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THE EFFECT GREEN PRACTICES WILL HAVE ON A MEETING PLANNER'S BOOKING
INTENTION

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to identify how a meeting planner's booking intention was affected by the sustainable practices implemented in a hotel property. A survey was administered to members of three major meeting planner organizations in the United States; Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA), Meeting Professionals International (MPI), and National Association of Catering and Events (NACE). The survey included one two types of scenarios (green and non-green) for one of two types of events (corporate and social). 125 responses were attained and the data was analyzed using a 2 x 2 ANCOVA. Although the interactions were not significant, and the hypotheses were not supported as a result, the main effects of this study provided interesting findings as to how green positively impacts a meeting planner's booking intention, behavioral intention, and attitude, and how these dependent variables are impacted by the type of event as well (corporate being of higher importance).

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Today's concept of "going green" has become an increasingly popular issue. Whether at home or in the workplace, efforts to reuse and recycle are all around us. Recycling stations have been formed in many communal places such as schools and offices, and reusable bags have become popular in most local grocery stores. These efforts have put pressure on people to change their daily consumption patterns at both an individual and governmental level. The concept of sustainability has raised much awareness of environmental problems caused by tourism (Park and Boo, 2010), and the hotel industry has taken the initiative to go green since the mid-1990s (Revilla, Dodd, and Hoover, 2001).

According to Stipanuk and Ninemeier (1996) environmental practices are becoming more of a focus among consumers (Wolfe and Shanklin, 2001). Due to the significant revenue meeting business provides to the hospitality industry (Hu and Hiemstra, 1996) and the large amount of waste that meetings and events produce (Park and Boo, 2010), the current study is specifically interested in those consumers that are meeting planners. Meeting planners are becoming more careful in selecting services that really fulfill their needs, and an understanding of these expectations is crucial to hotel managers if they want to win their share of the meeting market (Hu and Hiemstra, 1996). It is also imperative for both parties to recognize their social responsibility to the environment. Corporate social responsibility (commonly referred to as CSR) has been an influential concept across multiple industries for many years. Today, firms are under increasing pressure to give money to charities, protect the environment and help solve social

problems in the community, overall behaving in socially responsible ways (Mohr, Webb, and Harris, 2001).

Essentially, the current study investigates how green practices are influencing meeting planners in both corporate and social settings, and if corporate social responsibility is correlated to their ultimate booking intention. Much research in this area does not exist and Weber (1991) has emphasized the need for further research on hotels relationships with meeting planners (1991). Furthermore, Park and Boo (2000) believe the fundamental concepts needed to promote the sustainable growth of the convention industry are environmental awareness and a sense of responsibility. This study contributes to research in this domain by addressing the following research questions:

1. How do sustainable practices influence a meeting planner's booking intention?

2. Are meeting planners influenced differently based on the type of event they are planning (corporate vs. social event planning)?

Chapter 2

Literature Review

After a thorough review of previous studies related to sustainability, environmental efforts, or other aspects of the meeting industry, the following themes emerged..

Corporate Social Responsibility

Prevailing values now require that all events be environmentally friendly, as well as proactive about "green" management and operations (Business Events Australia, 2008; Getz, 1997). Mohr, Webb, and Harris (2001) researched the impact of corporate social responsibility on buying behavior. Adapting Petkus and Woodruff's (1992) interpretation, corporate social responsibility was defined as a company's commitment to minimizing or eliminating any harmful effects and maximizing its long-run beneficial impact on society. The research defines socially responsible consumer behavior as a person basing his or her acquisition, usage, and disposition of products on a desire to minimize or eliminate any harmful effects and maximize the long-run beneficial impact on society. Petkus and Woodruff's (1992) survey results indicated that consumers expect firms to protect the environment and behave ethically, and that purchasing decisions are sometimes based on these factors. Throughout interviews, a majority of individuals expressed positive or extremely positive attitudes toward socially responsible firms (Mohr, Webb, and Harris, 2001). Likewise, a survey conducted in the United Kingdom found that 48% of festival attendees would pay more to attend greener events, and 36% said they consider the environmental policy of a festival before purchasing a ticket (A Greener Festival, 2012).

Sustainable Efforts and Strategies in the Hospitality Industry

Park and Boo (2010) describe the growth of convention tourism in recent years. They recognize the significance of the shift in daily consumption patterns that occur as a result of new ecological efforts, which can cause the abandoning of comforts and conveniences (Park and Boo, 2010). Additionally, an analysis from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA, 2000) indicated that the convention industry is responsible for the highest level of greenhouse gas emission of any tourism sector. Conventions are the most energy-consuming activity compared to other leisure activities and the second most water-consuming activity. The study surveyed stakeholders of convention tourism (attendees, suppliers, and planners) and measured their attitudes about various environmentally responsible actions. Results indicated that meeting planners see the negative influence of conventions on the environment more clearly than do attendees and suppliers, although all stakeholders had a positive attitude toward green conventions and showed high willingness to participate in ecological activities. Meeting planners were also the least likely to recognize the cost-effectiveness of green practices, and felt the least environmentally responsible in comparison to suppliers and attendees (Park and Boo, 2010).

As consumer awareness of environmental issues and costs for disposal and land utilities increase, lodging properties, including conference centers, are searching for innovative methods of greening (Wolfe and Shanklin, 2001). Wolfe and Shanklin developed and administered a questionnaire to assess administrators' ecological concerns as well as identify environmentally conscious practices that had been implemented in conference centers. These concerns included recycling, energy conservation, reuse, water conservation, eco-purchasing, and composting and source reduction. By reducing the amount and volume of waste, thousands of dollars on waste disposal has already been saved by many properties (Bali & Balfe, 1998; Kim, Shanklin, Su,

Hackes, & Ferris, 1997; Townsend, 1993). Additionally, Chon and Huo (1993) surveyed members of the International Association of Conference Centers (IACC) to assess administrator's perceptions of the future in their industry. Addressing ecological concerns was of major interest. Conference centers have the opportunity to lead the lodging industry in meeting consumers' needs of greening, of which they should take advantage. It was suggested that in the future, conference center managers consider marketing their recycling program and other green practices to environmentally conscious meeting planners and guests. Chon and Huo also touched on the positive image green practices give. By promoting environmentally responsible programs to meeting planners, conference centers can differentiate or distinguish themselves from other properties (Wolfe and Shanklin, 2001).

