Executive Summary

Live music venues provide a valuable service to both artists and the surrounding community by offering a fully-equipped space in which they can come together and share in an artistic experience. For decades, the operation of a venue has been relatively unchanged, and little attention has been paid to their overall environmental impact. But venues actually consume a great deal of resources, produce large amounts of solid waste and noise pollution, and pull a significant influx of people into the area, all of which impacts the surrounding community, the environment, and most tangibly, the venue’s bottom line.

In order to survive in an increasingly-challenging market, venues must look for ways to stay competitive and discern themselves from the pack, by cutting costs, investing in the long-term, and ensuring the customer experience is consistently and noticeably better than that of their corporate competitors. This is where the GAIN Certification comes in.

GAIN stands for Green Artist Information Network, and was formed in 2019 in Seattle, Washington to connect venues, artists, fans, and anyone else wanting to collaborate, share ideas, and look for opportunities to create a greener music industry.

For venues that are GAIN Certified, key improvements will be built into the core of the business, with reductions in waste and energy usage saving money, improvements in facilities and crowd management creating a better, more comfortable experience, and strategic investments in the long-term viability of the venue ensuring that customers will be seeking out the venue’s unique offerings for years to come.

The foundation of the GAIN Certification is the GAIN Standard, the guidance document outlining the criteria for the three different levels of certification: Clean, Sustain, and Overdrive.

Clean level certification results in changes to operations, purchasing, energy usage, etc. for shorter-term gains, without changes in building construction or utilities. Sustain level is the Intermediate level, with updates to sound systems, HVAC, building construction, etc. for longer-term gains. And Overdrive level, which pushes beyond four walls of operations to influence local community and industry towards a greener future.

The live-music industry has vast untapped sustainable potential, and the GAIN Certification can help elevate a venue above the rest.