



# GREEN LIGHTS

ECO-FRIENDLY TIPS, TECHNIQUES, IDEAS AND BEST PRACTICES

## AGENCY ACTIVISTS

Agency sustainability officers help lead clients to greener events



**AS MARKETERS** head down the long and sometimes bumpy road to creating sustainable events, at least two agencies have people and plans in place to point them in the right direction. Ignition in June hired Thatcher Young as sustainability director to lead clients, suppliers and other agencies as they reduce the environmental impact of campaigns, tours and events. And TBA Global's internal corporate social responsibility council, led by Sara Geddes, educates employees and clients about green initiatives.

"Sustainability is here, it's the future of business in a general sense and the future of the experiential marketing business," says Young. He acknowledges agency president Mike Hersom's commitment to sustainability, which he will take to the next level using the BS 8901 standard as a jumping off point.

BS 8901 defines three phases of event management—planning, implementation and check and review—and requires companies to be certified by developing systems that address a broad range of environmental issues at their events. Young is looking at reducing energy, water and waste and offsetting the impact of carbon. "We are the mapmakers and BS 8901 points to the destination," he says.

Young began by looking at Ignition's internal operational footprint and liked what he saw. The agency had already performed a lighting audit and implemented an office-wide recycling program and other practices. The next step will be to engage clients as partners in a tiered arrangement they can join at various levels. "Some are young in their journey toward sus-

tainability, others have been at it for a long time," he says. "This is where we are going and we would love to have them get on the bus with us."

TBA Global works with one client, Walmart, which for years has been focused on sustainability. "Walmart has its own investment in sustainability, and that has been a huge springboard for us, but it is absolutely something that we have committed to educating all of our employees about," Geddes says.

The agency's CSR council is a bottom-up initiative that over the past year and a half has become a cross-representation of creative, production, destination management, meeting planning and executives where disciplines inform each other about what is relevant, what works and what doesn't and the challenges ahead. "Part of my role is to keep that on track and more importantly, make that the touch point to educate all of TBA," she says.

Geddes wants her co-workers to become ambassadors of sustainability, too. "We're educating TBA employees and staff people about how we want our offices to run and the programs we want to construct for our clients," she says.

She works with clients on a case-by-case basis. At Walmart's recent shareholder meeting, the agency supported recycling efforts for 17,000 attendees and donated wood flooring from the main arena to Habitat for Humanity. At executive meetings for Lexis-Nexis, top execs rebuilt a park in New Orleans one year and transformed a playground the next (see photo above).

"There are ways to go green without adding costs," she says.

—Sandra O'Loughlin

## RANGE ROVERS

The DOE takes a full-sized energy efficient home on tour

**THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY** has powered up the Living Zero Home Tour to educate consumers about how to make their homes more efficient, comfortable and less expensive to run. The tour launched in July at Taste of Chicago and will make 17 stops through November, including NASCAR races, New York City and the Ohio State Fair.

The 450-square-foot traveling home, built by sponsor All-American Homes, is outfitted with Energy Star-qualified lighting, appliances, windows, doors, heating and cooling, home sealing and insulation in addition to water-saving faucets, bamboo floors and countertops made from renewable and recycled content materials, low-VOC (volatile organic compounds) paints and interactive, hands-on displays. Other sponsors include GE, which is supplying the Energy Star appliances, and State Water Heaters (Agency: MCG Sports, Davidson, NC).

"When you go to a store to buy an appliance, you don't get to see it in context or as part of a house," says Lani MacRae, Energy Star marketing and communications, U.S. Department of Energy. "In this house you see energy-efficient appliances and the best building practices available."

All-American sees its sponsorship as a way to reach the mainstream public as well as green forums. "We want people to start asking for it and understand what green is," says Bill Martin, director of marketing at All-American.

State Water Heaters, a NASCAR sponsor for the past five years, especially likes the NASCAR connection. "We've found the sport is a great place to connect with key decision makers who purchase water heaters," says Jeff Storie, the brand's national manager-contractor marketing. "Many of our plumbing contractors are passionate about NASCAR and a large number of race fans in general own homes, so the Living Home Zero Tour fit nicely with our overall marketing plan." —S.O.

