



OVERVIEW

Today's event audiences expect interactive and shareable experiences, as well as unforgettable memories. As consumers become increasingly aware of ethical issues, brands must respect this and continue to demonstrate their credentials when activating brand experiences. Brands and their agencies have the opportunity to make a significant difference and deliver a powerful positive force through their activations.

Working in the events industry for 20 years we've witnessed sustainability being pushed up the agenda by Councils, consumers and communities.

We have noticed a concerning disconnect between brands' sustainable policies and the activations they produce at events. Frustrated by the mistakes being made and the damage being done, we decided to look into the brand activation processes in order to develop services which the industry can utilise to reduce environmental damage.

A Greener Activation is a collaboration between Alive Activation and A Greener Festival. We provide brands, agencies and producers access to a global network of assessors, consultants, training, guides and reports. Our certification will help brands to monitor their impact and offer advice on how to lighten their carbon footprint.

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METHODOLOGY

An invite to be part of an industry survey was sent out to over 7,000 sponsorship professionals, event rights owners, agencies and production companies. The link was distributed as part of the Think! Sponsorship newsletter in December 2019. It was also sent via A Greener Festivals database and social media channels and via personal invites. The survey was live for two months.

The full results can be accessed at
www.agreeneractivation.com



SURVEY SNAPSHOT

20%
of Agencies say that
'environmental impact'
is the deciding
factor behind their
activations

78%
of respondents have
never measured the
environmental impact of
sponsor activations

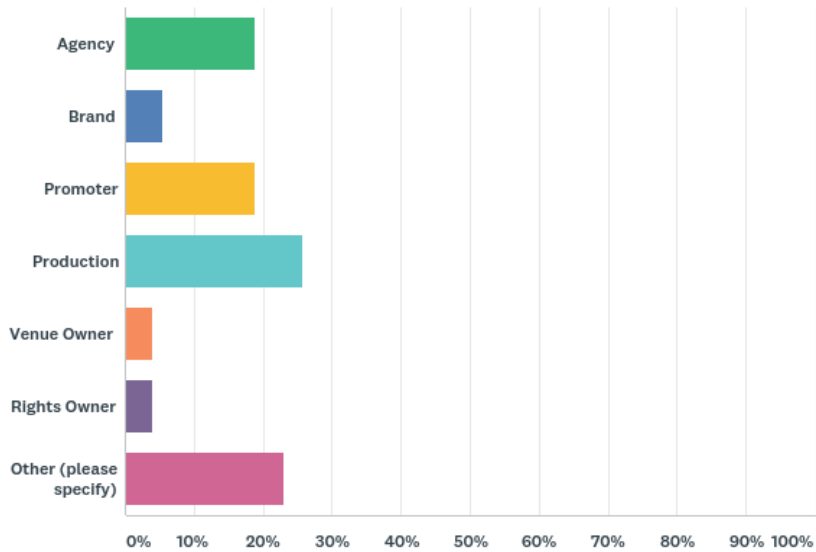
63%
of activation producers
do not allocate budget
to sustainability

68%
of brand activation
producers have never been
asked by event owners for
supporting information on
the sustainability of their
activation

43%
of promoters feel that
training is the most
important industry
requirement to improve
sustainability



Q1 What best describes your business?



A BALANCED RESPONSE

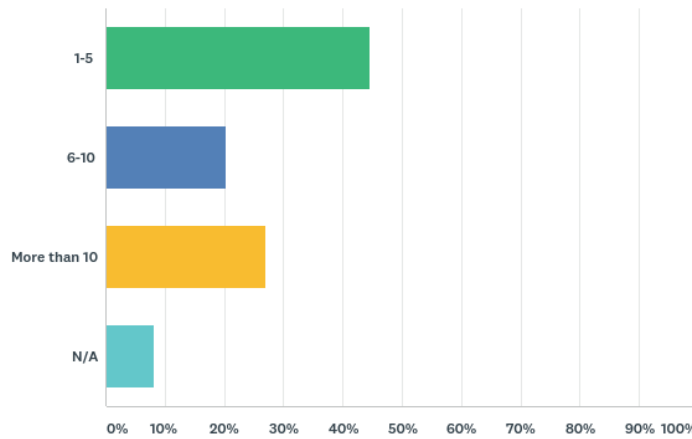
Our research received a balanced response from the industry, with brands and their activation agencies being equally matched by rights owners, venue owners and production personnel.

