Festival: The Use Of Large Tents For Outdoor Events

The original impetus for these large temporary structures was the development of ‘festival culture’ in the 1950s and 60s, cumulating in the arrival of events such as Glastonbury during the flower power period in the 70’s. In the 80’s, music festivals also began to use tents to provide weather protection for raves. It then evolved to the new generation preferring demountable covered venues that began to replace the traditional outdoor stages used at rock festivals. Unlike dance artists, rock groups required an audience facing proscenium stage and, coupled with a coincidental reduction in size of speaker stacks, this ultimately led to the evolution of the ‘festival tent’.

These days, large tents are used to provide temporary shelter for outdoor events such as weddings or circuses that can be reused year after year. Festival tents are usually used as shelter during camping, hiking, festivals and other outdoor recreational activities. The summer music festival season in the seasonal countries is the chance for people to get out of the house, camp with friends, enjoy music, and with the ultimate goal of partying in the great outdoors after being cooped up during the cold season. Festivals can go on from about 3 to ten days. During this long period of stay, festival attendees usually opt for using festival tents instead of paying hundreds of dollars to stay at a hotel. As festival tents will save cost on their accommodation it also has a variety of uses which are as follows: It’s durability provides protection from the various weather conditions, protection from insects and wildlife when attending events at dessert or rainforest festivals, it’s waterproof capabilities provides cover from the wind and rain, it is a compact and inexpensive form of sleeping accommodation that is portable. Due to its portability, it makes it convenient and easy to pop one up and pack up after the festival is over. Another obvious advantage of opting to use festival tents is that festival organizers will no longer have to worry about the weather conditions which can be unpredictable up to the last minute. Festivals have been planned and tickets have been sold out months before the event will not have to simply be canceled because it suddenly rained and there’s nothing to keep the attendees safe and warm.

However, the use of these festival tents pose aftermath problems post-festival. A lot of the waste resulted from single-use tents. Not all tents are bad, it's the poor quality ones. Some manufacturers and distributors distribute very cheap poor quality tents for festival newbies which won't last three or more uses. Which are cheap tents that festival attendees purchase either before they arrive or at the site and then leave them there rather than packing them up to bring it back with them to be reused. This means the canvas, plastics and metal of the tents that are discarded is posing a threat causing ecological problem. Each year, an estimated 250,000 tents are left at music festivals across the UK. Most assume that by leaving them, the tents will be collected by charities. Sad truth is that charities don’t and the tents cannot be recycled, meaning most of it end up as waste in landfill. The Association of Independent Festivals is asking retailers to stop marketing tents as single-use items and to encourage people to use them again in the future.

Drastic and innovative measures have been taken into consideration to tackle the left behind festival tents that are posing serious problems at festivals, particularly because of the massive amounts of landfill-bound waste they create. While the ideal festival attendees reuse their tents,

the other alternative to unrecyclable festival tents is that some people may only need a tent for one-time use. Innovators have come up with other options are other options by creating 100% recyclable cardboards or compostable bio-based plastic that are safe for both the user and environment. These temporary cardboard solutions, which is a tent sturdy enough to stay dry for three to nine days guaranteed to see that's the average length of a music festival. With the knowledge that thousands of tents get tossed after major festivals, a company created the Pod(o) as an innovative solution by creating a reusable sleeping pod made from recycled, single-use plastic rather than virgin materials. The modular design makes the pods adaptable for a variety of uses. They are stackable which enables the pods to be linked together that can even be connected to solar power, a water supply and a bio toilet. However, there is also a cheaper and greener alternative to buying a tent, which is to borrow one. Peer-to-peer lending sites, such as Fat Llama, include listings for a variety of camping equipment that offers their four-person tents from RM10.00 a day.

Other measures taken are spreading awareness campaigns such as in the UK, The Take Your Tent Home campaign follows the Drastic on Plastic campaign, launched by AIF last year in partnership with RAW Foundation. As with other campaigns, such as Eco Action's Love Your Tent and its #justtakeithome message, the aim is to reduce waste and remind festival attendees that a tent is for life, not just for a weekend. The famous Glastonbury festival has applied an extensive green policy with the motto "leave no trace", already achieving a recycling rate of 54% of their waste. Last but not least, festival organizers can apply incentives for those who packed up their tents at the end of the festival. By showing their packed tents at the exit, attendees may be entitled to purchase next year's festival tickets at a cheaper rate, receive freebies and sponsor vouchers. This will also lead to continuous support and the sustainability of the festival.

When it comes to great entertainment at festivals, masses of people gather, therefore, there is always the potential for high volumes of waste and environmental damage. With sustainability and going green are becoming more and more aware these days, event organizers are starting to pay attention to ways they can provide and apply eco-friendly policies at their festivals. Other policies to impose the going green movement at festivals is that festival attendees can use only compostable kitchenware, and a ban on plastic bottles at festival sites, along with more water taps put in. From fans, to artists, to organizers, everyone plays an important part in helping to achieve the same sustainable goal. Festivals are all about creativity, and they prove to be great at finding creative solutions to become more sustainable.