POST-LOCKDOWN ERA**

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INTRODUCTION

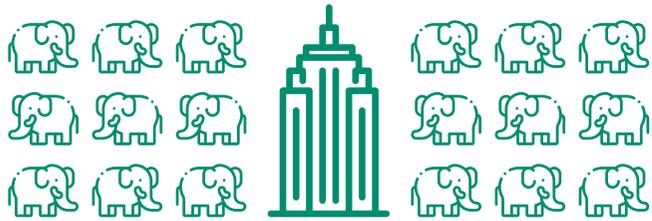
Alongside the devastating human cost of the virus and the unfathomable impact on the global economy, Covid-19 has led to a pandemic of plastic pollution. The demand for single-use personal protective equipment (PPE), disposable wipes, gloves and masks, cleaning agents and hand sanitiser is at a record high - and unfortunately so are the negative impacts on the environment, with items to landfill soaring.

We could never have forecasted the impact of Covid-19, but it's not too late to learn from this and shape a more resilient future. The pandemic will change the way we plan and execute events, adapting to the new ways of living and socialising. As we look towards the start of live events, and find ways to rebuild and recover, we can guarantee that PPE will be crucial in all planning and execution. With this in mind, we can't lose sight of our responsibility to the Planet as well as to our teams and attendees.

**MOVING FORWARD,
THE MEASURE OF A
SUCCESSFUL EVENT
WILL BE HOW
RESPONSIBLE IT IS
FOR BOTH PEOPLE
AND THE PLANET**

8,300 MILLION METRIC TONNES

OF PLASTIC HAS BEEN PRODUCED GLOBALLY SINCE 1950



That's the weight equivalent of 25,000 Empire State Buildings. Or more than one billion elephants.

THIS NUMBER IS EXPECTED TO HIT **12,000 MILLION METRIC TONNES BY 2050**

MORE THAN 1BN

ITEMS OF PPE WERE USED IN THE UK BETWEEN FEBRUARY AND APRIL 2020

THE GREAT PACIFIC GARBAGE PATCH IS A FLOATING CLUSTER OF DISCARDED PLASTIC.

IT COVERS AN ESTIMATED 1.6 MILLION SQUARE KILOMETRES:

THAT'S THREE TIMES THE SIZE OF FRANCE

If each person in the UK used a single-use face mask every day for a year, it would create an additional

66,000
tons of plastic waste

If 1% of face masks are incorrectly disposed, it would result in



10 million masks per month lost in the environment

WHAT IS THIS GUIDE FOR?

We have a window of opportunity to shape the way we plan and deliver experiential and events. We are not passive observers, but rather, are active players in the way our industry operates and the future of this industry is strongly affected by the choices we make today.

It is critical that we recognise that human health and planetary health are intertwined and dependent on one another and that we have a responsibility to safeguard both.

This guide is a framework for identifying the 'New Normal' and proposing ways to 'Lower Your Impact'. It is a tool to support you in navigating and exploring more sustainable ways of working.

We believe in the power of collaboration and welcome contributions from our network and clients.

We will continue to develop, grow and adapt this guide as the world changes. It is by no means exhaustive and, given the fast pace of change at the moment, it is a snapshot based on the regulations as they currently stand.

For up to date information on regulations please visit [Gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk).

WHY SHOULD SUSTAINABILITY BE A PRIORITY?

No organisation can afford to approach sustainability as a 'nice to have' or as separate from the 'real business' anymore. The businesses that embrace sustainability in all its forms - **social, environmental, and economic** - demonstrate competitiveness and a commitment to their organisation's long-term profitability and growth, benefiting both their bottom line and the planet.

The need to move with the 'new normal' and consciously take into account the impact business activities have both on people and the planet is how the leaders of tomorrow will thrive. How an organisation produces an event highlights what matters to them and what they value. It is a public statement of how conscious they are of their approach to using resources, exceeding employee and customer expectations, and creating a legacy.

The thriving businesses of the future will be those who do great things with less.

- ⊗ **Less food waste**
 - ⊗ **Less waste to landfill**
 - ⊗ **Fewer carbon emissions**
 - ⊗ **Less inequality**
- ### AND LESS IS MORE
- ⊗ **More budget available from costs saved**
 - ⊗ **Better ability to adapt to environmental changes**
 - ⊗ **Maintaining value from materials used, using circular economy approaches**
 - ⊗ **More business from millennials**

SUSTAINABLE DESIGN

The way we design, produce and dispose of our creative productions are unsustainable, contributing to the rapid depletion of our natural resources as well as placing the event industry as the planet's fifth biggest polluter.

