

# So you want to create a mobile event application based sustainability game...

GET YOUR GREEN ON!

*Designed, Created & Introduced at Event Camp Vancouver 2011*

Written by:



# What if you could create an event experience that:



Promotes more sustainable behaviour by event attendees, benefiting the host community?

Helps the audience for the event learn to apply new technologies to their jobs, improving their skills as a professional community?

Engages these individuals in using social media, extending the sense of community created onsite at an event beyond the close of the event?

Networks onsite event attendees with remote event participants, expanding the reach of the event to a global community of interested professionals?

# Would you try it?

Footprint Management Systems Inc., MeetGreen® and QuickMobile did!

During Event Camp Vancouver 2011, they set out to:

***...bust the myth that sustainability is  
as dry as granola and as tough as a  
burlap sack!***

## Get Your Green On is...

a mobile application-based game that engages event attendees in fun, engaging "Acts of Green". Game-players score points for simple sustainability actions. Each action contributed \$1 to the BC Cancer Foundation.

The experience was developed by Judy Kucharuk, Shawna McKinley and the team at QuickMobile for Event Camp Vancouver (ECV), held in Vancouver, Canada, November 4-6, 2011. The event audience included 90 senior event professionals gathered at the Vancouver Convention Centre and Westin Bayshore and 50 remote attendees tuning in virtually from various locations around the world, including Canada, the United Kingdom, Italy, Switzerland and the USA.

The experience was designed to:

1. Teach attendees how to use mobile event technology and social media.
2. Familiarize event designers with what is involved in integrating game-play with events.
3. Build community between remote and in-person event attendees.
4. Recognize event sponsor efforts to reduce event footprints.
5. Reward attendees for doing fun, simple actions to reduce their own footprint.
6. Educate event professionals about practical ideas to integrate sustainability into events.
7. Raise funds for charity.

The primary program sponsors were Footprint Management Systems Inc., MeetGreen® and QuickMobile. As sustainable event consultants, FMS and MeetGreen® were able to use the project to test a theory that attendees could be influenced to improve event sustainability using incentives. This runs counter to typical practice of using control-based approaches to improve event sustainability through the adoption of standards, contracts and reporting. QuickMobile partnered in this unique project by providing a mobile event application solution to deliver the Get Your Green On event experience to attendees.

# What is Event Camp Vancouver?

Launched in February 2010, Event Camp is a “safe place” for event professionals to experiment with innovative event design ideas.

“Event Camp is the world’s first industry gathering of its kind...our ongoing mission is to bring together like-minded professionals, to share best practices, and learn new strategies, for leveraging social media and technology to create enhanced event experiences.”

[www.eventcamp.org](http://www.eventcamp.org)

ECV is the eighth Camp to be organized and was planned by a committee of volunteer collaborators including event planners and suppliers. The event was spearheaded and led by Tahira Endean. A comprehensive Event Camp Vancouver 2011 White Paper was authored by Endean, which highlights the strategies, partnerships and successes of ECV.

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***“Event Camps have a rapidly building history of events created by event professionals for event professionals, where collectively we take risks and push boundaries exploring social media, hybrid events, innovative formats, peer-based learning, and remote and face-to-face engagement that builds relationships, all in unique settings.”***

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Event Camp Vancouver web site  
[www.eventcampvancouver.com](http://www.eventcampvancouver.com)



## *“Solutionary: one who innovates by breaking molds to solve challenges, meet opportunities and improve communities”*



### The Moment it all “clicked”

#### GET YOUR GREEN ON IS BORN

Get Your Green On (GYGO) was deeply embedded in the design of ECV. It emerged after two brainstorming sessions by organizers to clarify what they wanted to get out of their participation in Camp, including:

- Shared value solutions that result from real collaboration and non-traditional sponsorship.
- New and innovative ideas that could be tested, demonstrated and duplicated.
- Simple, uncomplicated ways to integrate sustainability principles and CSR into events.

After listening closely to the host committee’s needs, a vision to create a “solutionary” sustainability experience that integrated social media, technology and CSR in the event environment emerged: the Get Your Green On Game.

### The Game needed to be:

#### SUITABLE

Get Your Green On was embedded in the design of Event Camp Vancouver 2011. It evolved in response to event community aims: organizers and participants wanted to experiment with new and innovative event designs that embraced technology, social networking, sustainability and corporate social responsibility. The technical design of the game promoted the collaborative, innovation-oriented theme of the event program. It reinforced session content, recognized partner sponsors, reduced event footprint and contributed financial support to a worthy cause.

