

BS 8901:2007 Specification for a sustainable event management system

BS 8901:2007 Specification for a sustainable event management system with guidance for use sets out the requirements for planning and managing sustainable events of all sizes and types, supplemented by guidance on how to meet, and surpass, these requirements. BS 8901 encompasses the entire range of events ranging from large scale conferences and unique events such as the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic games to music festivals and air shows. It is aimed at:

- Event organizers
- Venues
- Organizations and/or individuals in the supply chain

BS 8901 provides guidance in the form of easy to understand practical information designed to assist the user to implement the requirements and those in event management to manage their environmental, financial and social risks and impacts spanning all aspects of event management.

About BSI

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BS 8901 for events management
BS 25999-1 for business continuity management
BS ISO/IEC 27001 for information security management
BS EN ISO 9001 for quality management
BS EN ISO 14001 for environmental management
BS OHSAS 18001 for occupational health and safety management
BS EN ISO 22000 for food safety

BS 8901 can help:

- Companies to improve sustainability performance within available budgets
- Reduce carbon emissions and waste, improving the resource efficiency of the entire event supply chain
- Present opportunities for more efficient planning and encourage the re-use of equipment and infrastructure
- Users take stock of the environmental impacts such as carbon footprint, waste management and effects on biodiversity; social impacts such as community involvement and fair employment; and economic impacts such as local investment and long-term viability.

To order your copy of BS 8901, please visit www.bsigroup.com/BS8901.

BSI is part of BSI Group, a global independent business services organization that inspires confidence and delivers assurance to customers with standards-based solutions. Originating as the world's first national standards body, the Group has over 2,250 staff operating in over 100 countries through more than 50 global offices. The Group's key offerings are:

- The development and sale of private, national and international standards and supporting information
- Second and third-party management systems assessment and certification
- Product testing and certification of services and products
- Performance management software solutions
- Training services in support of standards implementation and business best practice.

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Reed Exhibitions Ltd Case Study

EIBTM 2008 - The Global Meetings and Incentives Exhibition

EIBTM is an exhibition for the global meetings and incentives industry held annually in Barcelona, Spain. EIBTM is organized with the aim of promoting the best business to business exhibition floor, supported by the best networking and best professional education underpinned by a global Hosted Buyer Programme™.

The 2008 EIBTM held at the Fira Gran Via exhibition complex in Barcelona saw over 8,000 attendees, and exhibitors representing over 100 countries worldwide.

As well as the economic and social benefits that events like EIBTM can bring to the host location, bringing a large section of an industry together in one place is also an efficient way to do business as it allows many meetings to take place in one space in a short amount of time. Nevertheless Reed Exhibitions Ltd understands that there are aspects to their events and processes that have negative impacts and their intention is to minimize those negative impacts while also maximizing the positive ones.

Reed Exhibitions Ltd worked with Organise This, a sustainable event management company, to implement and measure sustainability using the sustainable events management system, BS 8901.

"Reed Travel Exhibitions places real importance on issues of sustainability within meetings and events. Commitment to achieving sustainability makes business sense as well as being environmentally sound."

"I am delighted that BS 8901 has been conferred on EIBTM as a formal and independent endorsement of both our intent and business practice helping us to lead the way for our growing global industry."

Paul Kennedy, Reed Travel Exhibitions



BSI Headquarters

389 Chiswick High Road London W4 4AL UK

Tel +44 (0)20 8996 9001

Fax +44 (0)20 8996 7001

www.bsigroup.com

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BS 8901 is a standard for a sustainable event management system. It is about implementing a system of working which considers environmental, economical, and social impacts of an event. BS 8901 can be self-certified or audited by second or third parties. In this case, the event was third party certified by BSI Management Systems.

The BS 8901 process involves several key stages:

Setting the scope

Before entering down the BS 8901 path, an organization must first establish the scope of what is to be covered by their sustainability management system. Reed Exhibitions Ltd set the scope for their management system to be four of their shows including EIBTM 08. These four shows were chosen as it was felt that the stakeholders for these events would be most interested in the opportunity to implement sustainability. In addition to this, two shows are run in the UK and two overseas, giving Reed Exhibitions Ltd the ability to evaluate the challenges and opportunities of applying a single management system in different markets and countries. All divisions of the company were represented in the trial, creating a nucleus of expertise internally from which to expand in future years.

Identifying issues

Reed Exhibitions Ltd held meetings and workshops with their internal staff, supply chain and consulted industry best practice to determine and rank their key sustainability issues. For EIBTM in Barcelona the largest issues identified by Reed Exhibitions Ltd were waste measurement; stakeholder engagement and awareness; and a lack of existing benchmarks for the economical, environmental and social impacts of their events, without which future improvements could not be measured.

Setting objectives and targets

From the key issues identified above, realistic objectives for the EIBTM event were set; in conjunction with these objectives, measurable targets were set so that performance could be evaluated after the exhibition.

The objectives Reed Exhibitions Ltd created for EIBTM were to:

- Benchmark the waste generated from the event
- Educate and encourage suppliers to increase their level of sustainability
- Benchmark the economical, environmental and social impact of an event

For each of these objectives we identified numerous Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), and for each of these KPIs a quantifiable target was established. For example, the target of reaching 100% of the supply chain with information on sustainability was established as a way to achieve the objective of educating contractors and suppliers.

Stakeholder engagement

A vital part of the BS 8901 process is to engage all stakeholders with sustainability issues. Reed Exhibitions Ltd consulted their stakeholders at all stages of the process culminating in a series of educational workshops for all companies engaged in their supply chain.

The workshops provided by, not-for-profit educational project, Positive Impact provided interactive education on issues including energy, waste, transport, certification and measurement. By organizing these educational events, Reed Exhibitions Ltd hope to have initiated a legacy of suppliers educated in the key themes of sustainability.

"There is a general perception that sustainable activities are a burden to business; we want to change that and show that business success and sustainability are not mutually exclusive. I really enjoyed the sessions, finding them informative and refreshingly 'open' - that's to say not preaching to us but engaging us in the process of identifying manageable targets and helping us put them into practical, everyday use."

Series attendee - Logistics supplier to Reed Exhibitions Ltd

Roles and responsibilities

A company sustainability champion was designated at Reed Exhibitions Ltd and sustainability, as an objective, was built into their job role. BS 8901 champions were also designated in each of the show teams so that all aspects of the planning of the show had a champion.

Implementation

The implementation stage is where steps must be taken to ensure the objectives set earlier in the process are met. An example of steps taken by Reed Exhibitions Ltd to achieve their objectives includes: the selection of five stands at the EIBTM exhibition to take sustainability measurements from. These were: Switzerland Convention & Incentive Bureau; Visit Denmark; Grimaldi Forum; Meeting Professionals International; and The Rezidor Hotel Group.

"The Switzerland Convention & Incentive Bureau is strongly committed to sustainable development and high ecological standards, and appreciates greatly the efforts Reed is making in terms of sustainability. We appreciate the effort that Reed has made to increase awareness with the venue and suppliers as well as all the stand exhibitors in this respect, to promote sustainable thinking and action."

Ursina Weder - Switzerland Convention & Incentive Bureau

Additionally Reed Exhibitions Ltd also measured waste and energy at the event – making reductions where possible, questioning all stand holders on their sustainability practices and future improvements and soliciting feedback from visitors and Hosted Buyers on efforts so far and views on future direction.

Review of performance and compliance

The final section of the BS 8901 process focuses on reviewing compliance and performance in relation to the specific objectives that were defined prior to the event.

Reed Exhibitions Ltd was externally certified by BSI Management Systems, this process included an on-site visit at EIBTM and a visit to Reed Exhibitions Ltd reviewing the management system implemented.

Audit

The Reed Exhibitions Ltd team undertook audit training so that they can regularly self-audit in between the biannual independent auditing by BSI Management Systems.

Throughout the process, the Reed Exhibitions Ltd team held workshops where they reviewed non-conformities. This involved looking at aspects of the newly formed management system, checking that anticipated performance levels were being met and when encountering problems establishing how and why this had happened and putting improvements in place.

Conclusion

After the EIBTM show had finished a full review of the BS 8901 process was undertaken, and Reed Exhibitions Ltd are in the process of setting objectives for EIBTM 09. This is evidence of the ongoing process of implementing and improving sustainability.

One example of this process is that EIBTM included Sustainability questions in its post show questionnaires to Visitors, Hosted Buyers and Exhibitors. Nearly 60% of the constructive feedback that was given by the Hosted Buyers and Visitors was they want exhibitors and the organisers to give away less printed brochures and have the option on their stand to download electronic copies instead. As a result, EIBTM will be working to both encourage exhibitors to meet this demand but also provide support with electronic options where applicable.



Implementing BS 8901 at an event on the scale of EIBTM presented many challenges to those involved and required the cooperation of many stakeholders previously uneducated in the ideas of sustainability.

Going forward Reed Exhibitions Ltd have decided to extend their portfolio of events which operate under the BS 8901 framework and from feedback taken at EIBTM it is clear that many other companies in the event industry are beginning to take sustainability seriously.

Further information

Reed Exhibitions: www.reedexpo.com

EIBTM: www.eibtm.com

Organise This: www.organisethis.co.uk

BSI: www.bsigroup.com/bs8901