It doesn't have to be like this. 80% of the environmental impact of a product is determined at the design stage. This stage of event planning is about decision making and sustainability simply comes down to putting responsible decision making at the heart of designing your event. Making responsible decisions across supply chains, processes, people and materials and embracing and embedding these choices into the creative and operations as a whole, rather than at the expense of each other.

The Circular Economy Approach

This approach aims to eliminate waste through redesign - i.e. designing waste out of your products and processes. It guides you into setting targets that are 'restorative and regenerative by design'. In the context of events, instead of disposing of materials, builds and production, it requires you to recycle and restore, maximising the potential of products, components and materials. Employing this approach at the design phase not only encourages creative thinking and provides environmental gains but you gain financially too because you waste less and reuse more.

THE NEW NORMAL

- ⊗ Social distancing measures of up to two metres to be incorporated into event builds and experience
- ⊗ Physical signage to be implemented every step of the way
- ⊗ Venue and event to be touchless wherever possible - the use of smart phones to enter the venue
- ⊗ Reduce the number of touch points throughout - make the experience as contactless as possible

LOWER YOUR IMPACT

- ⊗ **The absorbent natural fibres in cardboard have shown to dry the virus up more quickly than plastic or metal - and it's easily recycled. Check out [Bum Box](#) and [Ecoevent](#) cardboard furniture which can be used for both indoor and outdoor events**
- ⊗ **Copper and Aluminium kill off the virus in up to 8 hours due to their antimicrobial properties. [Bematrix](#) structures are aluminum and modular framing systems that can be adapted to suit venue and event requirements**
- ⊗ **If you decide to go virtual, check out [Stitch](#), a bespoke virtual event experience whose profits go directly back to helping people out of homelessness**

ECOBOOTH

There are brilliant companies who are reducing their waste, but how about going one step further and using existing plastic pollution to build events and experiences? [Ecoboath](#), a B Corporation, have recycled 35 tonnes of plastic waste into positive impact projects for brands and NGO's across the globe. Check out their work and how they could help you build your next creative experience.

EVENT SIGNAGE

Signage has got a centre stage position in this new era and getting it right is vital for reducing risk and providing reassurance to your team and attendees.

THE NEW NORMAL

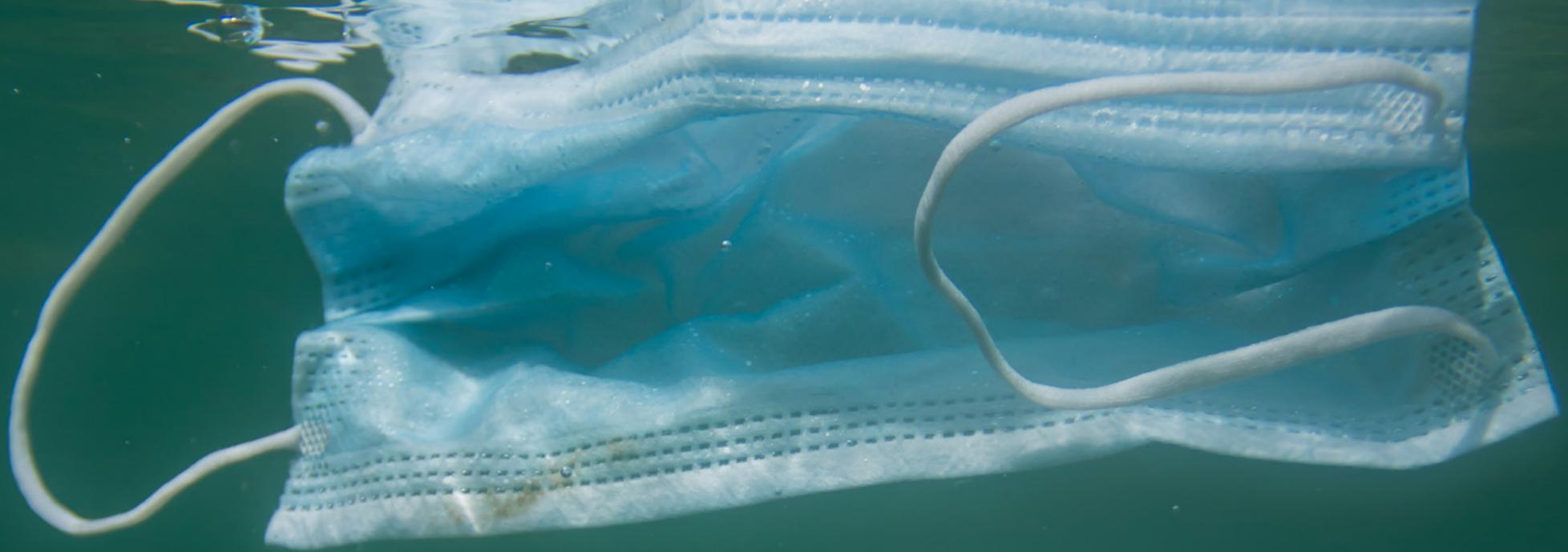
- ⊗ Visual reminders must be present throughout the experience and should be reinforced with pre-event communication
- ⊗ Bespoke apps will become the norm for registration, sharing of vital information and push notifications on health and safety and event updates
- ⊗ Informative and educational information is vital:
 - Ensuring coordination and consistency in crafting and delivering culturally appropriate and language-specific messages to participants and the public
 - Advising people with higher risk of transmitting Covid-19 not to attend
 - Emergency contact details for all participants to enable contact tracing if a participant at the event becomes ill with Covid-19
 - Right to refuse access to the venue if suspect that attendee has symptoms of Covid-19
 - There must be an agreed preparedness plan in place if a participant becomes ill and a “STOP” event rule that all staff are trained on, including rapid isolation of the ill person and a safe transfer to a local health facility

