



Scottsdale Green by Design

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1. Overview

It is the Scottsdale Convention & Visitors Bureau's goal to keep Scottsdale at the forefront of vacation and meeting choices for visitors, whether traveling for leisure or business. Therefore, we are committed to monitoring new trends that can benefit local tourism business and Scottsdale's product offerings. One trend that has emerged worldwide in recent years is the concept of "sustainable tourism."

In fact, going green is a key factor in staying competitive and vying for lucrative tourism dollars. In 2007, a survey conducted by Orbitz to gauge U.S. travelers' opinions revealed that 67 percent of Americans say the eco-friendliness of a destination is important to them, and 63 percent said they would pay more for green products and services.

As a result, the Scottsdale CVB wanted to investigate tools and programs that would allow Scottsdale's tourism industry to contribute directly to environmental sustainability and conservation of natural ecosystems.

The Scottsdale Convention & Visitors Bureau began addressing sustainability issues in early 2007 and through various efforts has created great momentum in helping its approximately 600 members become more sustainable. In addition, we have garnered positive media coverage for Scottsdale and our members, as well as interest from other convention and visitors bureaus that want to learn from our efforts and implement similar programs in their communities.

2. Program Establishment

Our first step was to learn from our members about sustainability practices in which they were already engaging – everything from asking resort guests to reuse towels to businesses founded on sustainable principles. Therefore, in February 2007, the CVB sent a sustainability survey to its membership. We analyzed responses to this survey to determine how sustainable tourism might provide product development and marketing opportunities for Scottsdale. From the results, the CVB was able to identify need areas for education, resource development, and communication and marketing assistance.

We announced our plan to focus on sustainability initiatives to our members at a quarterly member meeting in May 2007 and invited interested parties to join our Sustainability Advisory Committee, which helped guide our sustainability initiatives. This group of advisors from public and private sector organizations throughout the Valley, as well as staff from the CVB, helped develop a strategy to ensure sustainable, green and eco-tourism information is effectively communicated to the local tourism industry.

The communications plan included green tips and other green industry information and trends in the CVB's communication vehicles to CVB members, industry partners, travel agents, tour operators, meeting and incentive planners, media, and the local Scottsdale community.

In addition, the CVB coordinated two educational seminars for its members to assist them in going green. The first seminar, held in November 2007, helped CVB members get started with their green programs. At this seminar, guests heard the City of Scottsdale's senior environmental coordinator speak about how small businesses can take simple steps to become a part of the environmentally conscious effort to be green. In addition, a local restaurant owner/chef talked about his restaurant's process of becoming more green and how these changes are positively impacting their bottom line as well as their attractiveness to customers. At the second seminar, held in March 2008, guests learned how to implement a green program for recycling, energy conservation, water conservation and green purchasing from four experts. All total, these two seminars attracted 125 attendees. And, of course, the Scottsdale CVB worked with each host venue to offer recycling and reduce waste, and provided all materials and handouts the day following the seminar via e-mail to further showcase to members how easy it can be to be more environmentally friendly.

It also was important to ensure the CVB was leading by example. Therefore, we created an internal green team, and initiated a month-long effort to educate our staff. This included a daily tip to help our staff be more environmentally conscious as they go about their day-to-day activities. In addition, we educated the staff and our members on what the CVB was already doing to green our business, including:

- We recycle paper. Each month, the CVB recycles almost nine full bins of paper, which are picked up bi-monthly by the Arizona Center for the Blind and Visually

Impaired, Inc. This company recycles all of our paper and keeps nearly 1.5 tons of paper from ending up in a land fill.

- We recycle aluminum cans and plastic bottles with the Arizona Center as well. We are currently recycling nearly two full bins of aluminum and plastic per month. Recycling just one aluminum can saves enough energy to run a television for three hours.
- We recycle printer cartridges, which are reusable products that can easily be refurbished, refilled and resold for future use. By recycling our printer cartridges, the CVB reduces trash and helps printer cartridge manufacturers keep the cost of printer cartridges down each year.
- We purchase water for staff and guests in large jugs rather than supplying individual water bottles. Many staff members have been bringing their own reusable water bottles and coffee cups to the office to reduce the amount of plastic cups and treated paper cups we consume.
- Creamer and sugar are provided in bulk rather than individual packets or large refrigerated containers, which spoil before they can be consumed.
- We have switched to purchasing recyclable napkins in the kitchen. The products are made from 30% post-consumer recycled paper.
- Whenever possible, the CVB purchases Energy Star products, which are certified as energy efficient electronics.
- Also, whenever possible, the CVB works with our external printers to print projects on partially or wholly recycled paper and we often request the use of soy-based inks rather than chemical-based inks to reduce the harmful pollutants emitted into the environment.

