



## Conference Speaker Diversity Guidelines

Women are under-represented as conference speakers in research, data, insights, and beyond. For years, that's been blamed on a thin pipeline. Wire has spent years proving that's wrong. Wire has put together a database of woman speakers through our 50/50 Initiative and offers programs to mentor and encourage women in our community to put themselves forward for speaking roles.

The pipeline isn't the problem. So what's holding us back?

It's time to disrupt how you recruit and select speakers. Here's how to get there:

As part of our 50/50 Initiative, Wire has crafted the following set of guidelines to help industry conference organizers recruit a truly diverse on-stage presence and improve speaker gender ratios at events. When reaching out to procure speaker applicants, evaluate papers and studies, and craft agendas, this checklist will drive gender parity at research events.

### Conference Organizer Checklist and Guidelines for a Diverse Agenda

#### **Create diverse committees**

Diverse committees bring diverse networks. Make sure yours includes people of different genders, ages, ethnicities, abilities, and geographies — people who can tap into networks your org doesn't already access, especially for keynotes.

#### **Adjust your call for speakers.**

Say explicitly that you want new voices and perspectives. Tell them: experience isn't required or preferred. You're looking for fresh topics and fresh people. Be transparent about how you'll judge submissions.

#### **Use your network to encourage new speakers to apply**

Lean on your networks. Ask people you know and past speakers to nominate people you don't. Make it clear you're actively seeking diverse perspectives. Then go where you've never looked before: women in tech groups, diversity networks, Substack, LinkedIn—channels and communities outside your usual haunts.



**Follow blinded speaker selection processes**

Strip names and identifying details from submissions. Use a consistent, transparent rating system to score topics and papers while you stay blind to who submitted them. It kills intrinsic bias.

**Before releasing speaker selections, critically review your draft agenda**

No single-gender panels. (Yes, an all-male panel with a female moderator still counts. A female-heavy "women in data" panel doesn't offset a male-heavy schedule.) Check that no tracks or sessions lean heavily one way.

**For "pay to play" speakers**

Ask sponsors to bring diverse speakers. If their lineup isn't diverse, tell them: the industry values it, and they probably have other experts who could contribute. When you signal inclusion and change how you select speakers, people who've hesitated to apply will step forward.

**If you think diverse voices matter to the future of our industry and would like to gain access to our 50/50 Speaker Database of woman experts in research, data, and insights pledge to follow these guidelines by signing below:**

**Organization Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Organization Website:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Organization Contact Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Please email a copy of this agreement signed, along with your organization's logo, to [kristin@wearewire.org](mailto:kristin@wearewire.org) to receive access to the database.**