

## Thaw and Learn: 14 Winter, Spring 2016 CSR & Sustainability Conferences

NORTHAMPTON, Mass., Feb. 01 /CSRwire/ - Accountants have been around since the abacus. Personnel managers began issuing pink slips to unlucky employees as early as 1910.

Corporate social responsibility and sustainability officers are a much more recent breed of corporate professional. Their numbers are growing, with more than 7,000 organizations now issuing sustainability reports, up from a few dozen in the early 1990s.

Because few companies have long-established departments staffed with generations of veteran CSR pros to teach newbies the ins and outs of corporate citizenship, learning often takes place during professional development conferences.

It should be a banner year for CSR and sustainability events because of several watershed events that occurred in the fourth quarter of 2015:

The UN adopted sustainable development goals (SDGs) aimed at ending poverty, protecting the planet, and ensuring prosperity over the next 15 years. Corporations have taken note.

More than 190 heads of state signed the historic COP21 climate accord in Paris, meaning governments will be leaning on the corporate sector to reduce emissions.

Billionaires Bill Gates, Mark Zuckerberg, Richard Branson and Jeff Bezos formed the Breakthrough Energy Coalition. Their action is expected to provide a blueprint for others.

Campaigning for the U.S. presidential election got under way, giving social and environmental issues a thorough airing.

Airfares are cheap in winter. Many conference organizers also discount their rates for early birds. Here's my suggestions for 14 events that will inspire, educate, recharge and send you home with great swag during the first half of 2016:

Greenbiz 16, Feb 23-25, Scottsdale, Arizona – Billed as a “Post-COP21 forum,” this event takes place at the swank JW Marriott Camelback resort during a month when the temperature averages 69 degrees Fahrenheit (don't share that detail with your colleagues back in icy Minneapolis). The content is strong, too, with speakers from companies like Boeing and Disney, and nonprofits like the Ellen MacArthur Foundation. Expect around 700 attendees. (Save 10% here using discount code GB163BL)

GLOBE 2016 Conference and Innovation Expo, March 2-4, Vancouver, Canada – This is one of the larger conferences of the year, with 1,600 attendees traveling to British Columbia to hear from 250 speakers on topics ranging from energy transition to improving relationships between Indigenous communities and businesses. Globe has been holding its summit biennially for 25 years. (Register here)

Charities@Work, March 28-30, New York – Unlike generalist CSR and sustainability events, this gathering at the Marriott Marquis in Times Square draws human resources, communications and foundation staffers responsible for employee engagement. The organizers are four nonprofit agencies – America's Charities, Community Health Charities, EarthShare and Global Impact. (Register here)

International Women's Day Forum 2016, March 7-8, New York – For any corporation or nonprofit focused on expanding opportunities for women and girls, this conference is key to see how gender

factors into all 17 of the recently adopted UN SDGs. The first day of this meeting takes place at UN Headquarters, while day two moves to Microsoft's offices on Manhattan's west side. (Register here)

SXSW Interactive, March 11-15, Austin, Texas – While not an event focusing exclusively on CSR and sustainability, the topics have long been in the DNA of SxSW. One of the tracks during this highly acclaimed gathering of media and interactive professionals is SXGood, combining “purpose-driven” content from its film, music and interactive festivals and layering on panel discussions at Austin's JW Marriott. (Register here)

The Economist's Sustainability Summit, March 15-16, London – With the theme “Adapt or Die,” this event boasts a C-suite speakers like Monsanto's Brett Begemann and Mark Suzman of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. (Register here)

International Corporate Citizenship Conference, March 20-22, Atlanta – Community involvement by businesses improves corporate reputation and makes it easier to recruit and retain employees. This event, produced by the Boston College Center for Corporate Citizenship, attracts 600 corporate practitioners and aims to demonstrate how efforts made at the local level can help solve global problems like climate change, data security, and health and wellness. (Register here)

Ceres Conference 2016, May 4-5, Boston – With the theme of “Business Not as Usual: Sustainability in an Age of Disruption,” Ceres hits a hot button for many corporate executives striving to align business goals with CSR and sustainability. Ceres leads a national coalition of investors, environmental organizations and other public interest groups working with companies to address challenges such as global climate change and water scarcity. (Register here)

National CSR Awards, May 10, London – Held at the Crystal, home to the world's largest exhibition on the future of cities and one of the world's most sustainable events venue, this event consists of professional development seminars for CSR professionals and an awards gala. (Register here)

5th GRI Global Conference, May 18-20, Amsterdam – GRI pioneered sustainability reporting in the late 1990s and this biennial conference draws 1,500 sustainability leaders from around the globe to share best practices, innovations and trends. Held in GRI's headquarters city, Amsterdam, this event has a decidedly global feel. Past attendees have included Al Gore and other government leaders. (Register here)

Cause Marketing Forum, Chicago, June 1-2 – This annual event is a masterfully orchestrated dance between brands and the nonprofit causes they support. Key to its success are the Halo awards, which recognize programs that “do well by doing good” in 10 categories ranging from Best Environmental/Animal Campaign to Best Point-of-Sale Campaign for donations. (Register here)

Sustainable Brands 2016, June 1-4, San Diego – Set at the beautiful Paradise Point Resort & Spa on Mission Bay, Sustainable Brands draws thousands of corporate and nonprofit executives each spring explore a wide range of topics involving sustainability. Communications, design, supply chain, brand strategy, CSR, and design and innovation are some of the categories covered in this event, which is marketed to “courageous optimists who are shaping the future of commerce worldwide.” (Register here)

Social Innovation Summit, June 7-8, Washington – Although this event is held in the nation's capital, policymaking is only a portion of the agenda. Topics at the Social Innovation Summit also include technology, investment and philanthropy, as well as the intersection of international development and business. (Register here)

Points of Light, June 27-29, Detroit – Volunteerism is the topic that brings together thousands of nonprofit, government, business and civic leaders at Detroit's Cobo Center, home of the North American International Auto Show. ([Register here](#)).

For more information, please contact:  
There is currently no contact information.

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