Other studies show that environmental impacts are a large consideration for many event managers. Robbins, Dickinson, and Calver (2007) state that travel is a key issue due to the effect transport can have on greenhouse gas emissions as well as other local impacts. The particular focus was on the use of cars to reach event venues and carpooling, hybrid charter vehicles, and shuttle buses are becoming increasingly popular as alternatives. A large festival event in Australia has also taken green initiatives for over two decades. In 1992 they started a new system of reusable mugs that could be deposited in specific bins where they were then collected, washed, and returned. As a result they have saved 35,000 disposable cups each year, and have additionally gone plastic bag free since 2006 (Laing and Frost, 2010).

The ability to select a location of venue is an opportunity to consider issues such as access to transport waste management and availability of green power. In addition to carbon offset, the type and quantity of materials and products used, logistics, and marketing should also be areas of consideration for an event planner (Laing and Frost, 2010). There is an increasing

interest by event planners in highlighting their green credentials in an increasingly sophisticated

market that is more knowledgeable about sustainability than ever before (Heiskanen, 2005). If

event planners or managers do not consider green issues as part of their operations and marketing

efforts, there could be potential negative implications for future support from clients. Likewise, it

is imperative that research agenda keep up with the needs of both the industry and society as a

whole (Laing and Frost, 2010). Thus, the following articles focus on how green practices are

perceived by other individuals in the hospitality industry, besides the meeting planner.

Green Practices as perceived by Managers, Guests, and Employees

Agreeing that the deterioration of the natural environment in many places is threatening

the well-being of the hotel and tourism business, Bohdanowicz (2005) focused on the opinions of

those in administrative positions. Covering a substantial part of the European market,

Bohdanowicz administered a questionnaire in three stages to different types of hotel managers.

He examined their level of environmental knowledge and awareness as well as the extent of

ecological initiatives in day-to-day activities and incentives at their property. Bohdanowicz

provided specific details of European hotels' energy usage and water consumption, indicating

that a typical hotel produced 1 kg of waste per guest per day (or a ton of waste per month) and

that 50-60% of these materials could be reused or recycled (p. 190). Relevant to the current

study, Bohdanowicz focused on studying the differences between independent and chain-owned

hotels. She found that independent hotels environmental efforts were strongly based on their

manager's attitudes and knowledge of the subject, while chain affiliated properties had these

efforts incorporated into their company policies. Access to financial resources and the need to

keep a good brand image were also influential on chain hotels, as large companies are often

required to display environmental and social commitment and achievements. The corporate

world is increasingly required to engage in environmental and triple-bottom-line reporting, which could greatly influence the decisions made by corporate meeting planners. The results of this study revealed that hoteliers do not consider environmental commitment to be a priority when marketing (p. 192). Location, quality of services, price, and tradition of the hotel all ranked as higher contributory factors. However, the study also indicated that if customers were to demand more environmentally sound performance from the hotel, it would likely cause a substantial change, as demands of customers is the second strongest incentive capable of encouraging hoteliers to act environmentally friendly (p. 193). In some instances, the customers that these findings refer to could be meeting planners. One independent hotel manager felt that their hotel's environmental impacts were insignificant due to the small size of the property (195) – a meeting planner for a small event may feel the same way. Managers of independent properties were also less knowledgeable on the topic of eco-friendliness and were less aware of other green institutions. However, if a company lacks these types of standards, a manager may not have a reason to be knowledgeable about eco-friendly practices. The same could be true for a meeting planner in their own company. Environmental organizations need to reach independent establishments, which typically lack professional help and sufficient funding in order to avoid this problem (p. 200). The current research seeks to contribute to an increase in environmental awareness, so that guests will demand greener practices from hotels, which is one of the implications from this study. Evidence suggests that some travelers would actually be willing to pay a premium for the privilege of staying in a "green facility" (Wight, 1997). Although Bohdanowicz's (2005) research takes place in Europe where only 1% of accommodations are currently eco-labeled (196) it provides information that should be kept in mind as the research of this paper proceeds.

Moffitt and Engeldrum (1997) also recognized a poll that was taken in Conde Nast Traveller's Magazine that indicated 95% of travelers are concerned with the environmental conditions of their destination. Mensah (2006) researched various environmental concerns that he felt hotels should have such as recycling of waste, waste management, clean air, energy and water conservation, environmental health, maintenance of permits (such as building permits) and compliance with legislation, purchasing policy, and environmental education. The hotel industry of Ghana, where the research was conducted, has grown immensely yet has not exactly shown how they are embracing the concept of environmental management within context of sustainable tourism development. In this study, the Greater Accra Region was used as it has the highest concentration of all the various categories of hotels in Ghana, permitting a fair analysis. Hopes of determining environmental management policies and practices of hotels in the GAR and comparing the level of adoption and implementation of environmental management practices among different categories of hotels in the region were the two main foci (Mensah, 2006). The lack thereof these practices are certainly present in the literature as well. In 1998, the Golden Tulip Hotel discharged sewerage into a drain in front of the Alliance Francaise Building, while others were built on waterways causing flooding to outlying communities (Daily Graphic). Part of the Secaps Hotel at the Teftah Quarshie roundabout in 2001 was also washed away due to its location on a waterway, which caused flooding. Potential pollution of rivers, lakes, and coastal water from sewerage outfall lines and of ground water was also a possibility as waste materials from improper development of sewerage and solid waste disposal system in hotels and other facilities seeped into these areas (416). As a result, government entities such as the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) are pressuring hotels in this region to adopt sound environmental management practices. An environmental impact assessment (EIA), which

predicts the environmental consequences of a plan, is required for hotels with more than forty rooms before they conduct business. The EPA will provide an environmental permit only after an EIA has been submitted (Mensah 2006). Policies such as these indicate the large importance environmental practices are becoming worldwide.

Tracy Jenkin, Lindsay McShare, and Jane Webster conducted qualitative interviews in order to examine the extent to which employees in the financial services industry recognize the importance of information technologies and systems in developing and implementing environmental initiatives. Their article *Green Information Technologies and Systems: Employees' Perceptions of Organizational Practices* noted that generally, employers use a narrow range of information technologies and systems in the communication of environmental initiatives. Although bank employees discussed environmental issues more so than credit union employees, an overall existence of knowledge gaps among financial service employees about green initiatives was demonstrated in the results (Jenkin, McShane, & Webster, 2011).

