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TSEF



SUSTAINABLE EVENTS INSIGHT

LEADERSHIP CALL - NOV 2024





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WHO WE

01

are

What pillars is
The Sustainable
Events Forum
based on?

Education

Inspiration

Collaboration

Action

Introducing the Sustainable Events Forum

As a meeting professional, I once felt helpless in the face of the climate emergency. That's why I created the Sustainable Events Forum. Our mission is to promote sustainability in the events industry through our four pillars. Our forum is open to everyone, no matter where you are in your climate knowledge - we can all learn from each other.

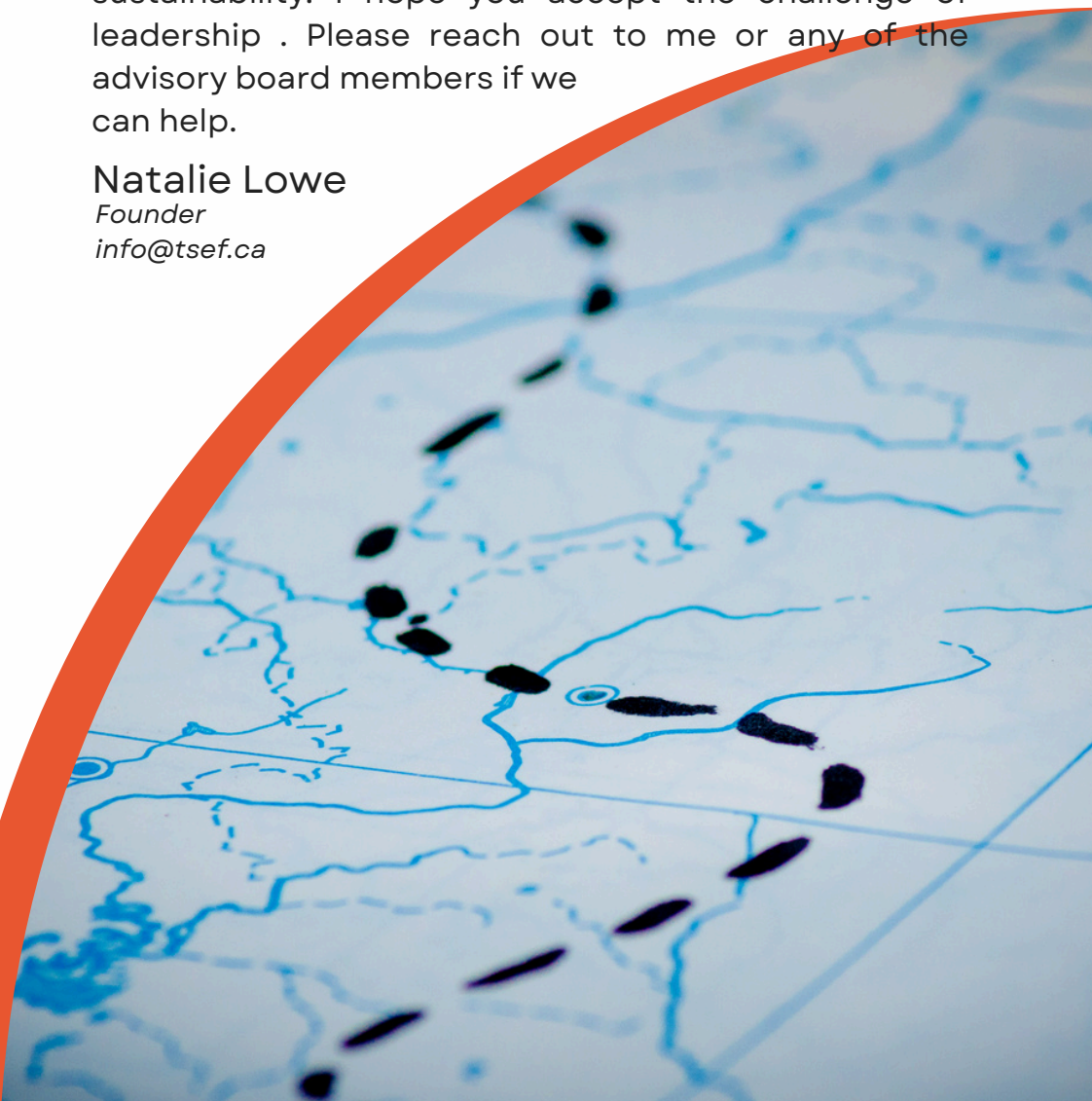
The Leadership call - the road map

We've created this road map based on your input, observations and questions from the Leadership call on November 15th, 2024.

