



RE-THINKING THE GOODIE BAG CULTURE

a study by xhebit



Copyright 2018 © xhebit

This publication may be reproduced in whole or in part and in any form for educational or non-profit purposes without special permission from the copyright holder, provided acknowledgement of the source is made. xhebit would appreciate receiving a copy of any publication that uses this publication as a source.

No use of this publication may be made for resale or for any other commercial purpose whatsoever without prior permission in writing from xhebit.

Acknowledgements

xhebit would like to thank the students of NUS-RVRC GEQ1917/Group 20.1 who helped with the initial data collection as part of their sustainability project work.

Published October 2018
Singapore

THE GOODIE BAG CULTURE

The trend of giving away #GoodieBags is popular at all types of events ranging from community events to roadshows, and forums. Goodie Bags are typically filled with snacks, gifts, product samples, sponsored items, brochures and promotional materials.

Organisers view #GoodieBags as a “value add” to their event – a marketing strategy to help draw event-goers because they believe event-goers like *freebies*. Goodie Bags are also an avenue for sponsors to promote their brand by providing their products as part of the goodies.

Did I really need a bag for my 2 brochures?



SO, WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?



Non-Woven
Polypropylene (PP)

1. RE-USE

Goodie Bags often come in re-useable materials such as Cotton Totes or Non-Woven Polypropylene (PP). These materials are marketed as being “eco-friendly” because they have the potential to be re-usable. *However, Goodie Bags are only eco-friendly if they are re-used many times over. The material alone doesn't make it eco-friendly.*

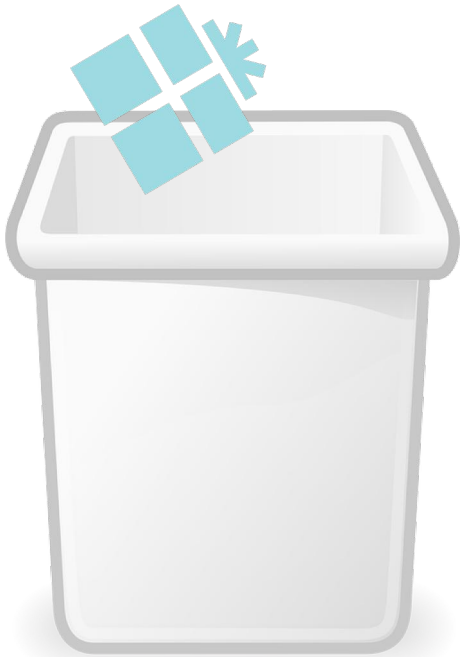
2. MATERIAL

Cotton is a renewable, natural product. Because of the high demand for it, current methods of growing cotton have become unsustainable. The key impact areas are intensive use of water, pesticides and converting natural ecosystems to cotton farms. These methods threaten our ecosystems, degrade soils, and pollute rivers & lakes. *Unless your cotton tote is made from sustainably cultivated cotton, your Goodie Bag maybe ruining the environment.*



Cotton Totes

SO, WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?



3. WASTE

The gifts within Goodie Bags are often disposed of after the event for a variety of reasons e.g. not useful, silly gift items, not relevant to me. *These items that end up in the trash are wasted resources.*

**How Many
Times Do We
Have To Use a
Goodie Bag To
Make It Eco-
friendly?**

Non-Woven Polypropylene bag

To be “eco-friendly”, a Non-Woven PolyPropylene (PP) bag has to be re-used
*14 times more than a supermarket plastic bag.



Cotton Tote

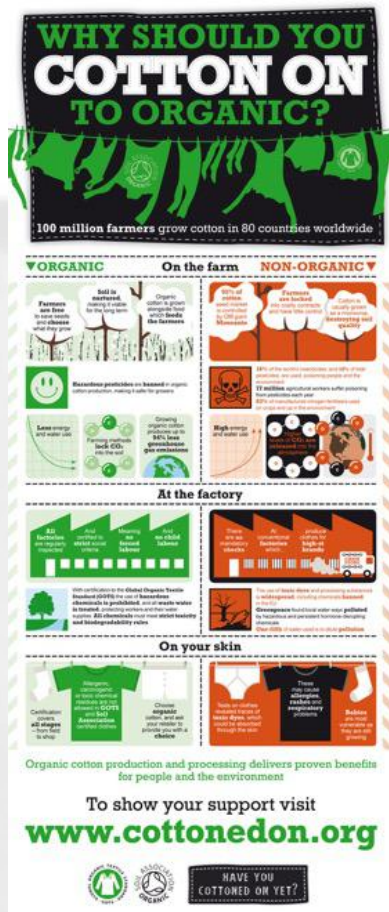
To be “eco-friendly”, a Cotton Tote has to be re-used *173 times
more than a supermarket plastic bag.