Respondents choosing 'Other' were mainly freelancers who sometimes worked for production companies and sometimes for agencies.





Q2 How many brand activations have you worked on in 2019?



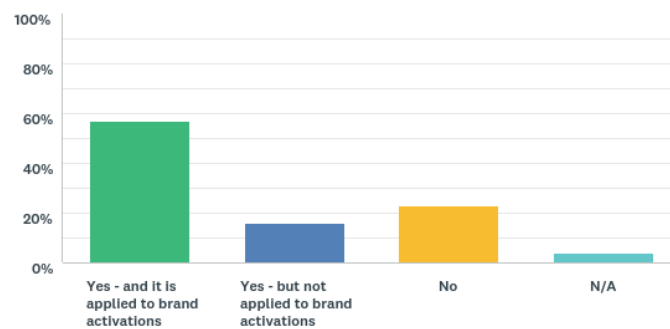
EXPERIENCE IN THE FIELD

Respondents came from a highly experienced pool with 28% having worked on 10 or more brand activations in 2019.





Q3 Does your organisation have a sustainability policy?



SUSTAINABILITY POLICY

As expected, more than half respondent companies have a sustainability policy, but it's equally interesting to note that over 20% of the companies operating in this space do not have a sustainability policy for 2020. When added to the 16% that do not apply their policies to activations it's clear to see that the industry needs help in this area.





How much do you consider the following elements of your activations to cause a potential environmental impact?

	1 - NO IMPACT	2 - MINIMAL IMPACT	3 - NEGATIVE IMPACT	4 - DAMAGING IMPACT
Materials usage in build	3%	34%	38%	16%
Sampling Materials	12%	24%	30%	22%
Branding and Signage	7%	26%	28%	32%
Travel and Transport	3%	19%	45%	30%
Waste	4%	18%	38%	36%
Plastics	7%	14%	32%	45%
Water usage	11%	39%	26%	12%
CO2 emissions	4%	22%	30%	35%

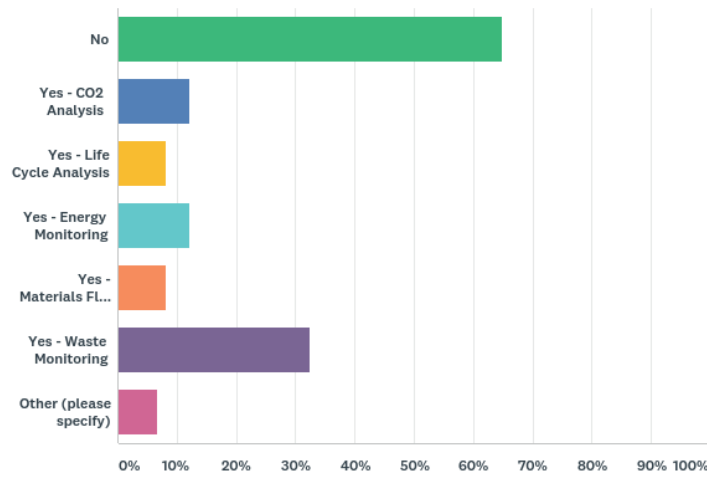
WHAT CAUSES DAMAGE?

We asked which elements of branded activations caused the greatest potential environmental impact. Respondents focused on plastic waste as being the most damaging, closely followed by waste and CO2 emissions. There is clearly an understanding that there are numerous contributors to environmental impact which may make them daunting to address individually.





