

Issue number: 21

Issue: Ethical spending: How can we use our budgets for good and not for evil?

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Summary of discussion, conclusions and/or recommendations:

We often have equalities and inclusion policies. More recently we've started thinking about environmental policies. These don't necessarily cover ethics.

Our key recommendations for ethical action are:

OVERALL

- **Make informed choices.** Don't necessarily do what is cheapest or what you've always done
- **Have targets.** It's all very well aiming to do these things, but we need to check up on ourselves by setting targets and returning later to see if we've achieved them.
- **Avoid buying cheap from large corporations.** Or give your money to them judiciously.
- **Buy fair-trade and organic** (where possible).
- **Buy local rather than global** (where possible).
- **Do it quickly and efficiently.** Try to develop a one page ethical policy that can be given to all employees and collaborators that will help them make these ethical decisions quickly and easily.

MONEY

- **Donations.** What's the environmental pedigree of your corporate sponsors.
- **Banking.** Is your bank ethical? (e.g. Cooperative Bank in UK)
- **Variable fees for ethical reasons.** Are there some people who you could choose to charge a lower fee in order to support them for ethical reasons.

PROJECT PLANNING

- **Design work with reuse and recycling in mind.** Ask staff what will happen to the things they buy when the production closes.

- **Pool resources.** Can you buy with another company. Can you borrow and share? Budget some staff time towards investigating these options.
- **Buy good quality.** Items will last longer or could be resold.
- **Budget staff time for resale, reuse and recycling.**
- **Buy electrical equipment (especially computers) with carbon footprint in mind.** How much electricity does your laptop use?
- **Centralised sharing/storage of sets and costumes for reuse and recycling.** Find out what the options are and use them.

AUDIENCES

- **Lead by example.** Don't forget what a high profile we have culturally. We can lead by example. Let audiences see how you implement ethical and environmental policies.
- **Sustainable travel incentives for audiences.** Reduced price if they show their bus ticket?
- **Ethical offset donations for audience.** Add €2 to the ticket price to donate to a charity which is relevant to the themes of the production?

ENVIRONMENT

Lots of environmental issues are obvious, so we didn't go into them in great depth (e.g. paperless office, recycling, reduce overall carbon footprint)

- **Green electricity suppliers.** Where do you get your power from.
- **Green web hosting.** Doing more work online and paperless isn't necessarily better for the environment. Can you move to a solar-powered web server?
- **Travel.** Buy a set of company bicycles for travel to meetings or you're your theatre to give to visiting artists? Avoid using taxis. They could be branded to promote your venue. Avoid freighting sets when touring. Avoid flying to meetings.
- **Total recycling.** If your local council don't provide total recycling then investigate the costs of commercial companies who do. Aim that your company doesn't throw anything away.

STAFF

- **Unpaid interns.** Who works for free for your organisation and why? What are the benefits for them? Structure it properly.
- **Personal development.** Are your staff developing professionally and personally. Are you facilitating that?
- **Pensions.** Do you provide pensions for your staff?