#### CREATIVE

Get Your Green On is unprecedented. It challenged assumptions that hybrid event technology can be at odds with promoting in-person collaboration. It demonstrated that environmental footprints can be reduced by presenting choices and influencing people to act, rather than controlling their decisions. It made serious and complicated topics fun for event planners to engage in. And not content to achieve these strategic objectives, it also integrated an important health-related fundraising cause that all attendees could connect with.

#### SUSTAINABLE

By simply inviting attendees to do “Acts of Green”, Get Your Green On demonstrated that not only are organizers responsible for making events sustainable, but participants have a role to play, too. Our lifestyles, events and communities become more sustainable when we all take responsibility for making better choices. And as an idea Get Your Green On has legs! Lessons and legacies have been shared broadly and the concept has already been re-purposed in other contexts to:

- Improve perceptions about integrating sustainability and technology into events.
- Improve the event experience.
- Educate attendees about sustainability stories about the event.
- Enable attendee action to improve event sustainability.
- Execute within budget (i.e. zero cost).
- Do less harm (action challenge) and do better (fundraising challenge).



# The Design

Get Your Green On was not created with the purpose of ‘playing a game at event’. It emerged as a solution to achieve specific strategic event objectives for Event Camp Vancouver. It also carefully considered audience needs and receptivity, the ability of organizers to control and influence sustainability and the realities of project timelines and available resources.

## DIAGRAM 1: Design Considerations

The diagram on the proceeding page describes the influence four key factors had on the design of the Get Your Green On Game. Careful consideration of each of these things up front and through the design process were essential to creating a successful event experience.

## DIAGRAM 2: Design Decisions

Each design consideration led to a critical decision being made about the experience. These tactical choices are outlined on page 8 and included everything from making the game voluntary through carefully designed scoring that engaged remote and in-person attendees equally.

## DIAGRAM 3: Design Timeline

The final diagram sketches out the implementation timeline for the game, identifying key milestones. This timeline was completed within 6 months.

***“How do you introduce event professionals to an experience that integrates social media, technology and CSR in a non-intrusive, un-intimidating way?”***

## EVENT OBJECTIVES

Planning committee members were invited to participate in the development of the experience that became the game early on.

Objectives expressed by collaborators included creating an experience that:

- was new, interesting and fun.
- showcased Vancouver's attractiveness as an event destination.
- promoted collaboration.
- encouraged participants to use social networking tools and new technology.
- introduced participants to the concept of sustainability without being intrusive.

## AUDIENCE

Feedback from the target audience indicated mixed familiarity with applying games to events. Some were leery to engage given negative experiences in the past.

GYGO bucked the traditional event model that typically puts remote attendees second. Onsite and virtual attendees could participate equally. The game gallery afforded two-way sharing of the event experiences between both types of attendees, enhancing the connection between them, rather than emphasizing the division. In fact while 17% of game players were remote, they generated 27% of the photo gallery content.

### DIAGRAM 1: GYGO EXPERIENCE DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

## CONTROL vs INFLUENCE

Traditional approaches to improving event sustainability stress the need to control event decisions in order to guarantee footprint reductions. This calls on planners to use requests for proposals and contracts to ensure 'greener' practices.