*Data sourced from Chris Edwards & Joanna Meyhoff Fry, Life cycle assessment of supermarket carrier bags: a review of the bags available in 2006 (The Environment Agency, Bristol, 2011).

Why is conventionally grown cotton so bad?

- Infographic by Cottoned On



ORGANIC

On the farm

NON-ORGANIC

Farmers are free to save seeds and **choose** what they grow

Soil is nurtured, making it viable for the long term

Organic cotton is grown alongside food which **feeds the farmers**

95% of cotton seed market is controlled by GM giant **Monsanto**

Farmers are locked into costly contracts and have little control

Cotton is usually grown as a monocrop, **destroying soil quality**

Hazardous pesticides are banned in organic cotton production, making it safer for growers

16% of the world's insecticides, and **10% of total pesticides**, are used, poisoning people and the environment

77 million agricultural workers suffer poisoning from pesticides each year

83% of manufactured nitrogen fertilisers used on crops end up in the environment

Less energy and water use

Farming methods **lock CO₂** into the soil

Growing organic cotton produces up to **94% less greenhouse gas emissions**

High energy and water use

Higher levels of CO₂ are released into the atmosphere

At the factory

All factories are regularly inspected

And certified to **strict social criteria**

Meaning **no forced labour**

And **no child labour**

There are **no mandatory checks**

At **conventional factories** which...

...produce clothes for **high-st brands**

CHAIN STORE

With certification to the **Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS)** the use of **hazardous chemicals is prohibited**, and all **waste water is treated**, protecting workers and their water supplies. **All chemicals** must meet **strict toxicity and biodegradability rules**

The use of **toxic dyes** and processing substances is **widespread**, including chemicals **banned** in the EU

Greenpeace found local water ways **polluted** by hazardous and persistent hormone-disrupting chemicals

One-fifth of water used is to dilute **pollution**

On your skin

Allergenic, carcinogenic or toxic chemical residues are not allowed in **GOTS and Soil Association** certified clothes

Choose **organic** cotton, and ask your retailer to provide you with a **choice**

Certification covers **all stages** - from field to shop

Tests on clothes revealed traces of **toxic dyes**, which could be absorbed through the skin

These may cause **allergies, rashes and respiratory** problems

Babies are most vulnerable as they are still growing

Organic cotton production and processing delivers proven benefits for people and the environment

SO, WHAT NOW?

#xhebit decided to investigate if the reasons for why #GoodieBags are given at events still hold true, and if Event-Goers are willing to transition to a more sustainable #GoodieBags culture.

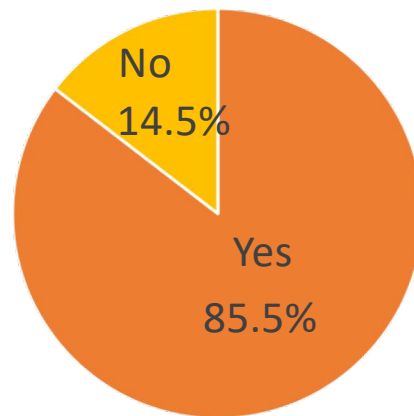
Total of 247 survey* responses collected

*An online survey, disseminated through social media, was used to collect information.
Ages sampled ranged from 18 to 60 years.

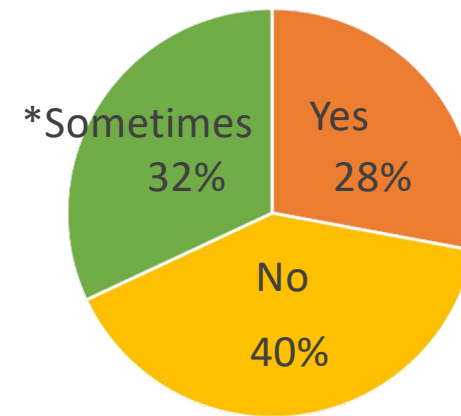
THE DISCOVERY

Event-Goers LIKE receiving Goodie Bags but it does not necessarily influence their decision to attend events.

Do you like receiving a Goodie Bag at events?



Does receiving a Goodie Bag influence your decision to attend the event?

