



**PADDLESPORTS**  
TRADE COALITION™

# **PTC Combined Code of Ethics & Industry Ecosystem Framework**

*Unified Standards for Collaboration, Conduct, and Industry Alignment*

*Version 1.0*

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# Paddlesports Industry Ecosystem

## Integration with PTC Gold Standard Code of Ethics

### Purpose & Relationship Between Frameworks

The Paddlesports Industry Ecosystem defines the structure of our industry—clarifying roles, responsibilities, and value alignments that connect brands, retailers, sales representatives, and community organizations.

The PTC Gold Standard Code of Ethics defines the culture that should guide these relationships—establishing principles of transparency, collaboration, and integrity.

Together, these two frameworks form the foundation and operating system for a thriving paddlesports industry:

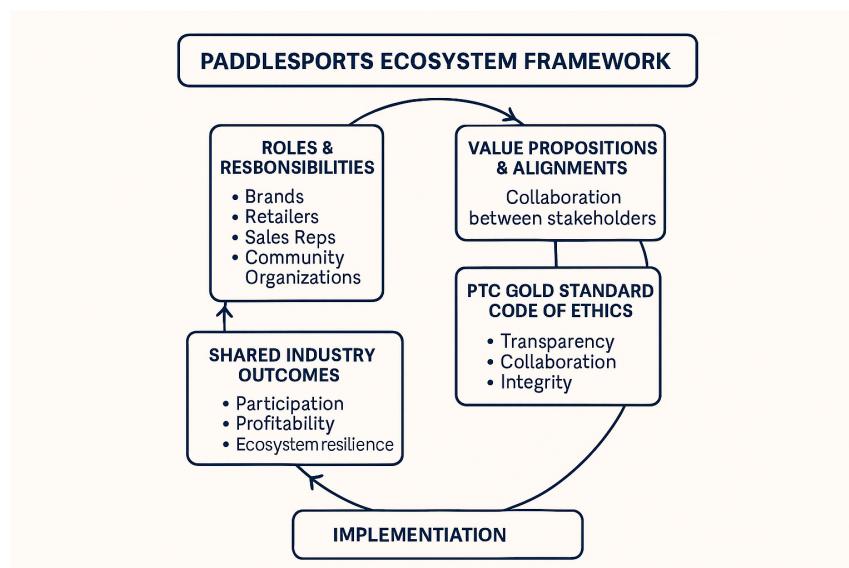
The Ecosystem Framework outlines how we work together. The Gold Standards outline how we behave while doing so.

When used in tandem, they provide both a map and a moral compass—ensuring that every partnership strengthens participation, profitability, and community impact.

### Shared Industry Outcomes

Both frameworks are anchored in the same collective goals:

1. Increase Participation & Retention – Create welcoming, safe, and inspiring experiences that encourage lifelong paddling.
2. Enhance Profitability & Sustainability – Align incentives, protect margins, and make data-driven decisions that enable long-term growth.
3. Strengthen the Paddlesports Ecosystem – Foster trust, respect, and cooperation between all stakeholders to build a resilient, values-driven industry.



## Alignment Notes by Stakeholder

### *Brands / Manufacturers*

#### Gold Standard Alignment

The roles and responsibilities of brands align directly with the PTC Brand Gold Standards—leading with transparency, empowering retailers and reps through education, and acting fairly across all channels.

By integrating the Gold Standards into brand operations, manufacturers strengthen trust, improve forecasting and communication, and ensure that every initiative contributes to shared profitability and ecosystem health.

### *Retailers*

#### Gold Standard Alignment

Retailer responsibilities reflect the PTC Retailer Gold Standards—investing in staff knowledge, championing local community engagement, and communicating openly with partners.

Applying the Gold Standard self-assessment process helps retailers evaluate how effectively they serve as the industry's economic and community hub, driving both participation and profitability through intentional partnerships.

### *Sales Representatives*

#### Gold Standard Alignment

Sales representative functions mirror the PTC Representative Gold Standards—knowing their territories, being present and responsive, and serving as a trusted bridge between brands and retailers.

Embedding these standards elevates professionalism in the field, ensures consistent communication, and reinforces the critical role of reps as connectors who transform brand strategies into local success stories.

### *Community Organizations*

#### Gold Standard Alignment

Community organizations embody the ethical spirit of the PTC framework through stewardship, inclusion, and grassroots collaboration.

Aligning with the Gold Standards enables these groups to work more strategically with commercial partners—ensuring that advocacy, access, and education initiatives are supported, visible, and mutually beneficial across the industry.

## Putting the Ecosystem into Practice

To operationalize the Paddlesports Industry Ecosystem, stakeholders are encouraged to use the PTC Gold Standards Implementation Guide as their action framework:

1. Self-Assess current performance and cultural alignment.
2. Reflect Inward on organizational strengths and opportunities.