Potential stakeholders, particularly for larger events, could include sponsors, community groups, relevant government agencies or departments and venue managers (Laing and Frost, 2010). Focusing on some of the issues encountered by event managers when incorporating green initiatives, Laing and Frost suggest that many stakeholders appreciate information that supports the need and desire for a green event including research that supports their introduction and a cost-benefit analysis. Literature on this topic has studied whether a shared purpose between planners and stakeholders is necessary for success, and these researchers have not reached a single conclusion. Watt (1998) believes that such partners need to agree on the purpose and beliefs of the event. Axelrod (1984) suggested the success does not necessarily exist as a result of common beliefs, but of relationships that are built over time. Although this was specific to

festivals and their repetitive nature, the same could certainly be true for repeat or long-term clients in a hotel or other venue.

Lee and Lounsbury (2011) also focused on the effect environmental practices have on shareholders. The thirteen-year panel study of fifty-eight corporations showed that shareholders activism has a positive effect on corporate environmental performance. Statistically significant moderators were also identified with larger firms, some of which were closer to the end user being more likely to make concessions to activist demands (Lee and Lounsbury, 2011). Though the study focused on a sector different from hospitality, it certainly provides continued information on how environmental practices influence shareholders. This is a rising topic of which both researchers and meeting planners themselves should take interest, and, therefore, will be focused on in this research.

Many studies have researched the effects of corporate social responsibility on performance. Based upon the organization's corporate social responsibility activities, studies in the tourism and hospitality industry have identified a positive impact on financial performance (Aragon et al., 2008). Such actions can improve an organization's financial value by saving costs, enhancing the organization's reputation, and discouraging action, which may result in costs to the organization (Whitfield and Dioko, 2011). Nicolau (2008) also found that venues increasing their corporate behavior will be rewarded with repeat visitation, and Garcia and Armas (2007) identified a positive relationship between hotel companies' corporate social responsibility actions and return on assets. In order to properly evaluate the environmental initiatives that venues are taking, environmental performance indicators are often used. By quantifying an organization's interactions with the environment, information can be provided on environmental impacts, legislative compliance, stakeholder interactions and organizational

processes (Chinander 2001). The conceptual framework used by Whitfield and Dioko (2011) included ten environmental indicators in a questionnaire with a five-point responsiveness scale. The results were then used to score a "greener venue" framework. A question was designated for each environmental indicator such as educating staff with regards to environmental impact, an environmental management system or environmental audit, and recycling programs. Additionally, questions regarding year of implementation, reasons for non-implementation, accreditation and venue type and size were also asked (Whitfield and Dioko, 2011). Although data may have been biased due to a venue staff member answering the questions regarding their workplace, the findings were rather interesting. Over 25% of the participating venues in the study had not implemented some form of discretionary environmental policies and indicated no intentions of changing their behavior. The study also included a two-way factorial analysis of venue size and type and the venue's corporate social responsibility score, and found that size had a large effect on corporate social responsibility, generally increasing simultaneously. It was also noted that large venue sizes, using the greener venue framework, attained a higher score on the green value measure. As a result, the researchers feel corporate social responsibility needs to be considered as a key factor that ultimately drives a venue's corporate social responsiblity performance. The greener venue framework has the potential to influence operational, managerial, and planning decisions as well as individual consumer decision-making and choice (Whitfield and Dioko, 2011). A large factor that was absent from this study was a target market venue as a variable, which this paper will attempt to address by attaining responses from both social and corporate event planners. The present study hopes to ensure that meeting professionals are more knowledgeable than these employees and that they are implementing environmental

initiatives to the best of their abilities, contrary to the following articles which do not include

environmental practices as a selection criteria in their research.

Selection Criteria Lacking Green Practices

DiPietro, Breiter, and Rompf (2008) studied different variables contributing to a meeting

planners' decision in regards to destination selection criteria. They reviewed a variety of articles

whose criteria selection variables included: accessibility by air, accessibility by roads, choice of

restaurants, variety of nightlife, number of first class hotel rooms, brand name hotels, amount of

dedicated exhibition space, image as a desirable place to visit, reputation for hosting successful

events, safety and security, support services for events, overall cost, perceived value of money,

availability of facility, quality of service, affordability, destination image, attractions and

entertainment, and safety and security (DiPietro, Breiter, and Rompf, 2008). Their study,

however, focused on differences in selection criteria between meeting planners that were

associated with various organizations. It did not address the type of event that the meeting

planner typically organizes, although there may be some indication based on their identifying

organization. Participants who are associated with the International Association of Exhibits and

Events (IAEE) often plan exhibitions, trade shows, trade fairs, and consumer shows. Members of

Meeting Professional International (MPI) often focus on business events and identify themselves

as corporate planners. Those who are a part of the Professional Convention Management

Association (PCMA) are generally third party or independent planners that work with corporate

organizations. After asking planners about their largest event planned in the past year, a

significant difference was found between IAEE and MPI in their rankings of amount of space as

a factor (exhibitors being much higher). Additionally, it was found that PCMA valued the quality

of hotel rooms more so than MPI. These planners typically use multiple hotels in order to

accommodate attendees for a large conference (DiPietro, Breiter, and Rompf, 2008). By

understanding the specific needs of each event planner and distinguishing between the different

types of events they plan, suppliers can improve the services they provide and offer a special mix

of services that the event planner so often appreciates (DiPietro, Brieter, and Rompf, 2008).

Though grasping valuable differences among organization members, the study did not consider

sustainability as part of a planner's selection criteria.

Oppermann (1996) found that previous experience with a destination city influences the

perception that event planners have when choosing destinations for future events. Meeting

planners with previous experience of a convention city were more likely to perceive that

destination as better. He similarly included safety and security, hotel room availability, as well as

cleanliness and attractiveness of the destination. The most important attribute for these

respondents was meeting room facilities and hotel service quality. Chacko and Fenich (2000)

established quality as a more important meeting factor for meeting planners than hotel

availability and cost. Lee and Heimstra (2001) focused on customer relationship management,

and found that event planners greatly valued characteristics of expertise, power, and willingness.