LOWER YOUR IMPACT

- ⊗ **Avoid foamex, foamboard, laminate, polystyrene and PVC - the usual bad boys of production**
- ⊗ **Create signs that can be reused for future events - don't date or make them event specific**
- ⊗ **Keep your impacts low through hiring digital signage. Event Ignite have a great range of technology that provides a contactless way of messaging**

SUSTAINABLE SIGNAGE COMPANY

The Sustainable Signage Company can provide all your signage needs using a plant based technology with plastic-free materials which are 100% sustainable. The signs are fully water resistant and also recyclable in the paper waste stream so can be recycled and repurposed once you have finished.



PPE

The need for single-use PPE looks like it will be around for some time, with many countries making face masks mandatory in order to ease up on lockdown measures. Protecting those at risk and stopping the spread of the virus is of paramount importance, but the rise in single-use masks and gloves have come with a detrimental environmental cost.

THE NEW NORMAL

- ⊗ Face masks act as a protective barrier to prevent the spread of Covid-19
- ⊗ Face masks will be mandatory for events, alongside public transport and enclosed and crowded public spaces where social distancing isn't possible
- ⊗ Staff will need to wear clean face masks at all times
- ⊗ Event organisers may need to provide clean face masks and gloves for attendees as well as notify all attendees to wear face masks to the event and hold the right to refuse entry if they do not
- ⊗ Please check [Gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) for updates ahead of your event

REUSABLE/ CLOTH MASKS

- Research has evidenced that cloth face masks are just as effective as disposable face masks at stopping the spread of Covid-19 in a non-medical setting
- Cloth face masks should be used if it has determined that a respirator face mask is not required based on a workplace hazard assessment
- Spare cloth face masks need to be available for the team to change out during the shift as needed
- All cloth face masks should be washed at 60C after use to kill off any virus particles

The Life Cycle Assessment of single-use reusable face masks concluded that single use plastic masks would result in **'ten times more climate change impact than using reusable masks'**.

For branded cloth face masks we recommend contacting Allwag or YR.

GLOVES

- Latex gloves are the lesser of two evils and should be sourced where possible instead of vinyl gloves. Latex material is extracted from rubber trees whereas vinyl gloves are made from synthetic polymers

FACE PROTECTION VISORS

- Service staff are advised to use Face Protection Visors. If the visor becomes moist, they should be changed and sterilized
- Plastic-free options are becoming available fast - check out REELshield which is made from FSC food-grade paper board and PEFC renewable and sustainable wood pulp and has a A Plastic Planet Plastic Free Trust Mark

DISPOSAL

- Do not attempt to recycle any PPE. This is important. If you put PPE in the recycling streams, you will not only contaminate the entire bin of contents, which will result in everything ending up landfill, but you also put frontline workers at risk of potential exposure to the virus through unbeknowingly collecting, sorting and handling the material
- The government guidelines are to dispose of non-medical PPE in black-bag waste whereas medical waste would typically be incinerated. Neither of these approaches align with a circular economy concept
- When planning your event, please contact your waste collector, or discuss this with the venue, to ensure you have the appropriate bins on site, and that these are collected and disposed of properly, avoiding landfill

TERRACYCLE

Single-use PPE masks and gloves are considered "non-recyclable" types of waste in the traditional recycling systems.