3. Look Outward to evaluate partner relationships and collaboration.
4. Build an Action Plan focused on 2–3 improvement priorities.
5. Engage Partners using the communication templates provided by PTC.

By pairing structural clarity (the Ecosystem) with behavioral accountability (the Gold Standards), the paddlesports community creates a cycle of continuous improvement that strengthens business performance, consumer trust, and environmental stewardship alike.

## Roles & Responsibilities

### *Brands / Manufacturers*

#### Core Role

Serve as the creative and technical engine of the paddlesports industry—designing innovative, reliable products that inspire participation and enhance performance. Brands translate vision into tangible experiences, driving product evolution, setting quality standards, and shaping the identity and future direction of the sport.

#### Extended Responsibilities

- Develop and maintain dealer networks to ensure strong local representation.
- Provide marketing materials and campaigns to support sell-through.
- Deliver product knowledge resources and training for retailers and reps.
- Offer after-sales support and warranty services to maintain customer trust.
- Manage distribution and logistics for timely product availability and simple ordering.
- Build a brand identity consumers trust and align with.
- Drive sustainability initiatives and lead material innovation.
- Educate consumers and stakeholders on product innovation, lifestyle, and safety.
- Advocate for industry standards and best practices.
- Integrate technology solutions (B2B portals, fit guides, configurators) to streamline operations.

### *Retailers*

#### Core Role

Act as the revenue-generating hub of the paddlesports industry—connecting local consumers with products that meet their needs, translating brand innovation into real-world sales, and serving as trusted experts and ambassadors for the paddling lifestyle.

#### Extended Responsibilities

- Provide expert advice and local paddling information.
- Offer value-added services: product fittings, outfitting, instructional programs, and safety training.
- Host events that inspire passion and create connections among paddlers.
- Create a welcoming space in-store that fosters community engagement.

- Support local clubs and organizations as integral partners.
- Serve as a resource for local advocacy efforts (e.g., waterway access, infrastructure).
- Demonstrate paddlesports' contribution to local economies to garner municipal investment
- Influence inventory planning through preseason commitments and forecasting.
- Share market insights with brands and reps to guide product development.
- Manage inventory risk to maintain healthy margins and avoid discount-driven market erosion.

### *Sales Reps*

#### Core Role

Represent brands within defined territories and act as the vital link between manufacturers and retailers. Sales reps translate brand strategy into local action—developing distribution networks, driving business growth, and ensuring that products reach consumers through trusted, knowledgeable partners.

#### Extended Responsibilities

1. Build trust-based relationships with retailers by curating assortments that meet local consumer needs and maximize sell-through.
2. Serve as the bridge between brands and local stores, ensuring alignment on goals, execution, and shared success.
3. Deliver product knowledge clinics and training sessions to turn retail staff into confident brand advocates.
4. Advocate for retailers with brands to secure resources for marketing initiatives and community events.
5. Provide brands with real-time, ground-level feedback on product performance, market trends, and consumer preferences.
6. Develop long-term territory strategies that balance new account acquisition with retention and service excellence.
7. Support demos, clinics, and festivals that strengthen brand presence and participation locally.
8. Use sales data and trend analysis to guide forecasting and assortment planning.
9. Maintain consistent communication, transparency, and responsiveness to foster lasting partnerships across stakeholders.

### *Community Organizations*

#### Core Role

Serve as the grassroots foundation of the paddlesports ecosystem—fostering participation, protecting waterways, and building inclusive, connected communities. Community organizations bring purpose and passion to the industry by translating shared values of access, stewardship, and safety into real-world action and advocacy.

## Extended Responsibilities

1. Promote paddlesports participation through local programming, instruction, and events.
2. Advocate for waterway access, conservation, and infrastructure investment at the municipal and regional levels.
3. Build inclusive and welcoming spaces for paddlers of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities.
4. Organize cleanups, stewardship initiatives, and conservation projects that protect local waterways.
5. Partner with brands, retailers, and reps to host demo days, clinics, and festivals that connect people to paddling.
6. Educate communities on safe practices, environmental responsibility, and sustainable recreation.
7. Act as trusted local voices for paddlesports, representing the interests of their members and regional ecosystems.
8. Collect and share participation data, event outcomes, and success stories that demonstrate the value of paddlesports to local economies and quality of life.

# Value Propositions & Alignments

## *Brands / Manufacturers*

### *Brands ↔ Retailers*

**Profitability & Margin Alignment** - Ensure healthy margins for retailers to sustain operations and reinvest locally. Logical pricing structures that support long-term partnerships. MAP enforcement to protect profitability across channels.