These types of characteristics could determine long-lasting relationships and essentially repeat

business. Jago and Deery (2005) also studied factors relevant to a customer-relationship building

process, by focusing on influences on convention decision making for international convention

associations, international attendees, and professional conference planners. They found that the

relationships between key convention participants were much more complex than previously

researched. In some way, each individual is dependent on another participant in order to make

the event run smoothly and satisfy the customer's needs.

Hu and Hiemstra used a hybrid conjoint analysis to determine the attributes that are important to professional meeting planners. Of the six attributes included in the study -hotel room rate, food and beverage function, functional properties of the meeting room, hotel conference planning procedure, hotel location, and hotel guestroom comfort - Hu and Hiemstra, 1996) found that corporate meeting planners view price as an important factor, but productive meetings are the ultimate goal. Similarly, Weber (2000) surveyed meeting planners to analyze the importance of individual hotel attributes before, during, and after their meeting. Prior research performed by Vogt and colleagues (1994) indicated that personal sources of information, such as prior experience or the advice of others, dominate the decisions made by meeting planners, but another study performed by Rutherford and Umbreit (1993) indicated that a successful meeting is perceived to be the result of a combined effort of employees from several hotel departments. Results indicated that before the event, prompt follow-up on calls and faxes was the most important practice. During the event, delivery of service as promised was the most important aspect to meeting planners, earning higher ratings than even the hotel's physical facility. After the event, accurate billing procedures were the most important practice. Additionally, planners also ranked performance relative to each of three chain hotels: Marriott, Hyatt, and Hilton (Weber, 2000). None of the attributes listed in either part of the survey were related to environmentally friendly practices. However, Laing and Frost (2010) insist that although green issues are typically missing from the events literature, green strategies and the promise of environmental renewal are crucial components for meeting providers who wish to stay competitive in the mega-event segment. Some conference venues are using their accreditation as a marketing tool, including Green Globe benchmarking, which is a system that evaluates and analyzes sustainability efforts, or other green ratings. Consequently, Getz (2008)

stresses the importance of environmental outcomes as a priority area for research; as event planners are seeking out these venues and further research can greater explore their exact needs.

Shaw, Lewis, and Khorey used a multivariate approach to measure meeting planner satisfaction with hotel convention services. A questionnaire was designed using a Likert scale, having meeting planners indicate their satisfaction of both tangible and intangible aspects of the convention services performance, and to consider their last meeting when answering the questions. Attributes included preliminary planning, meeting room set-up, Convention Service Manager accessibility and responsiveness, billing, and overall satisfaction (Shaw, Lewis, and Khorey, 1991). However, environmental practices were not incorporated. The survey concluded with two open-ended questions where meeting planners had the opportunity to comment on such practices, whether they were present or not, and what improvements could be made, but the results do not reveal specific answers, just that the overall responses were very positive. Laing and Frost (2010) suggest studies on different types of events in order to create a more complete picture of the "green event," just as this study will do.

The articles presented clearly indicate that sustainability is a consideration for all types of businesses as consumers expect their businesses to act responsibly towards the environment. Findings of the studies above showed that this was true not only for consumers, but for event managers and planners from a variety of organizations as well. However, the latter studies failed to include green practices when researching attributes that contribute to meeting planner's decisions. This study hopes to fill that gap, by focusing on sustainable practices in hotel properties and analyzing how they impact a meeting planner's booking intention.

Chapter 3

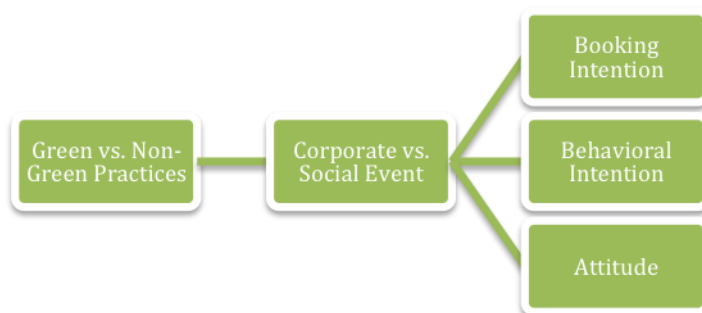**Conceptual Model and Hypotheses**

Figure 1: Conceptual Model

The conceptual model is that based on green practices, booking intentions, behavioral intention, and attitude will be influenced by the type of event being held.

Hypotheses

While prior studies have examined the venue attributes that are important to meeting planners, green practices have often been omitted.. Research suggests a strong correlation between corporate social responsibility and consumer buying behaviors, but not in the context of the hospitality industry. There has been no discussion of meeting planners' perceptions of green practices in relation to social events, or any indication that sustainable practices would be a consideration for those planning a social event, such as a party, wedding, or gala. This lack of information suggests that such practices would be less of a concern in this instance. Therefore, we arrive at the following hypotheses:

- Hypothesis 1: Event type will moderate the impact of "green" on booking intention.

  o Hypothesis 1a: A meeting planner is more likely to book with a property that provides eco-friendly services for a corporate event.

  o Hypothesis 1b: A meeting planner is less likely to book with a property that provides eco-friendly services for a social event.

- Hypothesis 2: Event type will moderate the impact of "green" on behavioral intention.

  o Hypothesis 2a: A meeting planner is more likely to recommend a property that provides eco-friendly services for a corporate event.

  o Hypothesis 2b: A meeting planner is less likely to recommend a property that provides eco-friendly services for a social event.

- Hypothesis 3: Event type will moderate the impact of "green" on attitude

  o Hypothesis 3a: A meeting planner will have a positive attitude about a property that provides eco-friendly services

  o Hypothesis 3b: A meeting planner's positive attitude will be stronger in regard to corporate events than social events.

Chapter 4

Research Design and Methodology

A survey was administered to meeting planners from various parts of the United States and responses were collected and analyzed. Any form of interview or non-anonymous data collection could result in interview bias. The general topic of sustainability is an effort in which many people feel they should participate. Without anonymity, participants could have exaggerated their feelings or actions toward this topic. A confidential survey of the participants was best in hopes of gathering the most honest answers. Thus, participants were assured that all responses were confidential. A 2 x 2 ANCOVA was used to compare social versus corporate events and green versus non-green practices. Manipulation checks and standard demographic questions were also asked for statistical purposes, and reported in the analysis section.

