

Breaking the Code for Conference Inclusivity

A code of conduct for employees attending conferences

Women's experiences at tech conferences around the globe are far different from those of men.

In order to facilitate a welcoming and inclusive environment, many technology conferences have developed a code of conduct that outlines behavioral guidelines for attendees. But as **Ensono's research shows**, these documents are not always visible or accessible.

Companies can proactively work to ensure a safe and positive environment for attendees by developing a code of conduct of their own that outlines what is expected of them at conferences. As it stands, data shows conferences current efforts of providing a code of conduct are not sufficient.

46%

Nearly half of women are unclear whether or not a code of conduct exists at the tech conferences they attend.

Only 8 of 18

major tech industry conferences developed attendee codes of conduct.

38%

Thirty-eight percent of conference attendees who had seen a code of conduct at an event said they experienced sexual harassment themselves — more than those who had not seen a code.

Inclusive conferences are everyone's responsibility — how can your organization help?

Making conferences more inclusive and closing the gender gap is everyone's responsibility, and companies should proactively promote good behavior and protect their associates at non-company-affiliated events.

Creating an internal code of conduct for events and conferences specific to your organization's values provides employees with an actionable

roadmap if they witness or experience misconduct. This also helps hold attendees accountable for their behavior, whether at a conference after-party or in the exhibition hall.

In this document, we will outline why conference codes of conduct matter and what elements need to be included. We'll also provide a template for your organization to begin drafting its own document.

Cornerstones of Code of Conduct

A code of conduct for your organization should include the following:



01 Clear Definitions

- How is sexual harassment defined?
- How does your organization define misconduct?
- What are the specific consequences of misconduct?
- When and where does the code of conduct apply?



02 Taking Action

- What action should an associate take if they witness harassment or experience it themselves?
- What expectations of anonymity should an employee have when making a report?
- What should employees expect as a result of following the code of conduct?



03 Professional Behavior

- How does your organization expect its associates to behave toward their own colleagues and other conference attendees?
- How can employees demonstrate good company values while attending a conference?
- What, if any, are the rules and expectations surrounding social media posts?
- Are there rules or expectations surrounding unofficial conference events?



04 Support

- How can associates support and protect their colleagues and other conference attendees?
- Who is the best point of contact at your company to approach with questions about behavior?
- What resources are available for employees who want to learn more or get involved in inclusivity efforts?

Creating a Code of Conduct

For associates attending events and conferences, creating a code of conduct is an important step toward promoting a positive company culture, onsite or not. These codes of conduct don't have to be lengthy, over-the-top documents — as long as clear guidelines and expectations are in place, you're on the right track. Finally, these documents assure your company's values are on display at any event that employees attend. A strong code of conduct embraced by employees is one of the biggest steps toward changing conference culture and making these events more inclusive to everyone.

If you're interested in creating a conference code of conduct for your company, we have developed a standardized template that can serve as a starting point, which **you can download here**.



Conference Attendance Code of Conduct

Conferences, Events and Other Non-Company Functions

Our company's conference Code of Conduct governs basic behavior guidelines and expectations for events, conferences and other non-company functions our associates attend

Creating a more inclusive and welcoming environment for our associates, as well as for other members of our community, is a value we embrace and this document is an important standard-bearer. We hold our associates to a high standard of ethics, and expect all our employees to behave with integrity and respect, whether inside our company walls or not.

As associates of our organization, each of us has a responsibility to support, respect and advocate for ourselves, our fellow associates and outside members of the community.

Who does this code of conduct apply to?

We expect all employees and board members to comply with our conference and event code of conduct. Failure to follow our company guidelines may result in disciplinary action, including termination of employment.

What is sexual harassment?

Sexual harassment is defined as unwanted conduct of a sexual nature. This includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical harassment of a sexual nature. However, harassment related to gender does not have to be of a sexual nature, and can include offensive remarks about a person's sex; for example, harassing a woman by making offensive comments about women in general. Both victim and the harasser can be any gender identity, and victim and harasser can share the same gender identity. In this Code of Conduct, we use the term sexual harassment to include both harassment involving unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, and harassment related to gender.

In attending this event, it is expected you will not participate in sexual harassment of any kind. If you witness sexual harassment, you are strongly encouraged to report it to conference security. Additionally, anyone with questions about harassment can reach out to human resources with questions.

Conference code of conduct



Harassment, discrimination and bullying

We do not tolerate discrimination, harassment or bullying in any form — verbal, physical or visual. In attending any event or conference, you will not be a party to this behavior in any way.



Taking action

If you are a victim, we strongly encourage you to immediately report the incident to your supervisor, your human resources department or both.

Supervisor Name: _____ **Supervisor Email:** _____

If you suspect a criminal offense has been committed, we encourage you to consider a report to the appropriate authorities. Similarly, supervisors and managers who learn of any such incident should immediately report it to human resources and/or the appropriate authorities. HR will promptly and thoroughly investigate any complaints and take appropriate action. If you are a witness of harassment directed toward a colleague, talk to the victim and let them know you plan to report the misconduct to HR. They may plan to personally report the incident as well. If you are a witness of harassment directed toward a non-company associate at an event or conference, please report the incident to the event staff.



Support for each other and the community

Support for each other and the community is a company value.

We expect our associates to encourage a culture that is free of harassment, intimidation, bias and discrimination, and to stand up for victims as a witness to any incident. Be a resource to anyone experiencing harassment, should they be a company associate or not.

Employee Agreement

By signing below, you acknowledge that you have read and understand this code of conduct, and pledge to follow the rules and guidelines it sets forth.

Employee Printed Name: _____ **Employee Signature:** _____ **Date:** _____