**Sales Enablement** - Provide consumer-facing product info and staff training resources. Digital integration for e-commerce support (product feeds, SEO-ready descriptions).

**Consumer Engagement** - Incentives or opportunities for retailers to facilitate first-hand product experiences (demo days, try-before-you-buy programs).

**Community Support** - Collaborate on local events and initiatives that grow paddlesports participation. Shared sustainability and advocacy initiatives.

**Operational Efficiency** - Simple ordering processes and timely product availability. Forecasting and inventory planning collaboration.

**Dealer Loyalty Programs** - Tiered programs or exclusivity options that reward commitment.

**Event Activation Support** - Help retailers host experiential events (clinics, races, festivals) with gear, staff, and marketing support.

### *Brands ↔ Sales Reps*

**Representing a Desirable Brand** - Provide a product catalog and brand identity that consumers and retailers actively want. Ensure the brand resonates with market trends and consumer values (innovation, sustainability, performance).

**Financial Partnership** - Offer competitive commission structures that allow reps to sustain and grow their business. Align incentives with territory growth and long-term brand development.

**Sales Enablement** - Deliver comprehensive product knowledge, education, and training resources. Provide marketing tools, samples, and demo gear to support in-field sales efforts.

**Operational Efficiency** - Ensure easy access to inventory and pricing information. Offer intuitive, reliable ordering systems for quick and accurate order placement. Regular check-ins and transparent updates on product availability, lead times, and marketing initiatives.

**Territory Intelligence** - Share sales history and performance data to help reps make informed decisions. Collaborate on forecasting and assortment planning for dealer networks.

**Event & Community Support** - Support reps at local events that grow brand awareness and revenue. Provide resources for demos, clinics, and grassroots engagement.

### *Brands ↔ Community Organizations*

**Shared Mission** - Support initiatives that promote paddlesports participation, safety, and environmental stewardship. Align brand values (e.g., sustainability, inclusivity) with community programs.

**Event & Program Support** - Provide gear, sponsorship, or financial backing for local events, clinics, and festivals. Collaborate on grassroots programs that introduce new participants to paddlesports. Move beyond one-off sponsorships to multi-year collaborations that build trust and impact.

**Education & Advocacy** - Share expertise and resources for conservation, access, and safety education. Partner on campaigns that advocate for waterways protection and outdoor recreation access.

**Marketing & Visibility** - Co-brand events and leverage community partnerships for authentic storytelling. Highlight shared initiatives in brand marketing to reinforce credibility and purpose.

**Operational Collaboration** - Offer demo gear or discounted products for community programs. Provide logistical support for events (staff, transportation, promotional materials). Track and share outcomes of community partnerships to demonstrate ROI and commitment.

### *Retailers*

#### *Retailers ↔ Brands*

**Profitability & Margin Alignment** – Curate core assortments with aligned vendors, focusing on shared values and sustainable pricing structures. Commit to preseason orders to support efficient production and reduce inventory risk.

**Sales Enablement** – Invest in staff training to effectively represent brand values and communicate key product differentiators.

**Consumer Engagement** – Collaborate on localized marketing campaigns and events that connect brand stories to community interests.

**Community Support** – Advocate for paddlesports growth and local engagement through joint initiatives, sponsorships, and shared advocacy goals.

**Feedback & Continuous Improvement** – Provide authentic product testimonials and detailed sales insights to inform future development and strengthen brand trust.

#### *Retailers ↔ Independent Sales Reps*

**Territory Partnership & Trust** – Build strong, trust-based relationships with reps who understand local markets and share long-term growth objectives.

**Training & Support** – Receive ongoing product education and sell-through support from reps to ensure knowledgeable retail teams.

**Assortment & Inventory Planning** – Collaborate with reps to develop balanced assortments, optimize preseason orders, and manage seasonal demand.

**Event Collaboration** – Partner with reps to activate local demos, clinics, and brand events that increase visibility and sales.

**Feedback Loop** – Provide timely feedback via reps to influence brand strategy and improve product offerings.

#### *Retailers ↔ Community Organizations*

**Shared Mission** – Partner with community groups to promote paddlesports participation, safety, and environmental stewardship.

**Event & Program Support** – Host and co-sponsor local events, clinics, and festivals that grow the sport and engage new participants.

**Education & Advocacy** – Provide gear, space, and expertise for outreach and educational initiatives; advocate for access and infrastructure improvements.

**Inclusivity & Representation** – Collaborate with organizations focused on expanding access for underrepresented groups, ensuring a diverse and welcoming paddling community.

#### *Sales Reps*

#### *Reps ↔ Brands*

**Territory Growth & Representation** – Expand brand presence by identifying and developing strategic retail partnerships within the region.

**Communication & Transparency** – