Auraria Sustainable Campus Program

Sustainable SWAG Guide

Fundamentals of Ethical Purchasing

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Sustainable SWAG Guide

Fundamentals of Ethical Purchasing

Sustainability can play a huge role in the numerous events hosted on the Auraria Campus and help the ASCP and your departments become better stewards for the environment! Giveaways and door prizes are a mainstay of many events but many of these items are low-quality, shipped overseas, come wrapped in plastic, and are often thrown away by the recipient if the item isn't useful in the long term. We developed this guide to help address this issue and the large environmental impacts of our giveaway or swag choices.

Before Ordering:

Consider, do we really need a giveaway? Are they any old items we should get rid of first? If giveaways are necessary (it's okay, sometimes they are!) then there are a variety of things to consider to ensure they are responsibly sourced and minimize their environmental footprint.

SWAG is a $23 billion per year industry. Education has the second largest industrial share of SWAG purchasing.

Source: PPIA, 2018

Be sure to follow the ASCP's

Top 6 Considerations Before You Buy

PRODUCTION FACILITY

PRODUCTION PROCESS

PRODUCT CHOICES

DEMEANOR

DURABILITY

DISPOSAL

The best way you can make sure your promotional products have a positive environmental impact is to choose your products wisely. Make sure your products look good and have a long life in your customer's hands

Source: Mertes, 2020.

How to Choose a Distributor

During the procurement process it is important to choose distributors that align with your company's ethics. Be stringent about determining what criteria are most important to you and your company. Use those values as a guide to chose which distributor is right for you. Many certifications and certifying bodies will also easily help you identify an sustainable distributor.

Always remember before you buy to thoroughly vet the company website, get a sample to verify there's no unnecessary packaging, and always ask yourself questions like, "Do I really need this? Can it be replaced with something with a longer lifespan? Can my goal be met without this item?"

Use the list of ASCP vetted companies below as a jump start to identify common characteristics of ethical swag. You can also follow the ASCP 3P's when finding a company of your own, but be sure to also check with your institution to ensure that you are purchasing within the procurement policy guidelines. (View the sites here: MSU Denver, CU Denver, CCD)

More than 90% of cotton is genetically modified, using cast amounts of water and chemicals. Nearly 97% of clothing in the US is produced overseas by some of the lowest paid workers in the world, 85% of whom are women.

Source: Miller, 2016.

	Certifications											Desired Values					
	FairTrade	B-Corps	BPI Certified	Green America	1% for the Planet	Global Organic Textile Standard	Organic Trade Association	CA Prop 65 Compliant	Woman Owned	Child Labor Free	Humane Farm Conditions	Locally Sourced	Recycled Material	Environmentally Responsible	Reduced/Renewable Energy	Organic Product Lines	Carbon Neutral/ Offsets Available
Custom Earth					x			x				x	x				x
Eco Imprints				x				x		x	x	x		x			
Eco Marketing Solutions					x								x		x	x	
Eco Promotions		x	x	x					x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Everest Tee	x					x	x				x		x	x	x		
Onno				x		x	x				x						x
To-Go-Ware		x				x					x		x				
4imprint			x								x		x				

"Certifications and Desired Values descriptions can be found on pages 6-7.

ASCP 3P's to ensure environmental and socially responsible purchasing

PRODUCTION FACILITY

Look for sustainability certified buildings, zerowaste & low pollution output, locally sourced materials, & local in proximity to purchase

PRODUCT PROCESS

Find plastic alternatives, extended-life & multiple-use function, based on NEED of target audience, & end-of-life alternatives to landfill

PRODUCT CHOICES

Find up-cycled & recycled materials, lowenvironmental impact statements, & humane working conditions. Refuse virgin materials

How to Choose a Product

Word cloud of Auraria's favorite items based on a 2020 survey of campus constituents (Cadwallader, 2020)

Before ordering consider, do we really need a giveaway? Are they any old items we should get rid of first? If giveaways are necessary (it's okay, sometimes they are!) then there are a variety of things to consider to ensure they are responsibly sourced and minimize their environmental footprint.

When exploring your promotional options remember that the goal is to engage your audience and keep them coming back. Research has show that Millennials are now prioritizing "experiences" over stuff (Saiid, 2016) so it is vital to provide your audience with something UNIQUE and CAPTIVATING. Consider things like employing a student to give a music or art lesson. Or maybe a giftcard for a local restaurant where you are holding a future event. The possibilities are endless!

