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Music Fans Want To Know More About The Sustainable Initiatives Of Festivals!

- **88% say they will re-use their tent after the festival**
- **Festival support for local organizations and charities goes largely unnoticed**
- **95% think recycling provisions are very well organized**
- **Car sharing is an established initiative**

The Event Tutor conducted research at the 2015 edition of Bonnaroo Music & Arts Festival and Lightning in a Bottle. Both festivals and A Greener Festival supported this research. The purpose of the research was to:

“Identify how festival attendees experience sustainability policies of live events in North America”

Specifically we wanted to know how the attendees experienced the sustainability and environmental policies of these festivals. We tried to find out whether:

- Attendees are aware of the policies
- Attendees understand the meaning of the policies
- Attendees genuinely care about the policies

The results were compared to research studies conducted by A Greener Festival and Buckinghamshire New University in 2008 and 2012. At Bonnaroo we collected 282 questionnaires. At Lightning in a Bottle we collected 180 questionnaires.

Key findings

Re-using your tent

Leaving your tent behind at a campsite is a big issue in Europe. Since a few years Eco Action Partnership and A Greener Festival run the campaign *Love Your Tent*. The aim of the campaign is to change the behavior of festivalgoers.

Some of the American participants in this survey wondered why we even asked this question because...well...of course you take your tent with you after the festival. At Bonnaroo 88% of the festivalgoers claimed to reuse their tent. At LIB the results are very similar. 87% say they will reuse their tents.

Unable to name local charities and/or organizations

60% of attendees at Bonnaroo and 82% of attendees at Lightning in a Bottle were unable to name any group or project supported by the festival organization.

Some participants in the survey were aware of the organizations own 'good causes' such as *Bonnaroo Works Fund* and *The Do Art Foundation*.

Jarno Stegeman owner of The Event Tutor says:

“Perhaps greater emphasis can be placed on this for future editions of each of the festivals. Festivals should shout about their sustainable initiatives much more.”

Recycling provisions

Recycling provisions at Bonnaroo were rated at 98% good/really good and 94% at Lightning in a Bottle. Festivalgoers at both festivals felt very safe with Bonnaroo scoring 91% good/really good and Lightning in a Bottle 87%. The lowest scores of good/really good were given to signage. 24% of Lightning in a Bottle fans indicated that signage on site could be improved upon and 21% of Bonnaroo fans said the same.

According to researcher Jarno Stegeman:

“Signage is an important part of event planning. Recycling can be made easier if signage is clear and consistent. At both festivals we observed attendees at recycling stations. We wanted to know how easy it was for them to dispose of their trash. Attendees at both festivals really made an effort to separate their trash. Where volunteers were present the process was much quicker.”

Car sharing

Transport is one of the biggest contributors to the overall carbon footprint of a music festival. Both festivals actively promote carpooling schemes on their websites. The festivals incentivize their audiences to car share and use organized buses where possible.

50% of fans at Bonnaroo and 59% of Lightning in a Bottle attendees indicated they had shared the car journey to the festival with someone else. We asked them how many people they shared the journey with. The average for Bonnaroo is 2.2 and for Lightning in a Bottle 2.5 fellow festivalgoers per car share.

On average Bonnaroo fans travelled 477 miles by car to get to the festival site. Lightning in a Bottle fans travelled less far but this is mainly because the majority of the interviewees had a Californian zip code. On average interviewees travelled 292 miles by car to get to Lightning in a Bottle. Our research at both festivals focused specifically on the distance travelled by car.

Environmental policies of festivals

Festivalgoers indicated they want, and expect, a festival to have an environmental policy. Over the years more festivals in North America have implemented environmental policies.

This is great news but festival organizers need to make sure they communicate their policies to the fans. They should make it clear what the policies are, how they are being implemented on site and what it will mean for the fans.

Festival organizers: shout about your policies!!

Observations

Based on our observations and interviews we can conclude that festival attendees genuinely care about the state of the festival site and the environment in general. A festival creates a perfect opportunity to educate people on the issues of sustainability and raise awareness.

Research

The Event Tutor conducted this research in the summer of 2015. This survey was supported by A Greener Festival, Bonnaroo Music & Arts Festival, and Lightning in a Bottle.

We have used quantitative research in the form of a survey based on a structured questionnaire, which was conducted at both festival sites. The questionnaires were collected over a period of two days, the Saturday and the Sunday, at each festival. Most questionnaires were collected between 11am and 4pm on these days.

At Bonnaroo we collected 282 questionnaires.

At Lightning in a Bottle we collected 180 questionnaires.

Besides questionnaires we interviewed festival attendees and observed their behavior at recycle stations. The questionnaire consisted of 22 questions. Most of them were closed questions, 8 of them were open questions. The average time to complete a survey was +/- 7 minutes. People could take as much time as they wanted. In the questionnaire we asked questions about:

- Demographics
- Transportation
- Sustainable initiatives of the festival

- Impact of festival on the environment
- Facilities at the festival site
- Responsibility of keeping site clean
- Environmental policies of festivals
- Projects supported by the festival
- Environmental issues of concern for festival attendees
- Recycling
- Water usage
- Tent usage

The Event Tutor

The Event Tutor offers online workshops in event planning. We teach you how to plan, produce and organize an event or festival. From basic event management principles to the more advanced practices. Jarno Stegeman is The Event Tutor.

Currently we offer three workshops Event Planning, Sustainable Event Management, and Wedding Planning. Besides the workshops there are three eBooks *Event Management: Your Environmental Plan* and *Gay Wedding Planning*.

The results of this research project can be found in my eBook *Event Planning: Research at Music Festivals in North America*.

For more information please visit www.eventtutor.com

A Greener Festival

Since 2013 I have been involved with A Greener Festival. This is a UK based non-profit organization dedicated to reducing the environmental impact of music festivals and events. Started in 2007 A Greener festival has firmly established themselves as a knowledgeable partner in the events and festival industry. In 2014 the organization assessed and awarded the environmental policies of 50 festivals worldwide. Bonnaroo and Lightning in a Bottle both took part in the Award scheme and have won Highly Commended and Outstanding Awards.

For more information please visit www.agreenerfestival.com

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