

Code of Ethical Conduct

Elizabeth A. Wade

Maryland University of Integrative Health

February 21, 2021

Culture, and how an individual is linked to a group through the thoughts, perceptions, and behaviors belonging to it, impacts the perceptions and actions of that group's health and wellbeing. According to NIH (2017), culture is comprised of features that are associated with ethnic, racial, religious, geographic, or social groups. The workplace constitutes a form of a social group given the ties that bind employees together. (NIH, 2017) As a group, employees of any given organization form a collective character. Each enterprise is the unique blend of its company values and the personalities, attitudes, and behaviors of its workforce. This includes policies, practices, and communication style. (ERC, 2019)

Cultural Respect in the Workplace.

The practice of cultural respect has a positive effect on the workforce by enabling leadership to value its employees and carry out policies and procedures that are respectful of and responsive to a diverse population. (NIH, 2017) This credo supports a positive work environment, increases performance outcomes, and encourages employee retention. Therefore, when creating a workplace wellness program, it is vital that the leadership respect and embrace the individual differences and cultural diversity of their employees. This can be bolstered by a strong Code of Ethics, also known as a Code of Conduct, created and enforced by the company's leadership. As the stated in the Google Code of Conduct: a "Code of Conduct is one of the ways we put Google's values into practice". (Alphabet, 2020)

Code of Ethics.

Since ANTEDOTUM, the company for which I am designing a wellness program, does not yet have a Code of Ethics in place I have created the following:

Dedication: To the employees, board members, and stakeholders of ANTEDOTUM it is pledged that all interactions related to work are measured against the highest ethical business practices at all times.

I. Product.

- A. **Responsibly Sourced.** Grown in rich, sustainable soil, which functions as a vital, living ecosystem, our hemp is healthy, thriving, and full of active plant compounds. (Antedotum, 2020)
- B. **Supply Chain Accountability.** All ingredients outside of hemp have been evaluated not only for their quality and efficacy but also for fair trade compliance. (Whole Foods, 2020)
- C. **Rigorous Purity Testing.** Official organic certification guarantees no solvents, pesticides, herbicides or heavy metals are present in any ANTEDOTUM products. (Antedotum, 2020)

II. People.

- A. **Respect.** At ANTEDOTUM we treat each other with respect and dignity. This means that all team members are entitled to work in an environment free of harassment, bullying and discrimination. (Starbucks, 2011)

- B. **Diversity.** As a Minority Business Enterprise ANTEDODUM supports inclusion in the workplace. Diversity is seen as a strategic and competitive business advantage. Our Founder & CEO, Karina, is a proud Latina of Puerto Rican and Cuban heritage who is committed to developing and supporting economic equality across all minority groups. (Antedotum, 2020)
- C. **Health & Safety.** Team members are encouraged to participate in a workplace wellness program to elevate employee health and wellbeing. Team members are expected to follow all safety rules and practices under law.
- D. **Conflict of Interest.** We all must avoid conflicts of interest. A conflict of interest is a situation in which a person or organization has conflicting interests or responsibilities, financial or otherwise, and serving one interest could have an adverse impact on those other interests or responsibilities. We make business decisions based on the best interest of ANTEDOTUM and not for personal gain or benefit. We require all employees to disclose any actual or perceived conflicts of interest. (Johnson & Johnson, 2020)
- E. **Legal Compliance.** ANTEDOTUM is committed to full compliance with the laws, rules and regulations of the jurisdictions in which it operates. Team members must comply with all applicable laws, rules and regulations when performing your duties. (Starbucks, 2011)
- F. **Confidentiality.** Each team member at ANTEDOTUM acquires knowledge and has access internal information that belongs to the company. Employees are trusted with maintaining the confidentiality of this valuable information. Because it is considered

proprietary, the information should be used only for company purposes and should not be disclosed to anyone outside of ANTEDOTUM. (Starbucks, 2011)

G. Contribution. We believe people thrive within a company culture that demonstrates gratitude and prizes humility, so for us, giving back, working to improve circumstances, and contributing to our community and beyond, is at the core of what we value. We hold deep convictions for many causes so over time we will build a network of organizations that we will partner with and donate to, (Antedotum, 2020)

Thoughts and reactions to research.