If you must get a physical item, be sure to follow the ASCP's 3D's for environmental and socially responsible purchasing. Also, feel free to pull product ideas from our campus favorites for inspiration.

ASCP 3D's to ensure environmental and socially responsible purchasing

DEMEANOR

Does it encourage and enable the user to adopt a sustainable behavior change (ie: reusable grocery or produce bags, bike lights)

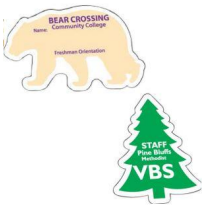
DURABILITY

Does it displace a single use item? Will people actually use it? If so, how long will it LAST? Is it built to last? What's the predicted lifespan of this product?

DISPOSAL

How easy is it to dispose of once it has exceeded its lifespan or the user no longer wants it? Are there opportunities to repurpose it? Re-gift it? Recycle? Will it just end up in the landfill?

Auraria's Top Swag Pick's



Satin Label Stickers

$0.176 (1,000)
Price includes custom sticker. Up-charge for special cuts and round corners

Wood Decal Stickers

$1.78 Each
$45.00 setup fee
Price includes 1-location, etched imprint or 1-location full color imprint

Natural Beeswax Lip Balm

$1.92 Each
$50.00 setup fee
$750.00 minimum
(available in three sizes)

Reef Safe Personal Care Gift Set

$3.17 each
$40.00 set up fee
Includes sunscreen, lipbalm, and carrying kit

Custom Recycled Lanyards

$1.78 Each
$45.00 setup fee
Price includes 1-location, etched imprint or 1-location full color imprint

Procurement Reminder

Follow the ASCP Top 6 Considerations when purchasing Swag and ALWAYS prioritize experience over extraneous stuff.

Auraria's Top Picks for "Experience"
Gift Card to Local Vendor - Face Paint at Booth
Music Lesson - Plant a Seedling - Discounted tickets
Food - Coupon Code to Future Event - Free Yoga

Seed Paper Folding Business Card

$1.32 (500) One-Sided
$1.72 (500) Two-Sided
Price includes flower seeds and branded paper card. Hemp option available (non-plantable)

Bamboo Pen

$0.55 each
$40.00 set up fee
Price includes 1 color, 1 location imprint

Coffee Thermos

$7.95 Each
$35.00 setup fee
Price includes up to 5,000 embroidered stitches in one location, up to 9 spot colors allowed

Tritan Metallic Like Water Bottle 26 oz.

$3.85 each
$55.00 setup fee
Price includes one color imprint on two sides
(BPA/BPS-Free Tritan Plastic)

Bamboo Utensil Set, Chopsticks, Reusable

$3.67 each
$45.00 set up fee
Price includes 1 color and 1 imprint on pouch

Company Certification Descriptions

FairTrade
Fairtrade participates in global supply chains and serve as a way that helps you know that those farmers got a fair deal in growing their goods. It is an independent sustainability certification that ultimately manifests as a fair trade logo on the packaging of your favorite foods, clothing, jewelry and even soccer balls. Businesses work with Fairtrade America to make sure that their supply chains are helping, not harming, farmers. We connect them to other companies and farms that are already certified and have met the rigorous Fairtrade standards. Or, we work with them to get the farms they're already working with certified by addressing the economic, social and environmental needs of producers.

B-Corps
Certified B Corporations are businesses that meet the highest standards of verified social and environmental performance, public transparency, and legal accountability to balance profit and purpose. B Corps are accelerating a global culture shift to redefine success in business and build a more inclusive and sustainable economy

BPI Certified Products
Certification for compostable products is critical for ensuring that items have been properly tested, meet international standards, and can be identified as such by composters, municipalities, restaurants, consumers, and others engaged in the diversion of organic waste. BPI advocates for compostable products as tools for scalable diversion of organic waste to composting.

Green America
Green America certifies businesses that are committed to using business as a platform for social change. Green businesses adopt principles, policies and practices that improve the quality of life for their customers, employees, communities, and the planet. The members of the Green Business Network are changing the way America does business.

