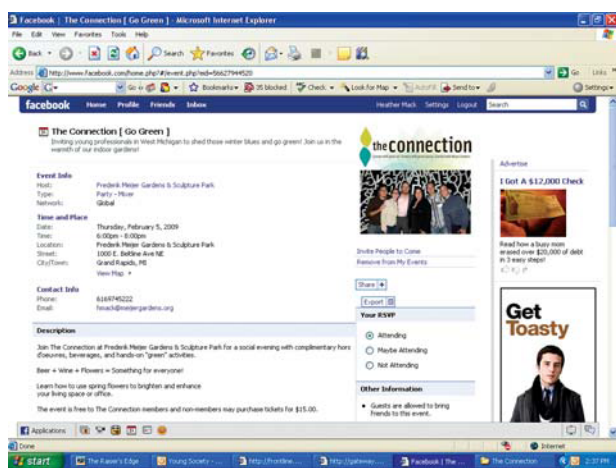


# Steps to greening your meetings

**GREEN, GREENER  
GREENEST**



## GREEN: Skip the paper

Instead of sending out reams of paper invitations to people who'd probably throw them out or not look at them for days, companies are cutting costs and taking their message to where the people are – the online world.

Heather Mack, membership events coordinator for Fredrick Meijer Gardens and Sculpture Park, did just that as she planned to gather an array of young professionals at the gardens for a new membership level, called The Connection, aimed at those in their 20s, 30s and 40s. All invites and communication for the two Connection events were on Facebook or via e-mail.

"It's where the people are," Mack told TBL. "Plus, since this was a brand-new group – not knowing outcome – we did not spend a ton a money. But it happened to be a great way to do it."

By foregoing printed invitations, Mack said the Gardens will save more than \$2,000 per year over the four Connection events.



## GREENER: Reusable gifts

Everyone's been to an event where you get a bag of sh... er, stuff just for being there. You think, "Well, I've always wanted a plastic carabiner that has an AM radio." But in reality, the nifty item will end up in the back of your desk drawer. Why not give away something usable?

That's what Karen Scarpino of GreenGiftz has been counseling her clients to do. Scarpino takes gift-giving a step further and makes the gift as eco-friendly as possible, whether by using reclaimed scrap from the host company or recycled material. Working from a design by Haworth Inc. Chairman Dick Haworth, Scarpino and her husband prototyped and manufactured a custom clock made with reclaimed timber from the bottom of the Great Lakes. The clocks are given away to company retirees.

"When Dick Haworth saw some of the items we'd made for Haworth to support the launch of their LEED certified building, he was very impressed and wanted us to work on an extremely special, sustainable retirement gift for their company," Scarpino told TBL.



## GREENEST: Meet virtually

Rather than having attendees fly or drive in from various parts of the country – causing a great deal of carbon emissions, perhaps the most eco-friendly meeting model is to hold a virtual meeting via teleconferencing on the Internet.

Sarah Lamb, event coordinator at Van Andel Institute, told TBL that the institute's scientists don't have to travel to all parts of the world to discuss their science with VAI's many collaborators. That saves a great deal on cost, first and foremost, plus it doesn't have the associated carbon emissions.

But, if people do have to fly to make a meeting, companies have options to offset their carbon emissions. According to a recent survey by the Association of Corporate Travel Executives and KDS, 28 percent of corporate travel departments are required to report to management on carbon emissions performance. About 25 percent of those corporations surveyed noted that they engage in carbon offset arrangements. TBL