



## Katrin Lüthy, The Green Event Planner

*The festive season is just a few days ahead!*

*By Marie-Helene Westholm-Knebel,  
for OUTSIDE THE BOX  
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Pics/ Katrin Lüthy - CC0*

*There is no better reason then to let a new guest  
in on OUTSIDE THE BOX and learn about her  
sustainable event management agency in  
Switzerland.*

**Welcome Katrin on OUTSIDE THE BOX and thank you for finding some time in your busy schedule to answer our questions!**

**Our interviews generally start the same way for all. Can you please give us a few info about yourself: your name, age, where you live, what you do for a living, your hobbies, your strengths and weaknesses...anything that defines you as a person 🍪**

Hi Marie – thank you SO much for having me! It's an honour to be part of the OUTSIDE THE BOX crew!

My name is Katrin Lüthy. I was born and raised in Zurich, Switzerland. I currently live in Regensdorf, at the border of Zurich, and I am 34 years old. I am the founder and CEO of The Green Event Planner, a sustainable and eco-friendly event agency in Switzerland.

# THE GREEN EVENT PLANNER

I have a degree in Public Relations and am also a certified Event Manager.

For The Green Event Planner, I definitely need both: the event management skills to make sure that my clients look their absolute best, and the PR background to make sure their guests get what they signed up for.

Green washing is a massive problem in the environmental business and when it comes to anything marketing, it is crucial to do it right.

Is your event sustainable? Climate-neutral? Ecological? I make sure that my clients don't oversell their event, but also get praised where praise and gratitude are due.

Organizing and hosting events has been a passion of mine for as long as I can remember, and being able to do what I love without harming the environment too much is a dream come true.

When I don't work on new event concepts and social media posts, I like to spend quality time with my friends and family, go for hikes and defend my hard-earned title as the world's worst snowboarder.

I also love to be creative and upcycle old furniture, get the sewing machine out and just make things. Any things. I'm not good at being bored, I suppose, and I love to explore and learn new things. The only area I'm pretty terrible at is the kitchen. I'm semi-okay with baking, but cooking adventures usually don't end well.

## **You are the Founder of [The Green Event Planner](#). Can you tell us more about this project?**

The Green Event Planner is an event agency in Switzerland that focuses on sustainable event solutions. From small birthday parties with only a couple of guests to client events with hundreds of people, there's always a green alternative right around the corner.

Other than that, The Green Event Planner works like your regular agency. Your wish is my command – as long as it's not covered in plastic or toxic for the environment.

My vision is quite simple: I want to work towards a creative Swiss event industry that cares for more than just the party. There's so much potential here!





The first thing I noticed when I started my business was the sheer amount of creative, professional and compassionate start-ups and small businesses that cater for the event industry in a more sustainable way. From young catering companies in Zurich who focus on organic, local food to locations all over Switzerland who try to be less wasteful, the foundation is already there. Bringing these people together and create unforgettable moments is what I am ultimately looking for.

### **What do you do in more details?**

My ultimate goal is to organize green events. Right now, I'm on the side-line, consulting restaurants and business on how to "green up" their marketing and event strategy, which I also love doing.

But yes, 2019 is just a couple of days away and my "goals for next year" list is growing by the minute. I definitely want to host a The Green Event Planner networking event next year. There's such a vibrant eco-community here in Switzerland, it's time to get to know each other.

What I love about the sustainability industry here is that everyone is so encouraging and helpful. We're all sitting in the same boat, working towards the same goals, struggling with the same problems, and it's lovely to see that there's an industry out there that is keen to help each other instead of being nasty on social media.



*"From young catering companies in Zurich who focus on organic, local food to locations all over Switzerland who try to be less wasteful, the foundation is already there."*



You have created a special [E-Book covering Christmas celebrations](#): what an amazing idea! Tell us more about it!

I love Christmas. It's my favourite holiday! Giving up childhood memories and traditions for the sake of the environment just doesn't sound appealing at all, and when I read some of the "green Christmas" tips that are out there, my heart sank. That's why I decided to publish my own E-Book. I'm not here to take away the joy of Christmas. Not at all!

But let's amend your traditions slightly and apply some of the most basic "green event rules" to your gatherings. Have a tree, but one that didn't travel all the way from Eastern Europe to Switzerland. Buy presents, but the right ones. Cook, bake, eat. The right food, though. And let's swap your ancient fairy lights with modern LED bulbs.

Loriot, a famous German comedian once said "Früher war mehr Lametta", there used to be more tinsel. And you know what? That's actually a good thing. Let's skip the tinsel.

Check it out, [the E-Book is free and available in both German and English!](#)



**What led you, professionally and/or privately, to dedicate your time to that topic?**

When the U.S. left the Paris Agreement, I knew that it's now down to all of us, so I changed my lifestyle. I set up a recycling station at my house, I started to compost, I brought my own bags to the store and I bought less plastic.

Small steps, but it worked well, until I had to organize an outdoor barbecue for 30 people. Hosting an outdoor event at a place where there's zero infrastructure is stressful enough and to make my life easier, I schlepped tons of plastic cups, PET bottles, plastic cutleries and pre-packed food to the venue. The amount of waste that we left at the end of the night was painful. That's when I knew that if I really wanted to make a change, I had to fundamentally amend the way I work. Shortly after, I launched The Green Event Planner.

**What are the biggest emitters when one organizes an event?**

Transport is the biggest environmental issue in the event industry. Setting up, bringing everything to the venue, mostly by car or truck, wastes a lot of Co2. Guests usually arrive by car as well, so they add to the problem. The second one is food waste, followed by energy and power. Waste is No. 4 on the list.

**What would be the “low hanging fruits” to reduce an event’s footprint, and on the contrary, what is the hardest to influence?**

The low-hanging fruits are plastic, food waste and recycling. There’s no need for plastic at an event. Whether it’s a wedding or a business gathering, switch plastic cups with real glasses, use proper plates and cutlery, buy metal straws and stay away from silly complimentary gifts no one needs. Handouts should be digital and serve tap water instead of PET bottles. Be conservative when you order food and make sure that the caterer won’t throw the leftovers away after the event. A simple recycling station will also significantly reduce your waste.

Harder to influence are guests. People arriving by car increase your carbon footprint. Significantly. I always try to find venues that are easily accessible with public transportation, encourage people to organize carpools or, if anything fails, charge for parking spots. That said, you want people to enjoy your event and if it’s easier for them to arrive by car, you’re in a pickle. I haven’t found a bulletproof solution yet.

In this context I would encourage them to leave their car at home and travel by train or bus. The public transport system in Switzerland is fantastic! Also, they could share a taxi at the end of the night.

**How do you define sustainability, and how do you apply it on a daily basis (as a professional but also as a person!)?**

For me, sustainability means long-term, lasting, positive impact. I try to do better at home: buy less junk, shop local (there are so many farmers where I live) and recycle.

Sustainability in the event industry means fundamental change. Some of the most classic event traditions just have to go: balloon races, goodie bags, printed handouts. It’s not easy to convince clients to quit something they’ve done forever, something that’s fun and memorable, something that’s proven, something that works every time.

But there are plenty of better options out there, and the willingness to change opens new opportunities. Sustainability is quite the trend at the minute, which means you might attract a new set of clients when hosting a green event.

**Anything else you’d wish to add?**

Thank you so much for this opportunity!

Discover The Green Event Planner and contact Katrin for more information:

[Website](#)