The survey was first pre-tested among 60 hospitality students at Penn State University. All of these students were currently enrolled in Hospitality Financial Accounting. Four scenarios were written for the survey. Two focused on corporate meetings and two focused on social gatherings. One of each type of meeting included green practices, while the other included non-green practices. Other than a description of the green practices, scenarios were completely identical. An example can be found in the appendix. Each participant was asked 3 basic manipulation checks, and a short series of questions about the scenario, including to what degree they felt the scenario was socially responsible. Theoretically, their feelings toward the "green" scenarios should be higher than those who had "non-green" scenarios, and this proved true. The average scores for Scenarios A and C, which were both eco-friendly, were 5.96 and 5.92, respectively. The average scores for Scenarios B and D, which were both not eco-friendly, were 4.43 and 4.44, respectively. Each scenario was distributed to 15 students. However, when asked which scenario they had read, 16 students answered Scenario B, and only 14 answered scenario D. It is assumed that one student incorrectly answered this question, and that they had actually

received scenario D. However, since B and D were identical in their lack of green practices, we feel this small discrepancy did not affect the results. 95% of students correctly answered that the scenario involved a hotel property, and 98% of students correctly answered that the amount of people in the scenario was 100. Thus, the pre-test results indicated a well-written survey that could be used further along in this study.

In order to have a mixture of both corporate and social event planners participating in the study, the sample included members of Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA), Meeting Professionals International, and National Association for Catering and Events. These directories have been used for participants in previous research, such as Weber (2000) who stated she chose the PCMA list because it has the largest representation of association meeting planners of any meeting-planner group. Initially, the hope was to attain complete lists of member contact information and administer the survey directly via e-mail in an effort to maximize responses. Unfortunately, this information was not publicized. Thus, each chapter president was contacted personally and asked to assist in the research by getting their members involved. Of fourteen PCMA chapter presidents, five were able to assist. Of 46 MPI chapter presidents, twelve were able to assist. Of 47 NACE chapter presidents, 14 were able to assist. Four other responses were received indicating that they were unable or unwilling to distribute the survey to their members, or that they felt their members did not fit the criteria needed to complete the survey. Each president, encompassing e-mail communication, social media posts such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn, chapter newsletters, and discussion forums, distributed the survey differently. Of the approximate 1,041 people the survey reached, 125 responses were received resulting in a response rate of 12%. It should be noted that not every president was able

to provide an exact amount of members reached, especially when utilizing social media accounts, so the actual response rate may be slightly different than indicated.

Four scenarios were written for the survey. Two focused on corporate meetings and two focused on social gatherings. One of each type of meeting included green practices, while the other included non-green practices. Other than a description of the green practices, scenarios were completely identical. The survey was generated to distribute the four scenarios evenly, each type given to about 31 people, and included 33 questions. Please see Appendix A for a complete listing of the questions asked. Questions regarding behavioral intentions (questions 7-12) were derived from Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman (1996), utilizing a 7-point scale, 1 being very unlikely, 7 being very likely. The Cronbach Alpha for this scale was .984

Questions regarding attitude toward green behaviors (question 12) and booking intention (questions 1, 3, and 4) were adopted from Han, Hsu, and Lee (2009). These also utilized a 7-point scale, 1 being very unlikely, 7 being very likely. The Cronbach Alpha for the attitude scale was .981, and .989 for booking intention.

Chapter 5

Data and Analysis

Personal Demographics

Demographic information for participants can be found in Table 1. The majority of participants were female (90.4%). 12.0% of participants were age 20-30. 37 participants (29.6%) were each in the 31-40 and 41-50 groups. 20.8% of participants were in the 51-60 range, and only 4.8% were 61 or older. The most common household income among participants was $100,000 or more (44.0%). 18.4% were in the $80,000-$99,999 range, 17.6% making $60,000-$79,999, 10.4% making $40,000-$59,999 and 4.0% making $20,000-$39,999. 60.0% of participants were college graduates. 12.0% had gone on to attend some sort of graduate school. 20.0% completed some college, and 4.0% were high school graduates. It was also interesting to find that 88.0% of participants were Caucasian American. 2.4% each responded African American, Hispanic American, and other. No participants indicated that they were Asian American, American Indian/Alaskan Native, or Native Hawaiin/Other Pacific Islander. Lastly, participants were asked to indicate of which organization they most strongly associate. Interestingly, only 11.2% most strongly associate with PCMA, who were the first organization the researcher intended to include. 40.0% most strongly associate with MPI and 42.4% most strongly associate with NACE. It is safe to assume with these statistics that an acceptable amount of both corporate and social planners were captured.

Table 1: Demographics of Participants

	Frequency and Percent Value	
	#	**%**
Age		
20-30	15	12.0
31-40	37	29.6
41-50	37	29.6
51-60	26	20.8
61+	6	4.8
Did not respond	4	3.2
Total	125	100.0
Gender		
Female	113	90.4
Male	8	6.4
Did not respond	4	3.2
Total	125	100.0
Household Income		
$20-000-$39,999	5	4.0
$40,000-$59,999	13	10.4
$60,000-$79,999	22	17.6
$80,000-$99,999	23	18.4
$100,000 or more	55	44.0
Did not respond	7	5.6
Total	125	100.0
Education		
High school graduate	5	4.0
Some college	25	20.0
College graduate	75	60.0
Attended grad school	15	12.0
Did not respond	5	4.0
Total	125	100.0
Ethnicity		
Caucasian American	110	88.0

African American	3	2.4
Hispanic American	3	2.4
Did not respond	6	4.8
Total	125	100.0
Organization		
PCMA	14	11.2
MPI	50	40.0
NACE	53	42.4
Did not respond	8	6.4
Total	125	100.0

Table 1: Demographics of Participants (cont.)

Professional Demographics

Participants were also asked a series of questions about their professional life, which can be found in Table 2. There were 120 responses to 3 of the 4 questions, and 117 to the 4th. The majority of participants (64.0%) indicated that the majority of the events they had planned in the past year were for approximately 100 guests. This was a significant indicator that the scenario presented could have been very realistic for many of the participants. 23.2% planned events for about 500 guests, 4.8% for 1000, and 4.0% planned events with 1500 or more guests. Participants ranged in their experience as a meeting planner. 16.0% have planned for 5 or less years. 23.2% have been a meeting planner for 6-10 years, 25.6% for 11-15, and 31.2% for 16 or more. This ensures that a variety of experience was encompassed, and may indicate that the values seen in the results are significant throughout ones career. Almost half (44.8%) of participants have been in the hospitality industry for 16 or more years. 19.2% have been in the industry for 11-15 years, 20.8% for 6-10, and 8.8% for 5 or less years. 94.4% of participants were aware of the term corporate social responsibility. Previous knowledge of this subject may have positively impacted their willingness to participate in the survey.

Table 2: Frequencies for Work Demographics

	Frequency and Percent Value	
	#	%
Planned events for		
100 guests	80	64.0
500 guests	29	23.2
1000 guests	6	4.8
1500+ guests	5	4.0
Did not respond	5	4.0
Total	125	100.0
Years as meeting planner		
5 or less years	20	16.0
6-10 years	29	23.2
11-15 years	32	25.6
16+ years	39	31.2
Did not respond	5	4.0
Total	125	100.0
Years in hospitality industry		
5 or less years	11	8.8
6-10 years	26	20.8
11-15 years	24	19.2
16+ years	56	44.8
Did not respond	8	6.4
Total	125	100.0
Aware of CSR		
Yes	118	94.4
No	3	2.4
Did not respond	4	3.2
Total	125	100.0

Manipulation Checks

Utilizing SPSS, the first step in analyzing the data collected was to code both the green

level and type of event indicated in each scenario. Scenarios involving corporate events were

coded "0" while social events were coded "1." Scenarios that included green efforts were coded "1" while those lacking green efforts were coded "0." This allowed "green" and "type" to be the fixed factors throughout the analyses.

Second, the manipulation checks took place, which can be found in Table 3. Almost all of the surveys completed successfully answered these questions. There were 120-121 valid responses for each question. According to the counts achieved while coding, 61 corporate and 64 social surveys were distributed. However, these numbers appear to change depending on the analysis being tested. According to the frequencies, 54.4% of participants had a corporate event and 41.6% had a social event survey. 96.7% of participants correctly stated that the scenario took place at a hotel property. 98.3% accurately answered that the amount of people the scenario's event was being held for was 100. This ensures that almost all of the 120 responses were appropriately included.

Table 3: Manipulation Checks

	Frequency and Percent Value	
	#	%
This scenario involves a		
Corporate Event	68	54.4
Social Event	52	41.6
Did not respond	5	4.0
Total	125	100.0
This scenario takes place at		
A convention center	3	2.4
A hotel property	117	93.6
A general event venue	1	.8
Did not respond	4	3.2
Total	125	100.0

The event is being held for		
10	1	.8
100	119	95.2
1000	1	.8
Did not respond	4	3.2
Total	125	100.0

Table 3: Manipulation Checks (cont.)

Dependent Variables

Next, the scale items for the dependent variables were summated. Means for the depending variables can be found in Table 4. Booking intention was captured by survey questions 1, 3, and 4. Using a univariate analysis with the fixed factors, the main effects were significant, but the interaction was not. Results can be found in Table 5. The significance of the interaction was .114 (insignificant), but the main effects of green vs. non-green and type of event both had significance less than .05 (p=.000, F=52.39 and p=.021, F=5.49 respectively). Looking at the estimated marginal means of booking, it appears that the booking intention was higher for corporate events than social events (M=5.329 and M=4.752, respectively). Similarly, the booking intention for green events was higher than that of non-green events (M=5.931 and M=4.151, respectively). These results fail to provide support for H1, H1a, and H1b but showcase that based on the main effects, booking intent is higher for green and corporate events vs non-green or social. For the behavioral intention scale, which included questions 7-11, the type of event was not significant (p=.062, F=3.546). Green practices were also significant for this scale (p=.000, F=50.494). The interaction was again, not significant, indicating that hypothesis 2 was also not supported. Although the main effects of this scale did not support hypotheses 2a and 2b, behavior intention was higher for corporate events than social events (M=4.985 and M=4.518, respectively). Green events had a higher behavior intention than non-green events as well

(M=5.633 and M=3.871, respectively). Green events were thus more likely to be recommended to friends or relatives, have positive things said about the property to other people, and to continue doing business with themselves in the future. The attitude scale had similar results. Again, the interaction was insignificant (p=.105), which indicates there was not enough evidence to support hypothesis 3, 3a, or 3b. Both green practices and type were significant in this model at p=.000, F=64.801 and p=.008, F=7.314 respectively. Participants' attitude was more positive for green events (M=6.019 compared to M=4.070 for non-green events). This indicates that participants had a more positive attitude about the green properties than non-green properties. Participants' attitude was also higher for corporate events than social events (M=5.372 and M=4.717, respectively). These results were also run with covariates but the results remained the same. Though the exact hypotheses were not supported by these results, the findings contribute large ideas as to how one's booking intention, behavior, and attitude are affected.

Table 4: Means for Dependent Variables

	Booking Intention	Behavioral Intention	Attitude
Green	5.931	5.633	6.019
Non-Green	4.151	3.871	4.070
Corporate	5.329	4.985	5.372
Social	4.752	4.518	4.717

Table 5: Summary of ANCOVA Results for Dependent Variable Booking Intention

Booking Intention				
Source of Variation	*Df*	*Sum of Squares*	*Mean Square*	*F*
Green	1	95.759	95.759	52.385
Type	1	10.038	10.038	5.491
Interaction	1	4.631	4.631	2.533
Error	118	215.702	1.828	
Total	122			

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Table 6: Summary of ANCOVA Results for Dependent Variable for Behavioral Intention

Behavioral Intention				
Source of Variation	*Df*	*Sum of Squares*	*Mean Square*	*F*
Green	1	91.078	91.078	50.494
Type	1	6.396	6.396	3.546
Interaction	1	2.610	2.610	1.447
Error	115	207.430	1.804	
Total	107			

Table 7: Summary of ANCOVA Results for Dependent Variable Attitude

Attitude				
Source of Variation	*Df*	*Sum of Squares*	*Mean Square*	*F*
Green	1	100.182	100.182	64.801
Type	1	11.308	11.308	7.314
Interaction	1	4.124	4.124	2.667
Error	103	215.702	1.828	
Total	122			