Q5 Have you measured the environmental impact of any of your brand activations or sponsorships? (Tick all that apply)



MEASUREMENT

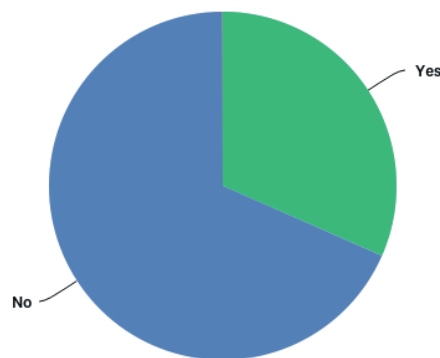
Perhaps the most alarming statistic from our research is that 65% of respondents are not measuring the environmental impact of activations or sponsorships. This needs to change as brands will increasingly come under scrutiny by councils, customers and rights owners. Brands will be exposed for ignoring consumers' principles and bad examples will be shared on social media, resulting in negative PR and brand damage.

Although most companies operating in this space have a sustainability policy, there remains over a third that either don't have a policy or do not apply their policies to activations.





Q6 Have you ever been asked by a rights owner to provide supporting information regarding the sustainability of your activation?



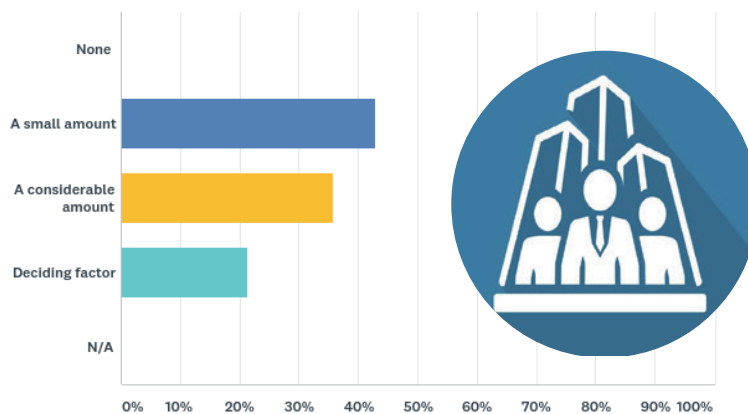
SUPPORTING INFORMATION

68% of the people producing brand activations have never been asked for supporting information regarding the sustainability of their activation.

In future this will change as brands increasingly come under scrutiny by councils, customers and rights owners.



Q7 When planning an activation, how much consideration do you give to it's environmental impact?

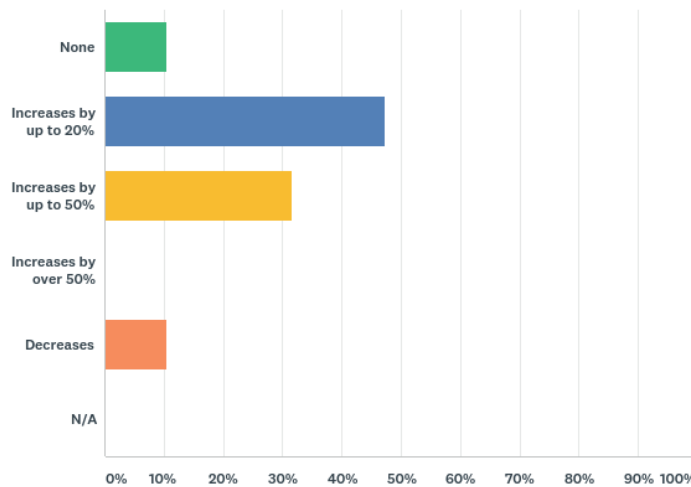


AGENCIES AND PRODUCERS ARE CHANGING - FAST

Environmental impact is increasingly becoming the ‘deciding factor’ when an agency or producer is considering a brand activation. It is encouraging to see this shift and underlines the need for an advisory resource which agencies and producers can lean on for advice and guidance. Assessment will need to be available to all, quick and simple to undergo, and available now.