TerraCycle, the innovative recycling company known for tackling the hard to recycle everyday products, provides a unique solution for this issue. PPE can be disposed of via their Zero Waste Boxes (a bespoke box has been created for the plastic free REELshield visor), when full, these are returned to TerraCycle for processing and cleaning before being melted into pellets. The recycled pellets can be used by third parties to manufacture a variety of new products, therefore providing a low impact and circular solution to ridding your event of PPE waste.

You may also come across TerraCycle's partnership with O2, where PPE collection boxes have been placed in all stores across the UK encouraging the public to responsibly dispose of their PPE instead of throwing it in the bin.



FOOD AND BEVERAGE

There has been a moral panic regarding plastic packaging during Covid-19, the government suspended the 5p plastic bag fee for supermarket deliveries, reusable coffee cups were temporarily banned by some chains and the global packaging market was projected to grow by 5.5% led by the demand for single-use cups and cutlery.

The panic was unnecessary and a [statement](#) published by over 100 scientists confirmed that reusable containers were safe to use as long as they are washed properly and social distancing was observed.

THE NEW NORMAL

- ⊗ Kitchens will be hot spots for the virus to spread so in addition to existing high safety standards, face coverings (cloth face masks should be changed every 15 - 30 minutes) and regular sanitising of stations will be mandatory
- ⊗ Social distancing needs to be employed so kitchens will need more time to prepare
- ⊗ Sterilizing of surfaces should happen regularly with a disinfection with an alcohol rating above 99.5%. The kitchen should have a deep clean every day
- ⊗ Communication is more important than ever. Stickers on all food packaging not only provides key information but also doubles as a tamper-evident seal
- ⊗ No more buffets or tray service. Food distribution will be replaced by static stations where guests will be required to use disposable gloves and hand sanitiser before handling food

LOWER YOUR IMPACT

- ⊗ **Reusables should always be prioritised where possible e.g. crockery and cutlery that can be washed and reused. Suppliers such as [Stack Cup](#) and [Green Goblet](#) provide reusable and bespoke branded cups for events**
- ⊗ **Request attendees bring their own water bottle and provide contactless refill stations**
- ⊗ **Vegware's 'Made from Plants' stickers means that these can be composted (but note the disposal recommendations below) - unlike ordinary stickers. These are also a great opportunity for branding and messaging**



COMPOSTABLE... BIODEGRADABLE... PLANT-BASED...RECYCLABLE....?

How to Dispose Responsibly

If you must use disposable food packaging and utensils, make sure you understand the material that you are using and set in place the correct waste stream to responsibly dispose of it.

Recommended Disposal Plan of Action

1. Seek advice from your waste operator (usually Local Authorities), the venue or organisation such as WRAP informing them of the material you intend to use, the items and size of packaging and if it will be contaminated with food. You can also contact the supplier of the product itself to see how they recommend disposing of the product (e.g. Vegwear has a list of facilities that can recycle its products)
2. From this advice and based on your available recycling facilities, create a disposal plan ordering the correct bins and booking your disposal collection following the event
3. Keep it simple - use one material/product brand for the entire event so it makes recycling easier

4. Make sure your bins are labelled correctly so it is clear to attendees which bin is for which item: one wrong throw could mean the entire bin goes to landfill, along with your recycling efforts!
5. Train your teams and brand ambassadors on your disposal plan so they can guide attendees to the right bin throughout the event

Compostable products such as [Vegware](#) or products that use Bagasse, a sugar cane fibre, (look into [Event Supplies](#) or [BioPak](#)) are preferred as long as you have the right conditions in order to compost effectively. The reality is that much of the UK recycling infrastructure is not set up to fully treat the compostables that they receive so it often ends up in landfill.

Go to extra lengths to make sure compostable packaging is not put in the mainstream recycling bins. It can contaminate the whole bin, meaning everything will go to landfill.