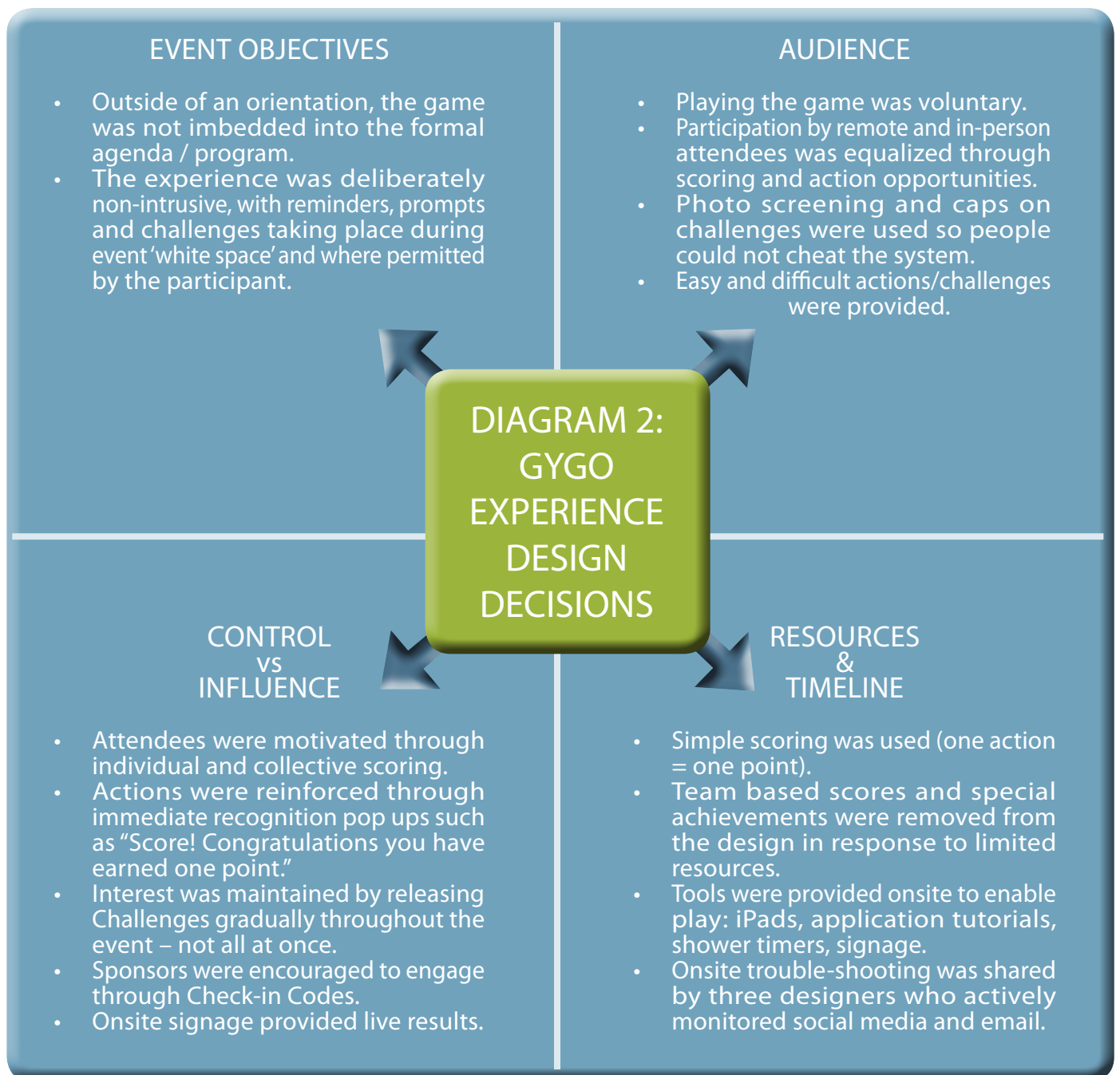
Given all organizers participated on a pro-bono basis, Event Camp Vancouver could not rely on this traditional approach. Influencing event sponsors and attendees to voluntarily improve sustainability was the only option.

## RESOURCES & TIMELINE

GYGO was created by a team of three professionals with event planning, sustainability and mobile application development expertise. None of the creators were 'game developers'. Game design required in excess of 200 hours. Onsite execution required an additional 60 hours of labor. Post-event reporting also took time.

The project took 6 months to execute and was significantly scaled back three months prior to the event due to resource constraints.







## DIAGRAM 3: DESIGN TIMELINE

### 1. Situation Analysis

Listen to understand stakeholder interests, attendee demographics, location & timing, event model & theme.

### 2. Strategy & Objective Setting

Confirm the objectives for the experience and select the tools that make sense to achieve those objectives. In this case: a mobile application-based event sustainability game.

### 3. Tool Design & Creation

Design the game to achieve objectives. Scope the game (object, rules, scoring, etc.) and event application. Select a technology collaborator to build the game platform. Engage sponsors and other collaborators. Adjust architecture and game design to meet budget. Build the game and mobile event application. Beta test and trouble-shoot.

### 4. Communication Plan

Develop a communications plan to inform and engage attendees in the game experience. Consider pre-event communications to ensure people know how to play. Provide tools to enable access. Include incentives to generate interest. Imbed feedback loops to reinforce participation in the game.

### 5. Review & Evaluation

Score and award prizes. Analyse participation data. Request and integrate participant feedback (during and post). Capture and share lessons learned.

## Get Your Green On ~ How to Play

### OBJECT OF THE GAME

Earn as many points as possible by performing different sustainable actions. The in-person and virtual attendee with the most individual points will each win prizes. The event goal is to reach 1000 Acts of Green across all attendees!

### WHO CAN PLAY

Any participant registered at Event Camp Vancouver can play. This includes in-person and virtual attendees. Participation is not required but encouraged to get the most out of your experience!

### HOW TO PLAY

1. Download the QuickMobile event application from the Apple Store.
2. Sign in using your registration username and password.
3. Stop, Look, Listen and Act to score points in three possible ways: Challenges, Check-ins & Random Acts of Green. You can view your score and total event acts of green by checking out the Leaderboard.

### COMPLETE A CHALLENGE

Challenges can be found in the Agenda section of the application as they are unlocked. We will notify you when new Challenges are released. You can also enable notifications in the Settings section of your installed event application to receive Challenges on your smart phone or iPad the moment they are active. To receive points for a Challenge simply hit "Yes" on the survey for each item you have successfully completed. If you did not complete the Challenge do not select anything. Challenges may be completed once after they are released and can be viewed in the Agenda section of the app at any time. Some Challenges call on you to share sustainability information through social media. If you do be sure to use the #ecv11 event hashtag. Be aware the same Challenge might be released more than once during the event, so watch for multiple chances to score again!

***"Our individual choices matter.***

***When we do good things  
it adds up to a whole bunch of  
better for everyone.***

***Have fun and help us make  
Event Camp Vancouver better by  
playing our  
Get Your Green On Game!"***

### SPOT & SHARE A RANDOM ACT OF GREEN

Event Camp organizers have made sustainable choices. Vancouver has a lot of green features as a city. For virtual attendees we're sure you've got some good green things going on where you are, too. Look around you. What do you notice? Snap a photo of something sustainability-related and upload it to the event app Gallery. You'll receive points for each Random Act of Green you add!

### ENTER A CHECK-IN CODE

During Event Camp we will be sharing Check-in Codes at certain times. These are strings of numbers and letters that you can enter into the Check-in option in the Game. If you see or receive one select the Check-in option and type the code into the Game. Score!

### WHEN TO PLAY

Scoring will be open at noon Pacific Time, Friday November 4, 2011. Scoring will close at 10:00am Pacific Time Sunday, November 6, 2011. Winners will be announced and prizes awarded during the sustainability session Sunday after 10:30am.

### WE ALL WIN, REALLY!

Although Get Your Green On has competitive aspects, we all win by contributing to a collective goal of a more sustainable event through as many genuine acts of green as possible. Another win we will take away is the ability to analyse Game results to understand which actions are most popular and most impactful. So in addition to having fun, be aware your participation helps us better understand 'green' attendee behaviour patterns. We trust you to complete Challenges accurately so we can get good data we will share with Event Camp attendees to help us all design better events.

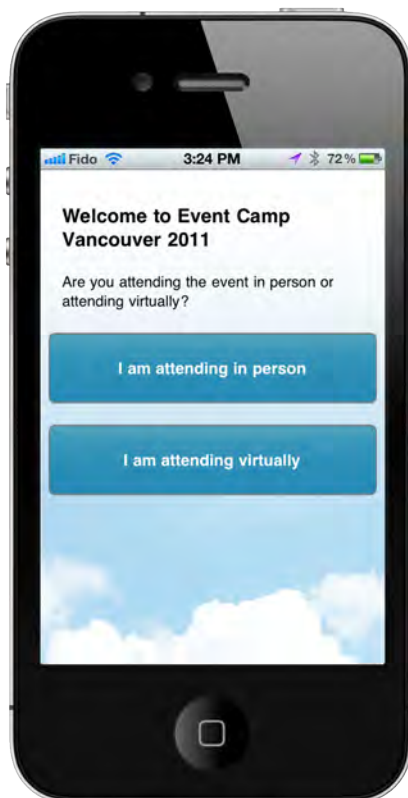
### FUNDRAISING GOAL

Need some added motivation to get out and play? You got it! MeetGreen® will donate \$1 per Act of Green to the BC Cancer Agency up to our 1000 Acts of Green goal!



# The Get Your Green On Experience!

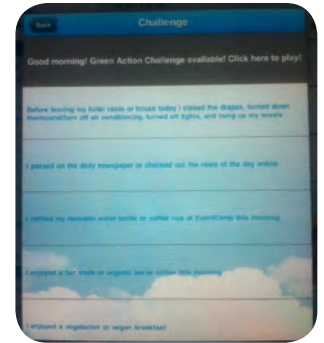
We could describe in words what the GYGO experience was about, but we think our Game Gallery, measured outcomes and attendee feedback tell the more powerful story.



## The Game is Afoot!

Get Your Green On kicked off with fun and drama, with attendees receiving an orientation and hands-on scoring opportunities during the opening session of Event Camp Vancouver (above). When logging onto the mobile event application or web site attendees were immediately given an option to score based on whether or not they were attending virtually or in-person.

**WOW!**  
**1715 Acts of Green**  
**and \$1500 raised!**  
**How did we get there?**



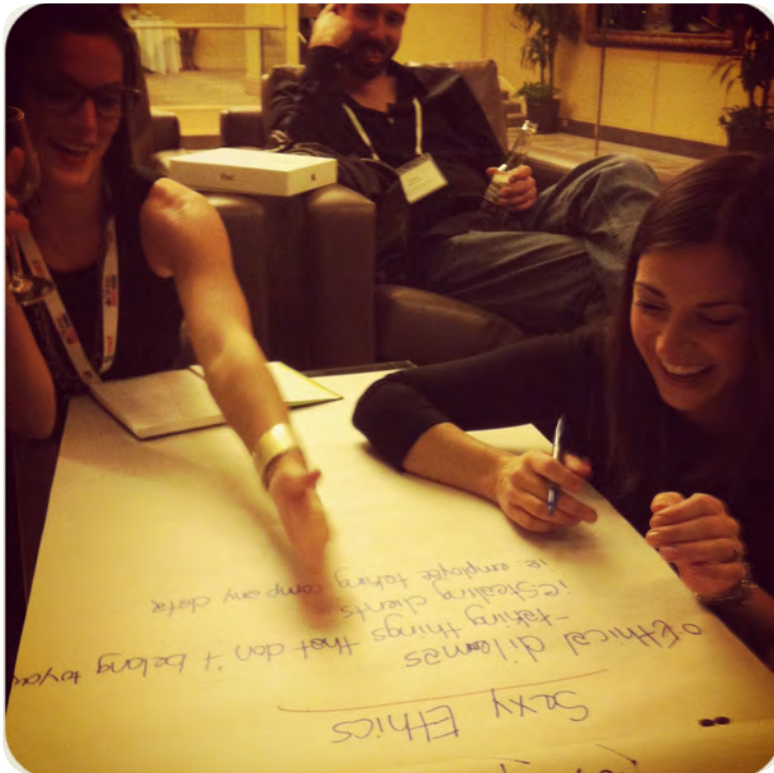
*“The BC Cancer Foundation was delighted to be selected as the benefiting charity of Get Your Green On. The proceeds from the event will be used to support leading edge cancer research to improve care for cancer patients in British Columbia and beyond. We commend you for your efforts and thank you for being our Partners in Discovery.”*

### Challenges, Check-ins and Random Acts of Green, oh my!

Participation in the Get Your Green on Game was optional. Remote and on-site event attendees could both participate. Players scored points for completing a pre-set Challenge (top right), finding a Check-in Code (bottom right) or uploading a Random Act of Green to the event gallery (left). 41 Challenges were released gradually throughout the event. 19 different Check-in Codes were ‘hidden’ throughout the event site much like a scavenger hunt. Each Check-in Code represented one way a sponsor was including sustainability in their operations. 168 photos were submitted during the event, showing both popular and unique ways individual attendees were being sustainable at the event and as a part of their lifestyle. The images featured in this report include Random Acts of Green that were uploaded by attendees during ECV.

Quote: John Andru, Senior Development Officer, BC Cancer Foundation.





## Walking the talk onsite...

Random Acts of Green photos capture how planners and attendees embraced green decisions made by organizers. A sampling of efforts captured on film included sustainability-related session content (top left), and bring-your-own lanyards (below). 57% of lanyards were reused from other events. Photo above taken by Kelly Clarke, overall onsite attendee winner.



## ...and at home!

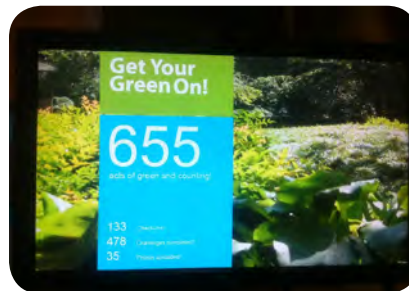
Random Acts of Green became a badge of pride for many ECV attendees. Points were awarded for personal choices to buy fair trade, organic coffee that is roasted locally (top right). In fact, 123 cups of fair trade brew were purchased during the event. Simple acts like unplugging appliances also improved scores (centre). To kick off the event all on-site attendees were given 4-minute shower timers to encourage them to conserve water while at Camp (below). In total 73 water wise showers were recorded! 21 attendees practiced linen reuse at the Westin too, helping to conserve 2,385 L of water.





### Remote Attendees score high points for carbon-sensitive participation!

By making the decision to virtually attend, remote participants received a significant number of bonus points in the Game. In fact by participating remotely these attendees avoided enough carbon dioxide emissions to fill 110,000 party balloons! The per person remote footprint was about 7kg of CO<sub>2</sub> per person, compared to the 1,100 kg of CO<sub>2</sub> that would have been emitted by coming in person. Pictured left to right are attendees Andrew Walker (London, UK), Priscilla Chan (Vancouver, Canada, watching Montreal pod who also tuned in virtually) and Jill Drury (New York, USA), each sharing their unique remote event experience through the gallery. Jill Drury won first place among remote attendees.



### She checks-in, she scores!

To build excitement the game application included a Leader Board that kept a tally of personal and overall Acts of Green. Scores were updated live on LCD signs provided by Bell at the Vancouver Convention Centre. Event collaborators got very creative with hiding Check-in Codes everywhere – from buffets to bars and washrooms to beehives. Here a Check-in Code has been added to a creative décor item provided by Greenscape in the Room for Thought (right).

***Even eating your veggies can be fun, if it's a game!***  
***94 fully vegetarian or vegan meals were reported during***  
***ECV, representing about 35% of breakfasts,***  
***21% of lunches and 9% of dinners.***



*25% of  
attendees  
took time to  
exercise over  
1000 hours  
while at  
Event Camp.*



I'm on a Bus!...or a Sky Train! ....or a Seabus!

By far the most popular Challenge and Act of Green, transit use was a hit during Event Camp Vancouver! In fact, 168 vehicle trips were avoided by walking, taking transit or car-pooling. This avoided an estimated 17 kg of emissions per trip, or 2.85 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub>. 9% of attendees also offset their carbon footprint.

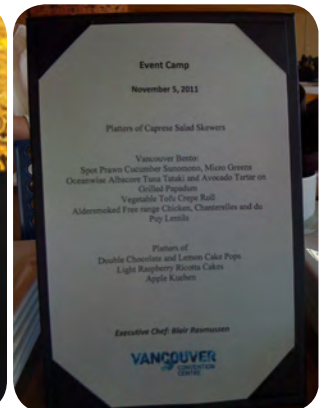


Funds raised, footprints reduced, sponsors recognized!

Get Your Green on also provided a measurable return on investment for ECV collaborators who chose to participate. The Game recorded:

- 21 images acknowledging sponsor efforts.
- 303 Challenges related to sponsored services.
- 313 Check-in Codes where attendees 'found' sponsor clues onsite (and incidentally, virtually!).

By reaching for reusable drink containers game players conserved 169 liters or 46 gallons of water – enough to fill 338 of the bottles sponsored by Patterson Brands!





# Lessons & Legacy

In short, GYGO demonstrated potential. Until ECV it had not been proven that multiple strategic objectives for event engagement, learning, community building, sustainability and fundraising could be achieved through an optional mobile event application-based game.

Get Your Green On benefitted from lessons learned during the experience of the Game On! Program for the 2011 Sustainable Meetings Conference. This experience imbedded a game as the program for the annual conference held by the Green Meeting Industry Council. GYGO organizers chose to scale back and take the game out of the formal program to build on the success of the GMIC program. We hope others might learn from our experience and continue to refine and experiment with event-based games.

Lessons learned from the Get Your Green On experience include:

- Communicating commitment to sustainability as early as possible.
- Actively engaging collaborators early on to be able to integrate them into game dynamics.
- Keeping it simple and being prepared to scale back when timelines shorten and situations change. This happened 3 months prior to the event when it was proving too complicated to develop a team-based game.
- Designing Challenges with hybrid attendees in mind; keeping unique opportunities/points for remote (bonus carbon reduction points) and in-person (Check-ins).
- Integrating onsite signage. Event organizers partnered with Bell who supplied LCD signage.
- Using an online photo gallery worked well as a way to engage the remote audience with onsite.
- Having a QuickMobile representative available to troubleshoot issues and a dedicated onsite coordinator.
- Monitoring and using Twitter to watch for bugs / technical issues and responding accordingly to confirm solutions.
- Identifying a sponsor who would commit to matching dollar for dollar, every Act of Green recorded to enable a donation to a local charity.
- While we chose a theme of sustainability, rewarding Acts of Green, other themes could be selected to modify the GYGO concept to benefit other organizations in future. The ability to model the program to professionals makes them more comfortable to experiment with implementing it themselves.

ECV organizers received post-event feedback from participants indicating:

- 80.7% learned new and valuable information relevant to their profession.
- 77.4% improved their knowledge of mobile application technology for events and 70% agreed they were more willing to try it as a result.
- 71% improved their knowledge of how to integrate sustainability into events and 67.7% agreed they were more willing to do so as a result.
- 77.4% improved their knowledge of using games in events and 64.5% agreed they were more willing to try including a game in a future event.

In the words of one attendee:

"My take-aways were mostly experiential...rather than the content of the individual sessions...the program was well thought-out and touched on many new and innovative aspects that matter to our industry. I found the weekend very valuable and I will implement many things I learned in future events. I feel I am a better planner, more aware of new technology and its possibilities, learned great tips for easy ways to be sustainable and made great new contacts by attending Event Camp."

***83 tweets about sustainability were shared across attendee networks during ECV. With networks ranging in size from dozens, to hundreds to thousands this is estimated to have spread a message of sustainability far beyond the event.***



You may hear first time game designers for events say:

“ Game design was more challenging than I thought it would be”.

Our response: Challenging? Yes! Rewarding? Absolutely!

Thank you to everyone who participated in the creation of Get Your Green On, including collaborators and especially the game players, both local and virtual. Your willingness to engage and provide feedback was instrumental in ensuring that the game was successful. Play on!

For more information about Event Camp Vancouver including a listing of the organizing committee and collaborators on the project please link to: [www.eventcampvancouver.com](http://www.eventcampvancouver.com)

A sampling of articles & Blogs referencing the game, Get Your Green On, can be found:

- [www.eventcampvancouver.wordpress.com](http://www.eventcampvancouver.wordpress.com) - various contributors
- <http://www.managefootprint.blogspot.com/2011/11/ss-event-camp.html>
- <http://www.managefootprint.blogspot.com/2011/10/gone-fishin.html>
- <http://blog.meetgreen.com/2011/11/1000-acts-of-green.html>
- [http://www.mpiweb.org/Portal/CSR/20120305/Sustainable\\_Games](http://www.mpiweb.org/Portal/CSR/20120305/Sustainable_Games)

***“Designing a game for your peers  
is a privilege. Seeing the game take  
shape into something tangible is  
extraordinary”***

***~ Judy Kucharuk***





Stn. Main PO Box 2660  
Dawson Creek, British Columbia, Canada  
V1G 5A1  
T: (250) 784-4237  
F: (250) 782-3595  
E: [judy@managefootprint.com](mailto:judy@managefootprint.com)  
W: [www.managefootprint.com](http://www.managefootprint.com)



6220 NE Glisan Street  
Portland, OR, USA  
97213  
T: (503) 252-5458  
F: (503) 261-0964  
E: [info@meetgreen.com](mailto:info@meetgreen.com)  
W: [www.meetgreen.com](http://www.meetgreen.com)



#400 - 1008 Homer Street  
Vancouver, BC, Canada  
V6B 2X1  
T: (604) 875-0403  
E: [info@quickmobile.com](mailto:info@quickmobile.com)  
W: [www.quickmobile.com](http://www.quickmobile.com)

Photos: Event Camp Vancouver participants

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