Q8 How much do you think having a sustainable approach to activation impacts on the cost of the activation/activity?



COST OF SUSTAINABLE ACTIVATIONS

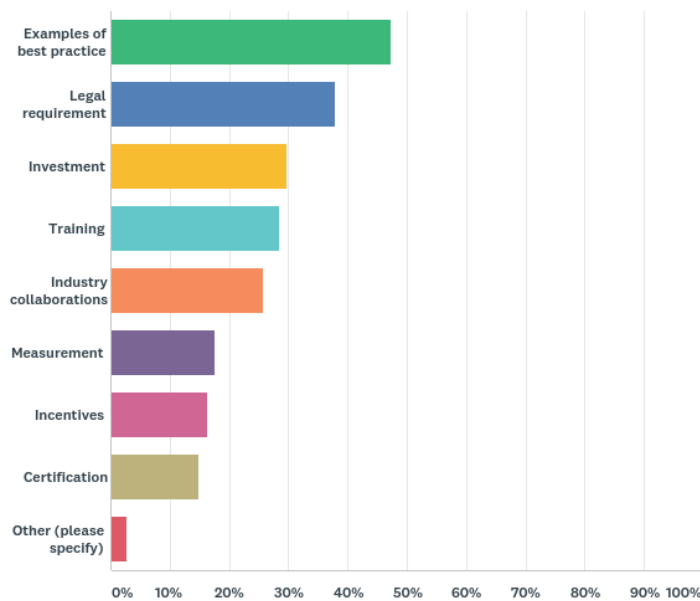
There can clearly be production cost implications when adopting sustainable practices. While some activations will cost more, the reuse of materials can decrease the costs of activation, without assessment this is very hard to judge.

Cost comparisons can only accurately be reported when assessment has taken place and the differences of changes calculated.





Q10 What help do you think is needed for the sector to achieve sustainability? (Please tick the TWO most important)



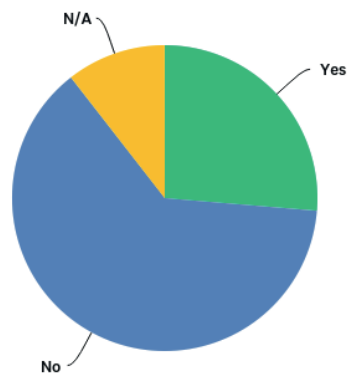
REQUIRED ASSISTANCE

The industry needs help via **examples of best practice**, backed up by the more rigid approach of making it a **legal requirement**. It is acknowledged that brands need to **invest** in assessing their activations and industry **training** is required.





Q11 Do you allocate budget specifically to sustainability when planning your activations?



BUDGETING FOR SUSTAINABILITY

54% do not allocate budget to making activations more sustainable.

This highlights a real need for investment in certification, training and best practices, making sustainability as important as evaluating Health and Safety, Risk Assessment and Fire Risks.



CONCLUSION

The survey results have highlighted areas where change is needed and indicated the tools required to implement change. Brands know the potential dangers of activating in a manner which puts their needs before those of the planet. An environmental lens should be placed on all brand activity to ensure best practices are upheld in every location. This will create a multitude of opportunities for brands to make a significant difference. Brands and their agencies can be a powerful force and make genuine positive impacts through their activations. Rights owners and promoters should be responsible for enforcing assessment of all sponsors and brand partners activating at their events or in their venues. As gatekeepers they play an important role in ensuring their brand partners operate in an environmentally sustainable way without damage to the events' credentials or reputation. Organisers could incentivise brands by offering discounts to site assets such as power or waste services if they have carried out A Greener Activation Assessment. The saving this creates for agencies and brands could fund activation assessment. Brands should be confident of the sustainability of their activations and be able to demonstrate to media, audiences and venues that they are upholding good practices. An industry recognised assessment from A Greener Activation delivers verification and peace of mind.



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