In my research on the Codes of Conduct for various businesses, I found that it was strictly larger publicly held companies that had their information readily available online. I reviewed the Codes of Conduct for Google, Johnson & Johnson, Starbucks, Whole Foods, and Bassett Furniture. Even though the company for which I am creating the wellness program is from the cosmetics industry, I decided to investigate a cross section of industries: services (Google), goods (Johnson & Johnson and Bassett), and food and beverage (Starbucks and Whole Foods).

The first thing I noticed was that the companies I reviewed chose to focus on the conduct angle of their code rather than the ethical one. This gives me the impression that it is the behaviors of employees the companies are honing in on rather than the overarching exploration of ethical considerations. That said, I chose to frame my version for ANTEDOTUM as a Code of Ethics rather than a Code of Conduct. I prefer the more theoretical approach of exploring moral

principals which comes across employee centered whereas the list of rules from a Code of Conduct comes across as having been dictated from a position of leadership.

It was evident that each of the companies carefully crafted the language of their respective documents to reflect their unique corporate cultures. Google used noticeably casual language in a conversational in style to appeal to their laid-back company culture. Both Starbucks and Johnson & Johnson used upbeat, feel-good language to mirror their values. Johnson & Johnson, in particular, took great pains to include creative visuals and clouds with bullet points for easy reading. Meanwhile, Whole Foods and Bassett used more conventional paragraph-style structures. This was not a surprise for Bassett as it reflects their more traditional mores. However, I expected the tone of Whole Foods to be more progressive. I attribute the legal style of their Code of Conduct to their still newish parent company Amazon which likely became the dominant corporate culture after their acquisition of Whole Foods Market. I was very influenced by the Starbucks model when creating my draft for ANTEDOTUM as their document was concise as well as positive.

References

- Antedotum. (2020). <https://antedotum.com/pages/why-antedotum>
- ERC. (February 1, 2019). *Workplace culture: What it is, why it matters, and how to define it*. Your ERC. <https://www.yourerc.com/blog/post/Workplace-Culture-What-it-Is-Why-it-Matters-How-to-Define-It>
- Google. (September 25, 2020). *Google code of conduct*. Alphabet Investor Relations. <https://abc.xyz/investor/other/google-code-of-conduct/>
- Johnson & Johnson. (2020). Johnson & Johnson Code of Business Conduct. Live our Credo, Know Our Code.

NIH. (2017). *Cultural respect*. <https://www.nih.gov/institutes-nih/nih-office-director/office-communications-public-liaison/clear-communication/cultural-respect>

Starbucks. (2011). *Business ethics and compliance: Standards of business conduct*. Starbucks Coffee Company. [PDF]
<https://globalassets.starbucks.com/assets/eecd184d6d2141d58966319744393d1f.pdf>

Whole Foods. (August 22, 2019). *Whole Foods Market code of conduct*. Whole Foods Market. [PDF] [https://assets.wholefoodsmarket.com/www/company-info/WFM_Code_of_Conduct_MAY_2018_FINAL_072018.pdf#:~:text=Purpose%20The%20Code%20of%20Business%20Conduct%20\(%E2%80%9Cthe%20Code%E2%80%9D\),of%20the%20WFM%20Board%20of%20Directors%20\(%E2%80%9CBoard%20Members%E2%80%9D\).](https://assets.wholefoodsmarket.com/www/company-info/WFM_Code_of_Conduct_MAY_2018_FINAL_072018.pdf#:~:text=Purpose%20The%20Code%20of%20Business%20Conduct%20(%E2%80%9Cthe%20Code%E2%80%9D),of%20the%20WFM%20Board%20of%20Directors%20(%E2%80%9CBoard%20Members%E2%80%9D).)