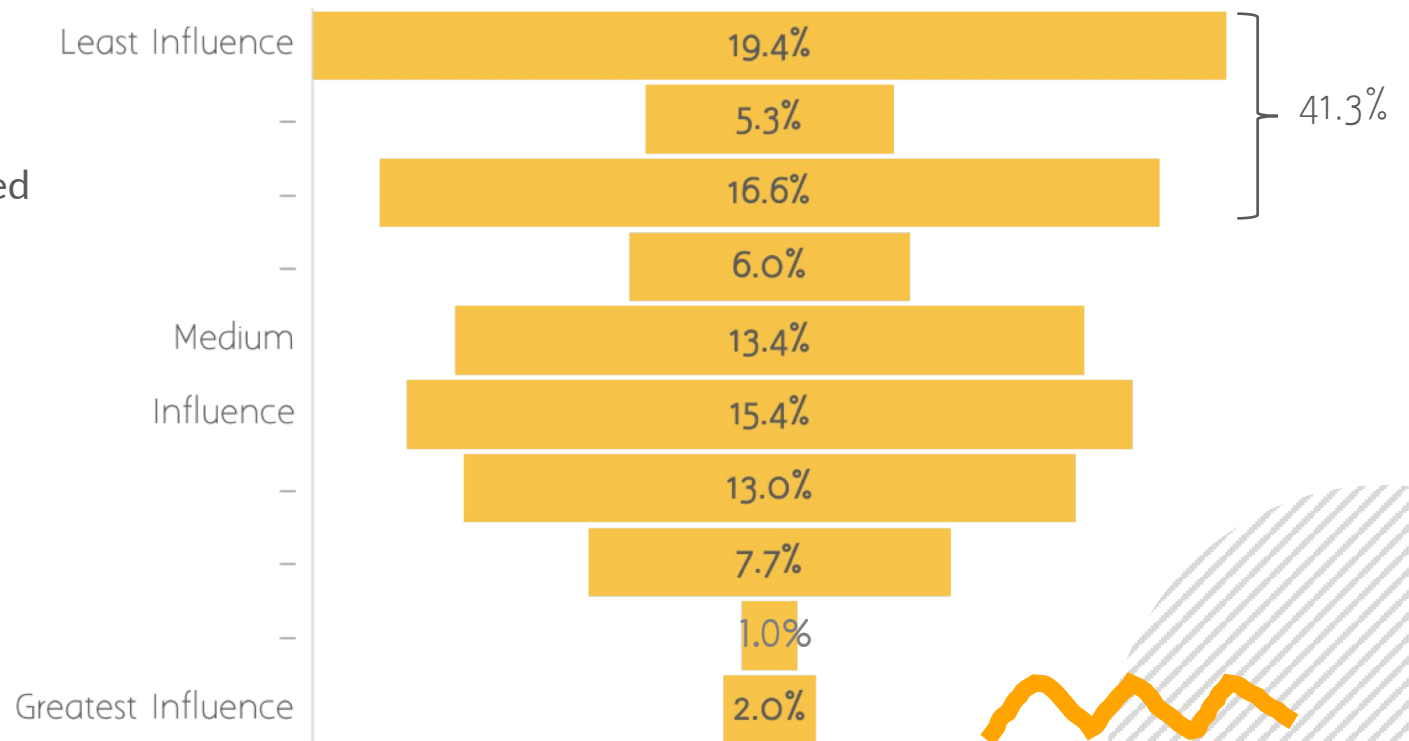


*To read Event-Goer's comments on why they responded Sometimes, go to <https://www.xhebit.com/goodie-bag-study>

THE DISCOVERY

Over 40% of Event-Goers are NOT influenced by sponsorship items.

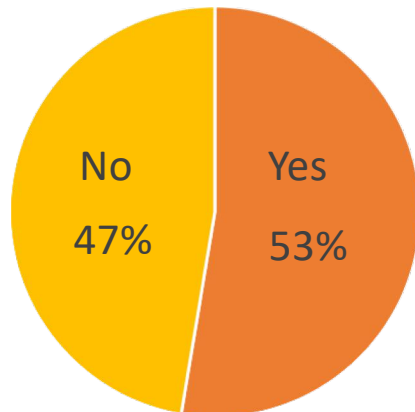
Goodie Bags often contain sponsored items. Do these sponsored items influence your future purchases?