There were a lot of diverse perspectives but one thing is abundantly clear - our companies, our teams, our communities and our events need leadership in sustainability. I hope you accept the challenge of leadership. Please reach out to me or any of the advisory board members if we can help.

Natalie Lowe

Founder
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SUMMARY

On November 15th, 2024 - 45 event leaders gathered to discuss, strategize (okay, maybe a bit of venting!) and learn from each other. We wanted to discern on what is happening with sustainability at events, what needs to happen and how we can make better progress going forward.

Our analysis reveals that while there's broad agreement on the need for change, but there is **significant variety** in how to achieve it.

The discussions showed a clear pattern of moving from identifying challenges to seeking practical solutions, with a strong emphasis on the need for both individual and systemic change.

The most actionable conclusions

- 1) simplifying sustainability initiatives
- 2) building strong partnerships
- 3) developing clear business cases for change.

One of the key concerns was around communicating effectively and persistently. Repetition is key to people noticing, but there is also fatigue due to over-messaging.

While this might sound problematic, it actually is a realistic assessment of the status quo. Sustainability is not a one size fits all, it's dependent on context. We can learn from each others experiences to help match the message to the audience.

Now, let's see what everyone had to say!

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BREAKOUT

Session 1

CHALLENGES & CURRENT STATE

POLITICAL & ECONOMIC CONTEXT

- Concerns about new US administration's impact on environmental policies
- Economic challenges preventing individual focus on sustainability
- Need to shift messaging and expand beyond current audience

Challenge:
Why are we equating
the health of the
planet to time &
money issues?

COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

- Move away from preaching to the converted
- Engage specialists from various sectors
- Focus on gentle persuasion with clients
- Need for simplified, accessible education

PRIMARY CHALLENGES

- Time and budget constraints
- Shifting focus within ESG topics
- Workload preventing proper education
- Need for reliable, free resources

NOTABLE ARGUMENTS

- Cognitive dissonance between values and actions
- Economic dependence on current systems
- Complexity of climate change requiring systemic thinking
- Need for decentralized approaches

BREAKOUT

Session 2

PARTNERSHIPS & RESOURCES

ARTS & CULTURE(S)

- Leverage music industry intelligence
- Use classical music for emotional connection
- Peripheral items like wine, beer can tell a story
- Utilize immersive art experiences

EDUCATION

- Partner with renewable energy sector
- Simplify sustainability checklists
- Focus on localization
- Collaborate - no need to reinvent the wheel

PARTNERSHIPS

- Employee resource groups
- Academic partnerships
- Food rescue organizations
- DMO (Destination Management Organization)
- Other environmental NGOs

COMMUNICATION

- Use positive messaging ("choose this" vs. "don't do that")
- Use storytelling and experiential learning
- Leverage technology for measurement and tracking

BREAKOUT

Session 3

IMPLEMENTATION AND ACTION

TRANSPORTATION

- Focus on Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF)
- SAF is not a solution
- Reality of business travel growth
- Need for practical solutions

DECISION MAKING

- Top-down approach necessity
- Grassroots approach works
- Role of incentives and rewards
- Importance of measurable targets

CULTURAL CHANGE

- Need for systemic cultural shift
- Role of younger generations
- Economic barriers to change

STRATEGIC TENSIONS

- Virtual vs. in-person events
- Immediate action vs. long-term planning
- Individual vs. corporate responsibility



NOTABLE

insights

RECURRING THEMES

- Education and Communication
- Consistent emphasis on simplified education
- Need for better resource accessibility
- Importance of positive messaging
- Economic Reality
- Budget constraints as primary barrier
- Need for business case for sustainability
- Connection between personal and environmental economics
- Systemic Change
- Recognition of need for cultural shift
- Importance of both top-down and bottom-up approaches
- Role of partnerships and collaboration

CONTRADICTIONS

1. Implementation Approach

- Fly under radar vs. bold action
- Individual vs. systemic change
- Quick wins vs. long-term transformation

