

Inclusion and Diversity is Good for Your Business



WEF Strategic Goal: Attracting and Creating a Diverse Water Workforce

We are committed to revitalizing the water industry by attracting and developing a more diverse workforce. We believe in integrating Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in all that we do. Our exhibitors and manufacturer representatives play a crucial role on the WEFTEC exhibit floor by welcoming all respectfully.



We're very respectful - what's the problem?

Prior exhibition attendees *and* buyers told us they do not always feel respected in their interactions. We want to be clear about expectations and provide examples of behaviors that can even unintentionally lead to guests feeling ignored, dismissed or disrespected.



I approached people who were dismissive, or I was ignored. My counterpart went to the exact same people within minutes and had a totally different experience. We have the same ability to purchase/influence purchasing. I left the hall feeling totally disrespected."

**Z. English, Strategic Initiatives & Project
Delivery Director.**

Thank you for exhibiting at WEFTEC

We want you to **gain maximum business value by creating a welcoming and professional environment for all.**

We are providing this extra information because we have received feedback that **not everyone has felt welcome**, especially on the exhibit floor.

TELL ME MORE



Behaviors to avoid

- When a man and a woman approach a booth together, the exhibitor may address the man instead of the woman, even when the man looks much younger or when the woman initiates the conversation.
- When a person of color approaches with a white person, we heard multiple instances of exhibitors addressing only the white person, excluding the person of color.
- When a person of color approaches by themselves, they may find it hard to get any attention at all.
- When someone perceived as a young professional approaches the booth, staff might ignore them as someone who is not an influential decision maker.



What should we do? Best Practices:

- Staff your team with a diverse range of employees, including women, people of color, younger employees, non-technical staff or other under-represented groups in the water industry. Include bi-lingual staff if possible, especially Spanish or French speakers.
- Avoid assuming roles/seniority/experience level, as it might be perceived as judgmental. Instead, focus on seeking to understand guests' needs first.
- Welcome questions from early in career professionals, to create a positive image of the industry.
- Ensure that your booth layout is accessible and accommodating to all.
- When you're busy, establish a line to save people competing to catch someone's eye.
- Remind your team of the importance for professional language at all times.



“We’re here to talk about water, not DEI!”

- We’re here to provide a professional and welcoming environment for our guests.
- This is as simple as being welcoming to all and treating folks as you would like to be treated. Be observant – who has been hovering on the edge of your exhibit for a while?
- Have a few open-ended questions that are engaging and neutral. “How has your conference been so far?”. “What interests you about our exhibit?”



Promotional Materials

Use inclusive language in your communication materials, signage and interactions. Avoid gender-specific or exclusionary terms and imagery, e.g., all white, older, all male images.



You agree to treat all individuals with respect and create a collegial, inclusive, and professional environment. You will value a diversity of views and opinions by communicating openly with respect for others.

WEFTEC Code of Conduct



Other information to consider

Familiarize yourself with your organization’s own inclusive policies, and any diversity statistics that people might ask about from a careers perspective, or due to supplier diversity needs.



Recognition of Best Practices

If you would like to be recognized for your organization’s contributions to creating a welcoming, inclusive environment at WEFTEC, please contact Laura Helm (lhelm@wef.org)



Questions/Concerns

WEF realizes that not everyone may fully understand or agree with the importance of DEI. We encourage open dialogue. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact:

- Manufacturers and Representatives Community Chair: Patrick Foley
foley.p@sherwoodlogan.com

Thanks for your consideration
we look forward to seeing you all
at WEFTEC



Other Resources and Support

At the conference, an Ombuds has been appointed as a resource for meeting participants, including exhibitors.
www.mwi.org/wef-ombuds

- DEI policy: <https://www.wef.org/topics/hot-topics/diversity-equity-and-inclusion/>
- WEF Code of Conduct
<https://www.weftec.org/about/about-weftec/code-of-conduct/>