Chapter 6

Discussion

It is clear from these results that today's increasing concern with contributing positively to the environment, particularly as a business, is impacting our industry. This study helps fill the gaps presented in the literature review. By utilizing a hotel in the scenario, this study contributed general assumptions about the hospitality industry that was not focused on in many other studies regarding sustainable efforts and strategies. By utilizing a smaller group of attendees, this study contributed findings that green practices do matter even in a smaller setting, where previous studies have frequently focused on larger events. To recognize that any group of people, big or small, impacts the environment is a positive finding. Where previous studies targeted perceptions of green practices by managers, guests, and employees, this study contributed perceptions of the client, which is extremely important in any business. To have a greater understanding of those who will potentially book with one's property can only benefit both involved parties. The same is true for stakeholders willing to invest time and money into a business. While the study's hypotheses were not supported due to a lack of interaction effects, the main effects were significant. Both the type of event and green values individually had an impact on a planner's booking intentions, behavioral intentions, and attitudes. From this, hotel managers should recognize that sustainable practices are indeed a strong consideration for meeting planners nationwide. As expected, the main effects indicate they are of more importance for corporate events, where companies may be attempting to hold corporate social responsibility standards, than for social events, in which a planner may be more concerned with personal touches. Thus,

this research may be more beneficial for a manager who focuses on corporate events, or works at a property with a lot of conference space. A manager, who focuses solely on weddings or parties, may be interested in sustainability, but less concerned with this research and implementing such practices at their hotel. Due to the cost of green procedures, each individual property will have to best assess how and when they can implement such practices, but as a result of this research, it is certainly a task that should be considered.

Chapter 7

Limitations, Further Research Direction, and Conclusion

Limitations

One large limitation of this research is that the scenarios lack the variety of aspects that go into a meeting planner's booking intention. It is very likely a decision will not be made solely based on environmental practices of the property. Though it was assumed in these scenarios that all other factors were the same, and the intention was to keep these factors out and the scenario focused for the purpose of this study, it was actually pointed out by two participants via e-mail back to the researcher that they completed the survey, but felt the scenario did not grasp everything they would realistically consider.

Another limitation is the process in which the survey was distributed. Although the response rate was adequate, a higher amount of participants could have certainly been achieved. Online surveys are always a limitation due to the nature in which it reaches the potential participants. Although so many professionals were willing to post the survey on their social media outlets, the pool is truly limited to those members that actually read these social media feeds, newsletters, and other interactions.

Sustainability should not only be a concern or topic of interest in the United States. However, this research only included participants from U.S. chapters. Although three of the largest meeting planning organizations were targeted, there are numerous other organizations and associations that could have been included.

Further Research Direction

In order to alleviate some of the limitations of the current research, future studies should consider including a more realistic scenario that involves other factors such as price, location, and other amenities. In order to alleviate any issues with an online survey distribution, further research could be conducted otherwise. PCMA, MPI, NACE, and other similar organizations frequently hold educational seminars, annual conferences, or other learning experiences in which their attendees could fill out a survey in person. This could contribute to a larger response rate, particularly from PCMA, which showed the lowest amount of participants.

Reaching a more global group of participants is certainly a prospective aspect to future studies. Although PCMA and NACE are only in the United States and Canada, Meeting Professionals International is Worldwide, and all of the foreign chapters were left out of this study and could be included. Additionally, if further factors were added to the scenarios, organizations like the Green Meeting Industry Council could be included. Though many of these sustainability-focused organizations exist, they were not included for fear of strong bias. However, if the study is not completely focused on sustainability, this type of bias could be significant in contributing to the results.

Conclusion

It is hoped that this research will provide further insight to hospitality professionals and help them realize the importance of sustainability at their properties. Such practices are not only imperative to the well-being of our environment, but important to the business we conduct on a daily basis. Particularly for properties with large conference space and potential to attain corporate business, eco-friendly practices should be largely considered as an investment if they are not already in place.

Appendix A

Survey Scenario and Questions

A sample of the scenario:

You are planning your company's upcoming business meeting for approximately 100 attendees. You have found a room of the appropriate size at a hotel centrally located for all of your attendees. Wi-Fi will be accessible in order for all of your attendees to connect to personal **electronic devices** for note taking purposes. A drink station including water, coffee, and soft drinks will be provided with **eco-friendly disposable** coffee cups as well as **standard glasses and coffee mugs.** Additionally, the meeting room provides a **recycling station** where all eligible products can be disposed of in the appropriate receptacle. Upon arriving in their guestroom after the meeting, they will also find a few notes from the housekeeping department notifying them of the hotel's **environmental efforts, including a towel re-use program** (only towels on the floor will be replaced) and the **linen reuse program** (sheets will be changed in between check-outs unless otherwise requested).

The survey distributed to participants in this study read as follows:

1. Based on the scenario described above, how likely are you to book the meeting at this hotel? [1(very unlikely) – 7(very likely)]

2. To what extent are you confiden with your booking decision? [1(not at all confident) – 7(very confident)]

3. The probability that I would consider booking this hotel is [1(very low) – 7(very high)]

4.   My willingness to book this hotel is [1(very low) – 7(very high)]

5.   Based on the scenario above, how likely are you to book a social event at this

     hotel? [1(very unlikely) – 7(very likely)] *Note: Question 5 was generated to

     ask about the opposite type of event as the one used in the scenario the

     participant had read.