A Web site, ScottsdaleGreenByDesign.com, was launched to help educate visitors and meeting planners on the green offerings within the destination and is updated with new offerings as they become available.

In April 2008, the CVB unveiled its *Scottsdale Green by Design Tool Kit* to encourage members of Scottsdale's tourism industry and business community to implement measures that will reduce their impact on the environment. From simple steps that can be taken immediately to ideas for larger-scale programs, the tool kit has everything needed to start greening a business today.

The tool kits, which are made from recycled materials, are \$15, and 100 percent of the purchase price for each kit is donated to the Desert Discovery Center Fund to help create a public access center within the McDowell Sonoran Preserve. The center will be a key recreational and educational experience, providing visitors and residents with opportunities to explore Scottsdale's unique Sonoran Desert environment.

The *Scottsdale Green by Design Tool Kit* includes a comprehensive guide book, a desktop daily reminder and online resources such as directory listings of green resources and industry best practices. With this kit, businesses learn how greening their business can boost their bottom line, how to determine which programs are the best fit for their company, the best ways to start a green program and get employees on board,

why and how to promote their green efforts to customers, the steps some local businesses have taken to help the environment, and important terms for understanding eco-friendly lingo.

In fall 2008, the Scottsdale CVB launched the Scottsdale Green by Design Awards to recognize companies that exhibit outstanding green practices. Winners were announced at a CVB member meeting. In addition, the winners were recognized with plaques at the Desert Botanical Garden commemorating their efforts, as well as recognition on the CVB's green Web site, in an e-mail blast sent to visitors who have requested Scottsdale destination information, and in CVB publications.

3. Goals and Benchmarking

Our goal for the program included establishing the Scottsdale Convention & Visitors Bureau at the core of this issue for our local hospitality community so we could serve as an educational resource for their efforts as well as a communication vehicle for their accomplishments. Our first steps were to educate our members on the issues at hand, then provide resources to help them increase their sustainability efforts, and then to help communicate their efforts to the local community as well as the traveling public.

To date, we have measured the program's success based upon attendance at educational seminars, unique visitors to the Web site, and interest in the green tool kit, as well as continued feedback from members at our events requesting additional information on the subject. During the past two years, we also have seen huge changes in our members – from the types of products and services they provide to the green business practices they have in place.

The Scottsdale CVB will be surveying members in early 2009 to determine next steps of the program. This research also will help us further measure program success and steps taken by our members since the program's launch.

4. Outcomes and Environmental Benefit

Our program has changed not only our operations at the Scottsdale Convention & Visitors Bureau, but also at many of our members' businesses as well. These combined efforts also are helping to spotlight the efforts of the city as a whole.

In 2009, the CVB will address more local issues, such as solar energy and transportation. In addition, we will work closely with the City of Scottsdale to ensure recycling programs are made available to all businesses in our community. Currently, household recycling is wide spread, but business recycling is not supported as widely by the city's services.

5. Relevance to Traveler or Travel Industry

To further support the needs of travelers and showcase the city's sustainability efforts, the CVB worked with the City of Scottsdale downtown office to provide new recycling containers in the downtown area. These containers allow visitors throughout downtown to easily recycle.

Travelers to Scottsdale also are able to quickly access information regarding member businesses that offer green products and services, or that are taking steps to make their operations more environmentally friendly. This information is posted on the CVB's Web site, which also encourages visitors to seek out resources that fall in line with their own eco-values.

6. Real-World Examples

There are several examples of how the Scottsdale CVB's program helped get businesses thinking about these issues and making changes at their place of business. We also have seen instances where members were already tackling these issues, and yet did not know how to market their efforts. For example:

- The downtown Scottsdale trolleys run on bio-diesel fuel that is produced from domestic, renewable resources and contains no petroleum. Through their involvement in the Scottsdale CVB's Green by Design program, the trolley operator, Ollie the Trolley, has begun educating the public on this green service available to residents and visitors.
- Many of Scottsdale's golf courses have achieved, or are working toward, certification in the Audubon International Cooperative Sanctuary Program. However, before the Scottsdale CVB's program, most of these businesses rarely talked about these efforts or considered such efforts to be a competitive advantage. Today, they are communicating these efforts to their customers.
- The Scottsdale CVB's green program helped provide the Four Seasons Resort Scottsdale at Troon North with the tools they needed to launch a green team on property.