For more information on how to dispose of your waste correctly, read this [useful guide](#) by Refill or sign up to a [waste masterclass](#).



FOOD DONATION

There is no evidence, at present, that Covid-19 can be transmitted by food, and with the growing unemployment, donations are critical for supplying those in need during a time of increasing demand.

For cooked and prepared food explore your local food banks and homeless shelters and agree to the donation ahead of your event so you can plan to transport the food once the event has finished. For large donations of unprepared food, organisations such as [City Harvest](#) and [Fare Share](#) can help with redistribution.

Check out apps like [To Good To Go](#) and [Food Cloud](#). If you have ongoing waste, get in touch with [Winnow](#) who have innovative technology to help combat leftovers.

KEEPING IT CLEAN

Who knew that washing your hands, for how long and to what song would become the conversation piece for the first half of 2020! Sanitising ourselves as well as our surroundings is incredibly important in the bid to stop the spread of Covid-19.

THE NEW NORMAL

- ⊗ All venues must have a deep clean and sanitisation pre-event
- ⊗ Think about all of your high-touch and high-traffic areas. Regular disinfection and cleaning of the surfaces is required hourly, if not more, by designated staff
- ⊗ Hand sanitiser dispensers will be mandatory throughout venues. All staff and attendees should sanitise their hands after touching any item
- ⊗ Touchless dispensers are preferred, as dispenser buttons are high touch points and must be disinfected between each use
- ⊗ Shared items such as phones and keyboards need to be disinfected between use
- ⊗ Sanitisers should have a minimum of 60% alcohol content to be effective against Covid-19
- ⊗ Bins should be lidded and foot pedal operated or automatic and should be emptied, disinfected and liners replaced hourly
- ⊗ Refer to Gov.uk for guidance on the type and dilution of cleaning products A post-event deep clean sanitisation is required throughout the venue
- ⊗ AV equipment needs to be sanitised pre-event and throughout the event
- ⊗ Toilets need to be deep cleaned after every person. Cleaners should wear full PPE which should be disposed of on a regular basis
- ⊗ All suppliers should wear face masks and gloves and keep to the socially distant rules
- ⊗ Don't forget to publish and share your procedures: visible cleaning activity will give confidence to attendees. Think about how you can get creative using signage - see above [↑](#)

LOWERING YOUR IMPACT

GREEN ZONE

GreenZone is a leading cleaning company with sustainable practice at the heart delivering chemical free cleaning without the harmful effects including limited VOC's associated with damaging health. GreenZone operate a zero to landfill policy across all sites, educating clients on waste hierarchy to minimise waste on site and encourage the recycle, re-use and recovery strategy.

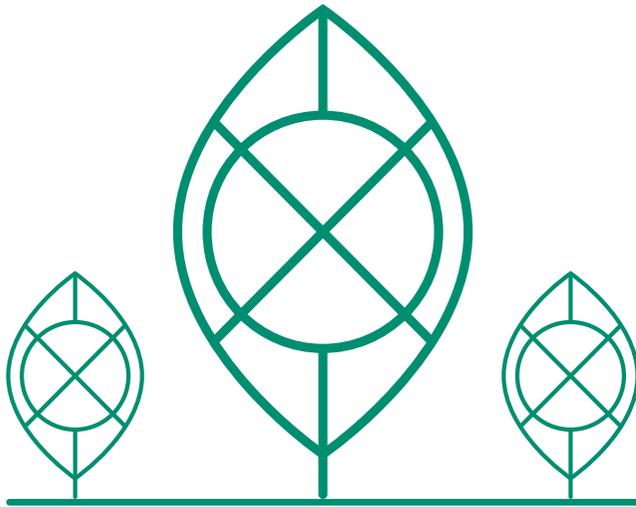
DISINFECT

Disinfect is an innovation and global group that was established during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, providing an entry point solution for venues and gatherings. The sanitisation units have a three step process which every member of staff and each attendee must go through, not only providing safety but also reassurance that everyone has gone through the same process.

The three step process begins with a temperature check before moving on to hand sanitisation and finally the attendee walks through a dry mist which kills any bacteria and virus in come in contact with that may be elsewhere about the person.

The booths are made from a recyclable aluminium framing system and the company operates on a refill system for the empty cleaning fluid bottles.

PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES



Social sustainability promotes the wellbeing of people and communities and should be at the heart of every decision that we make and every event we run. Transparency and clear communication around health and safety will be demanded for every event moving forward, meaning information required from participants is going to stretch the limits of privacy. Access to live events will be tighter, requests may be made regarding the health and travel information of staff and participants and a system may be put into place to assess risk.

As well as maintaining safety, the fear factor has to be managed as well. Attendees need to be reassured and feel confident that as an event organiser, you have put every measure possible in place to prevent the risk and spread of Covid-19.

THE NEW NORMAL

- ⊗ Keeping people safe is the key responsibility of every event organiser moving forward
- ⊗ Access to events should be by registration only. Registration will require the health and travel information of the participant in order to pass pre-clearance and have access to the event. All event organisers must recognise the sensitivity of this information and protect the privacy of attendees as far as possible
- ⊗ Systems will need to measure the likelihood of impact of the virus on attendee and confirm access
- ⊗ Explore the Government's Track and Trace process so you can contact all attendees if someone was diagnosed with Covid-19
- ⊗ All staff and participants to the event will be thermal scanned on arrival to the venue. This must be clearly noted in registration and briefings to ensure consent
- ⊗ Delegates refusing to undertake a temperature check should be refused entry
- ⊗ Venues will need to be equipped with thermal scanning and this will impact on the choice of venues moving forward. As well as Disinfect, we also recommend [Noba](#)

ONE PLAN

Maintaining social distancing rules in large gatherings is going to be a challenge, one that many event planners will not have experience doing. But not to worry, this is where online software, One Plan, comes into play.

[One Plan](#) is a site plan tool that has been developed to include a toolkit of social distancing calculators and assessments to support event planning. The toolkit measures your event space and calculates how many people can fit in the area whilst maintaining the set distance between each person. Not only does it calculate the social distance but it can also model your arrival and exit, allowing you to plan how many people you can process in any given time and the queuing space required to ensure a smooth arrival process.

SO WHAT NOW?

Calls for a 'green recovery' out of Covid-19 have been growing with global businesses and NGO's leading the demand for a plan that avoids returning back to the 'normal' which led to the climate crisis in the first place and towards a more sustainable future.

Whilst we in the events industry wait for a signal of when business can resume, we have an opportunity to ensure that they do not resume 'business as usual'. The companies that prosper will be those that understand sustainability cannot exist in a vacuum and will use this time to invest in training their teams in new working practices that put economic, social, environmental and cultural concerns at the heart of how they deliver events.

It is often said that out of a crisis, comes transformation. Ways of working that previously seemed unattainable, now feel within reach. Now is the time to reorganise and restructure all that we know. To reassess our company values and priorities and to remodel our approaches towards a more sustainable future.

WHO ARE THE BULB?

The Bulb was set up to produce creative and meaningful events that educate and empower audiences, inspire change and leave a positive mark on our Planet and on people.

We fused our expertise in event production with sustainability and we can help you do the same.

We help you transition to a sustainable business model, reduce your environmental impacts and create strategies that work in practice.

HOW WE CAN HELP YOU

SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGIES

We align your organisation's purpose, strategy and business structure to better serve a sustainable business model. We create strategies that work, bringing to life the plans on the page to the event in action.

SUSTAINABILITY CONSULTANCY FOR INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS

We provide consultancy for projects from the ground up, advising on sustainable suppliers, materials, social impacts and metrics. We can combine this with creative consultancy to make sure your project is sustainable from design stage through to completion.

EVENT PRODUCTION, CREATIVE DIRECTION AND PROGRAMMING

We create and deliver innovative and purpose driven events with an environmental and social conscience. We can do it for your organisation from creative concepts to programming the right speakers for your stage and production delivery.

WHAT TO DO NEXT...



Change the way you produce events with us

To find out how we can help you, contact us [here](#)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Selina's epiphany moment came while working on the London 2012 Opening and Closing Ceremonies, which served as memorable bookends for the most sustainable Games to-date. As well as the Games, Selina has been part of high profile projects including England 2018 World Cup Bid, the Rio Olympics 2016 and as senior management for the ITV events team. Recognising the antiquated and wasteful approach to events, Selina founded The Bulb in 2015 to champion sustainability and legacy in the industry. Fusing her expertise in event production with sustainability, Selina provides consultancy to event organisers, brands and NGO's to transform their approach and implement strategies that work in practice, enabling them to create events with environmental and social causes at the heart.



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