2. Focus Areas

- Local vs. global impact
- Virtual vs. in-person events
- Technological vs. behavioral solutions

ACTIONABLE *conclusions*

WHAT WE CAN DO NOW

Immediate Steps

- Simplify sustainability metrics and checklists
- Build partnerships with arts, academic and NGO sectors
- Focus on measurable impacts in food choice, waste and energy use

Strategic Priorities

- Develop clear business cases for sustainability
- Create incentive structures for change
- Build broader coalitions across sectors

Communication Recommendations

- Focus on positive, solution-oriented messaging
- Use multi-channel approach (arts, education, technology)
- Emphasize practical, achievable steps

CHALLENGE

This is where the rubber hits the road - what are we going to DO now?

All of our progress depends on each of us taking action - not crazy, drastic action - just the next step. Here we have 10 items that you can try - or come up with your own!

1. Can we each take a bit more education and help pass along better education / information to our colleagues?
2. Can we simplify our messages - eat less beef, use less stuff doesn't seem to be that complicated?
3. Reach out to a new audience - what groups have similar but different interests that we can collaborate with?
4. Share your wins - in this group or in general - to inspire others.
5. Can you lead or grow a leader - one of the comments was "I started a group and people showed up, they were looking for a place to make a difference."

And lastly, can you come to our next call on January 17th at 1 p.m. EST, and bring a friend?

Note: these were resources put into comments by notetakers

Food & Waste Resources:

- [BetterTable.com/audit](https://bettertable.com/audit) - For food audits
- <https://feeditforward.ca/> - Food rescue non-profit
- <https://rethink.restaurant/> - Free resources about food waste prevention
- <https://www.foodsynergymovie.ca/> - Documentary about food systems
- <https://champions123.org/> - SDG 12.3 food waste reduction initiative
- Food rescue organizations mentioned: Copia, Goodr, foodrecovery.org
- La Tablee des Chefs
- Second Harvest

Sustainability & Events Resources:

- <https://www.gds.earth/index/> - Destination Sustainability Index from Destination Canada
- <https://greenkeyglobal.com/meetings/> - Green Key certification for meetings
- <https://www.visitrichmondbc.com/stakeholder-resources/regenerative-solutions/> - DMO sustainability resources
- <https://www.thetravelfoundation.org.uk/envision2030/> - Beyond 2030
- <https://www.purposenetzero.com/> - Purpose Net Zero platform
- <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/environment/weather/climatechange/climate-plan/net-zero-emissions-2050/challenge.html> - Net Zero Challenge from Government of Canada

Educational Resources:

- Footprint Deck presentation: https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/e/2PACX-1vRsA4SG2RFphEX_1i-j0OJ6Vjq5unQMzuCSkp6OICZ-UsF-Lq1vLsJpt7jau3dGBVq_OhLT7SRivOCb/pub?start=false&loop=false&delayms=3000&slide=id.g2f9411d31f7_1_195

Case Studies:

- Calgary Stampede refugee-powered environmental program: <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/calgary-stampedes-refugee-powered-enviro-program-leor-rotchild-wk62c/>

Expert Resources Mentioned:

- Climate scientists referenced: Katharine Hayhoe and Johan Rockström
- Sound of Silence (Quiet Places): <https://www.soundoflife.com/blogs/places/listen-to-the-sound-of-silence-the-world-s-certified-quiet-places>

On moving forward:

"The lazy lose to the average. The average lose to the focused. The focused lose to the obsessed." Let's become obsessed!

"We need to stop accepting things as they are, and create a better future.

Climate and Sustainability Insights:

"It comes down to economics -- does this approach make business sense?"

"Either do you want to help the economy or help the environment?"

Powerful Personal Reflections:

"The first question in sustainability is always 'should we be doing this at all?'"

Systemic Change Observations:

"Climate change is not the problem, its the people who make the decisions that are the problem, and its psychological."

"We need to get off the linear lifestyle and get on a circular economy with less consumerism."

Provocative Challenges:

"Stop giving people a choice."

Pragmatic Wisdom:

"Work within the industry with the people who are passionate about it."

"Let's celebrate buying used and second hand, or not buying anything at all."

"We need more voices not less."

Emotional/Psychological Insights:

"People are facing a cost of living crisis and that is preventing them from thinking 'outside' of their household."

"Until we shift our mindsets, nothing is going to change."

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