



# Lowell Fox

The production manager/sustainability manager at New York-based productionglue talks to *LSA* about the company's multi-pronged green program.

**Lighting&Sound America:** How was productionglue founded and what sort of projects does it specialize in?

**Lowell Fox:** The company was founded in 2006 with the thought of advancing the live event industry through creativity and technology. Green technology was near and dear to the founders of the company and they were always conscious of their impact and footprint. We do everything: corporate dinners, conferences, immersive experiential events, large musical festivals, pop-up museums. We also have clients who ask us to help them green their events.

**LSA:** How is your donations program arranged?

**LF:** It's part of our waste management efforts. We seek to reduce our impact by reducing our consumption at the front end. We look at ways to rent and purchase materials that are as durable and reusable as possible. That said, there are many items that need to be custom for specific events. In those situations, I help them design a way for materials to go to the best place. At first, we seek to reduce, then to reuse. Once materials are identified as having a really good life after the event, but something we can't use, that's where I come in. There is a loose network of organizations around the country that help to connect people like productionglue with artists and charities. In one case, a traveling project had a giant ball pit, and we purchased 100,000 ball pit balls, which is enough to fill two-thirds of a full tractor trailer. We're talking side to side, top to bottom. I worked with the show team to have these balls end up in the Atlanta area. I identified an organization with a network of artists; they connected me with an artist who resided just out of the metropolitan area, and arranged for him to receive all of the balls. He had a warehouse space that could hold that many balls, which itself is a challenge! We also did an experiential event for *Animal Kingdom*; we had a huge parking lot built out with a wave pool and bar and lots of lounge areas. We worked with our network in the Austin area to make sure that every piece of decor and furniture went to a worthy cause or organization. None of it ended up in a landfill.

**LSA:** How does the Green Toolkit work?

**LF:** We have a nine-page tool kit that is used to introduce to each person in the organization to why it's important to be green. It's a jumping-off point of how they can help every event they work on be as environmentally conscious as possible. The more people take to heart what we're doing and see the importance of it, the more effective I can be.

**LSA:** How does conservation work within the company itself?

**LF:** We take a multi-pronged perspective. We track the energies that we use, logging the power we use, month to month, to measure the effectiveness of our efforts. For example, all our office lighting is energy-efficient. We use florescent and LED lighting and utilize low ambient levels. If it isn't enough, each person has a desk lamp. Our office is run off laptops because they are designed to run off batteries and be more power-efficient. We use off-site data storage. We also have many different waste streams. We have typical New York City recycling of metal, plastic, and glass, but we take it to the next level with in-house composting, e-waste collection, and proper recycling. New York City people go out to get their lunches, and they get a plastic bag, a paper bag, and a clam shell container. We collect all the single-use containers, wash them, and take them to a mission in the city where they hand out to-go packages of food to people. Not only are we reducing our waste to landfill but we are also endeavoring to do a social good as well.

**LSA:** What is the cost of sustainability?

**LF:** A lot of the efforts help us to save money but above and beyond, it's the responsible thing to do. We do scrap metal collection and sell it to offset recycling costs. Recycling collections tend to be less expensive than landfill waste collection. And we have a dedicated group of people who are committed to the sustainability mission; by engaging in sustainability, your customers feel better about interacting with you and your brand. It helps you to leverage a better customer base, and a better customer pool. 📶