1% for the Planet
1% for the Planet is a global movement inspiring businesses and individuals to support environmental solutions through annual memberships and everyday actions. We advise on giving strategies, we certify donations and we amplify the impact of our network. They pair businesses and individuals with our approved environmental nonprofits, creating high-impact partnerships that amplify the impact of our members' giving.

Women Owned
The Women's Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC) is the largest certifier of women-owned businesses in the U.S. and a leading advocate for women business owners and entrepreneurs. We believe diversity promotes innovation, opens doors, and creates partnerships that fuel the economy. That's why we provide the most relied upon certification standard for women-owned businesses and the tools to help them succeed.

Child Labor Free
Child Labor Free certification empowers consumers to recognize brands that do not use child labor. It clearly demonstrates to consumers that brands are committed to working through their supply chain to ensure there is no child labor being used in the production of any of their products or services.

Company Certification Descriptions

Global Organic Textile Standard

The Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS) is recognized as the world's leading processing standard for textiles made from organic fibers. It defines high-level environmental criteria along the entire organic textiles supply chain and requires compliance with social criteria as well. Only textile products that contain a minimum of 70% organic fibers can become GOTS certified. All chemical inputs such as dyestuff and auxiliaries used must meet certain environmental and toxicological criteria. The choice of accessories is limited in accordance with ecological aspects as well. A functional waste water treatment plant is mandatory for any wet-processing unit involved and all processors must comply with social criteria. The key criteria of GOTS, its quality assurance system and the principles of the review and revision procedure are summarized in this section.

Organic Trade Association

The Organic Trade Association (OTA) is the membership-based business association for organic agriculture and products in North America. Its members include growers, shippers, processors, certifiers, farmers' associations, distributors, importers, exporters, consultants, retailers and others. Organic products represented include organic foods, ingredients and beverages, as well as organic fibers, personal care products, pet foods, nutritional supplements, household cleaners and flowers. OTA's member organic businesses work together through networking, advocacy, and other initiatives to encourage and protect organic farming practices, and to share messages about the positive environmental and nutritional attributes of organic products with consumers, the media, and policymakers.

California Proposition 65

Proposition 65 requires businesses to provide warnings to Californians about significant exposures to chemicals that cause cancer, birth defects or other reproductive harm. These chemicals can be in the products that Californians purchase, in their homes or workplaces, or that are released into the environment. It also requires businesses selling products in California to give consumers a "clear and reasonable warning" that chemicals in their products contain substances known to the state of California to cause cancer, birth defects or reproductive harm.

Locally Sourced Definition

Many federal programs that support local foods generally define "local" based on the geographic distance between food production and/or sales such that "the total distance that the product is transported is less than 400 miles from the origin of the product"; or "any agricultural food product that is raised, produced, and distributed in ... the State in which the product is produced." (Congressional Research Service, 2016, p.g. 2)

Other Notable Certifications

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Other Useful Resources

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Sustainable SWAG Guide

A Quick Guide for Ethical Purchasing

Top 6 Things to Consider Before You Buy

PRODUCTION FACILITY

Sustainability certified buildings
Zero-waste & low pollution
Locally sourced materials & end destination location

PRODUCTION PROCESS

Up-cycled & recycled materials
Low-environmental impacts
Humane working conditions
No virgin materials

PRODUCT CHOICES

Plastic alternatives
Extended-life & multiple-use functionality Based on NEED
End-of-life alternatives to landfill

DEMEANOR

Products that encourage and enable the user to adopt a sustainable behavior change

DURABILITY

Displaces single use items
People actually use it
It is built to last

DISPOSAL

Easily dispose of once it has exceeded its lifespan or the user no longer wants it?
There are opportunities to repurpose,re-gift it, & recycle it

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Be sure to follow the ASCP's **Top 6 things to Consider Before You Buy**

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Custom Earth					x			x				x	x				x
Eco Imprints				x				x		x	x	x		x			
Eco Marketing Solutions					x								x		x	x	
Eco Promotions		x	x	x					x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Everest Tee	x					x	x				x		x	x	x		
Onno				x		x	x				x						x
To-Go-Ware		x				x					x		x				
4imprint			x								x		x				

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Questions? Contact us at greenevents@ahec.edu
www.sustainableauraria.org/swagguide

Auraria Sustainable Campus Program

AURARIA HIGHER EDUCATION CENTER