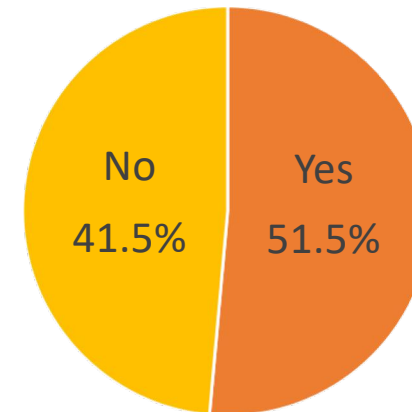
THE DISCOVERY

Over 50% of Event-Goers think about how wasteful & eco-friendly Goodie Bags are.

Do you think its wasteful for events to give out Goodie Bags?



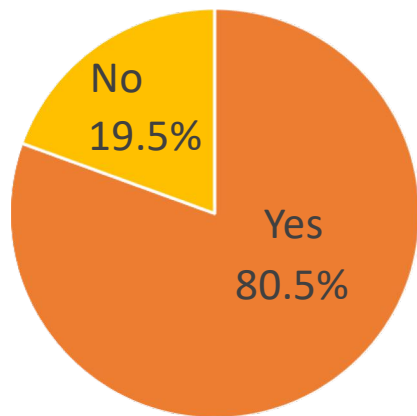
Have you thought about whether these Goodie Bags are eco-friendly?



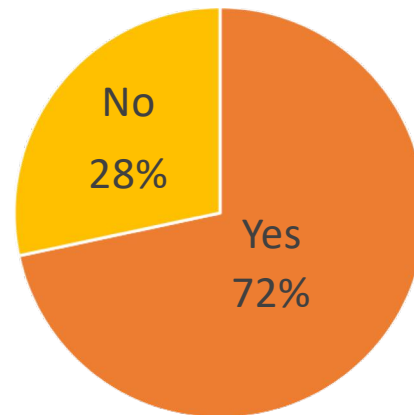
THE DISCOVERY

An overwhelming 80% prefer Eco-Friendly items in their #GoodieBags.

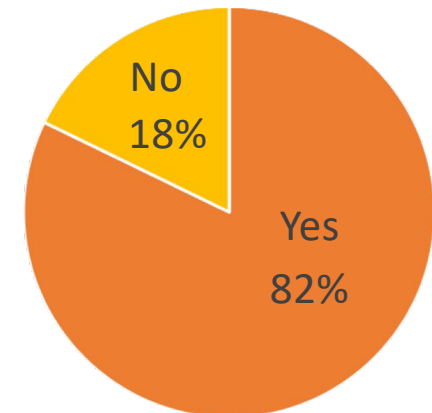
Would you prefer Eco-friendly gift items in your Goodie Bag?



Would you prefer discounts on event tickets in place of a Goodie Bag?



Would you prefer E-vouchers in place of physical vouchers?



THE REVELATION

JUST SAY NO

Just refuse to take a Goodie Bag. You have the **POWER** to influence Event Organisers, so do it!

BRING YOUR OWN BAG

BYOB if you think there are goodies that may interest you. There is no need to forego things you like, but you can help to minimise wasted resources.

PROVIDE FEEDBACK

Let the Event Organiser know if there were goodies that were useless or wasteful. If we don't tell them, how will they know?

XHEBIT FORUM

XHEBIT FORUM FOR FEEDBACK

xhebit Forum for Feedback is an initiative to help Event-Goers provide feedback to Event Organisers.

HOW?

1. Go to xhebit's Forum.
2. Clearly state the event name, date & location.
3. Provide constructive feedback – we'll get the message to the organisers/hosts!

*This initiative is only for sustainability focused feedback.



Tips for Event Organisers

1. Survey your Event-Goers to find out ahead of time how many would want a Goodie Bag or the Goodies in the bag – particularly useful for annual or regular events.
2. For other types of events, partner up with businesses that offer sustainable options – check out the #xhebit Eco-Gifts directory for ideas.
3. Offer alternatives to Goodie Bags – e-vouchers are clearly a favourite amongst Event-Goers.
4. And finally, do not assume Event-Goers do not care about the environment!



In order for events to become more sustainable, Event Organisers need to recognise that the “usual way of doing things” is not sustainable.

Event-Goers have a responsibility in helping drive change through feedback & by supporting Event Organisers in their green initiatives.

Let's co-create a greener events ecosystem in Singapore!



FUTURE REPORTS

Found this report useful?

Sign Up to our mailing list and be informed of upcoming studies.