6.   I would say positive things about this hotel to other people [1(very unlikely) –

     7(very likely)]

7.   I would recommend this hotel to someone also seeking to plan a similar type of

     event. [1(very unlikely) – 7(very likely)]

8.   I would encourage friends and relatives to do business with this hotel. [1(very

     unlikely) – 7(very likely)]

9.   I would consider this hotel a first choice in my purchasing decision. [1(very

     unlikely) – 7(very likely)]

10.   I would do more business with this hotel in the next few years [1(very unlikely) –

     7(very likely)]

11.   My attitude toward this hotel is:

     a. Bad (1) – Good (7)

     b. Unpleasant (1) – Pleasant (7)

     c. Unfavorable (1) – Favorable (7)

12.   This scenario involves a

     a. Corporate Event

     b. Social Event

13.   This scenario takes place at

a. A convention center

b. A hotel property

c. A general event venue

14. The amount of people that this event is being held for is

a. 10

b. 100

c. 1000

15. In the past year, the majority of the events I have planned have been for

approximately

a. 100 guests

b. 500 guests

c. 1000 guests

d. 1500+ guests

16. I have been a meeting planner for

a. 5 or less years

b. 6-10 years

c. 11-15 years

d. 16+ years

17. I have been in the hospitality industry for

a. 5 or less years

b. 6-10 years

c. 11-15 years

d. 16+ years

18. I am aware of the term corporate social responsibility

    a. Yes

    b. No

19. The company I have most recently worked for views corporate social responsibility as [1(not at all important) – 7(very important)]

20. My guests/clients view corporate social responsibility as [1(not at all important) – 7(very important)]

21. I personally view corporate social responsibility as [1(not at all important) – 7(very important)]

22. To what degree do you value taking care of the environment? [1(not at all important) – 7(very important)]

23. How much do you value making environmentally sustainable choices? [1(not at all important) – 7(very important)]

24. To what degree do you value conserving our natural resources? [1(not at all important) – 7(very important)]

25. To what degree do you think it is important to consider our impact on the environment?

26. What level of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) do you expect to see from a property you are interested in booking?

    a. High

    b. Moderately high

    c. Moderately low

d. Low

e. Very low

27. Imagine yourself in the scenario, to what extent do you share the environmental

values with the hotel? [1(not at all} – 7 (very much)]

28. The organization I most strongly associate with is

a. Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA)

b. Meeting Professionals International (MPI)

c. National Association for Catering and Events (NACE)

For the purposes of this study only, please answer the following demographic questions:

29. I am

a. Male

b. Female

30. My age is

a. 20-30

b. 31-40

c. 41-50

d. 51-60

e. 61+

31. Which one of the following categories does your household income fall into?

a. Less than $20,000

b. $20,000 to $39,999

c. $40,000 to $59,999

d. $60,000 to $79,999

    e. $80,000 to $99,999

    f. $100,000 or more

32.   My education is best described as

    a. Some high school

    b. High school graduate

    c. Some college

    d. College graduate

    e. Attended graduate school

33.   What is your ethnicity?

    a. Caucasian American

    b. African American

    c. Hispanic American

    d. Asian American

    e. American Indian or Alaskan Native

    f. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander

    g. Other

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ACADEMIC VITA

Adrien Aloi
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EDUCATION:
The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA
Schreyer Honors College
Bachelor of Science in Hotel, Restaurant, and Institutional Management
Minor in Labor Studies and Employment Relations
Expected graduation date: May 2015

Hospitality Summer Studies in Europe 2013
International Hospitality Management - *Maastricht, Netherlands;* European Cuisine &
Restaurant Management - *Martigny, Switzerland*

HONORS AND AWARDS:
- Deans List (Fall 2011; Spring 2012; Fall 2012; Spring 2013; Fall 2013; Spring 2014)
- College of Health and Human Development and Eta Sigma Delta Hospitality Management Honor Societies
- Recipient of the College of Health and Human Development William F. and Constance B. Snyder Scholarship (2013-2015)
- Recipient of the PCMA Education Foundation Roy B. Evans Scholarship (2014-2015)

ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP/ACTIVITIES
- **Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA)**
  - Penn State student chapter/Penn State Meeting and Events Club
    - Secretary (February 2012-April 2013)
    - PCMA Student Chapter Liaison (January 2014-Present)
  - Attended Convening Leaders Convention
    - San Diego (2012)
    - Orlando (2013)
    - Boston (2014)
    - Chicago (2015)
- **Meetings Professional International (MPI)** student chapter member
- **Penn State Hotel and Restaurant Society**
  - Attended New York Hotel Show (2013)
- **School of Hospitality Management Recruitment Ambassador**
- **Whiplash Dance Team**
  - Penn State Homecoming and Social Event Co-Chair (April 2012-2013)
  - President (May 2014-Present)
- **Tapestry Dance Company**
  - Penn State Dance MaraTHON Co-Chair (April 2012-Present)

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

Catering Sales Intern, The Biltmore Company, Asheville, NC (June 2014 – August 2014)
- Corresponded with potential brides to provide detailed information for nine special event venues
- Accompanied Catering Sales Managers on site visits and menu tastings with brides and grooms
- Served and assisted guests at weddings and other special events of various sizes both on- and off-site

Conference Services Intern, The Penn Stater, State College, PA (January 2014-May 2014)
- Experienced all aspects of the department including Audio Visual, Refreshment Break Services, and Concierge
- Responsible for assisting in all aspects of the planning process and service delivery of various conferences and events

Event Coordination and Alumni Relations Intern, Penn State School of Hospitality Management (August 2013-December 2013)
- Assisted with coordination, marketing, and execution for industry, student, and alumni events
- Practiced Penn State sustainability practices and implementation in SHM offices and events

Food and Beverage Extern, The Westin Gaslamp Quarter, San Diego, CA (March 2013)
- Served customers and assisted employees in both full-service restaurant, *Pinzimini*, and coffee outlet, *Ingredients*
- Experienced Starwood One internal website, menu engineering, and assembly of weekly food and beverage resume
- Attended Starwood's Ecosure Food Safety Standards workshop

Hotel Marketing Intern, Penn State Hospitality Services, University Park, PA (August 2012-December 2012)
- Assisted in development and launch of print, web, and radio advertisements for The Penn Stater and The Nittany Lion Inn
- Oversaw Thanksgiving and Christmas buffet advertising campaign to ensure prompt and efficient advertisements

Sales and Catering Coordinator, Hilton Philadelphia Airport, Philadelphia PA (June 2012-August 2012)
- Responsible for contacting customers, collecting payment, soliciting previous bookings for repeat business, & lead distribution
- Assisted in set-up of PAMPI annual gala, other special events, and creation of new catering menus
- Attended industry networking events including MPI educational institute and HSMAI Annual Summer Outing

On-call Event Staff, Kuoni Destination Management, New York, NY (May 2012)
- Responsible for greeting and directing attendees at FOX Upfront Event held at Beacon Theatre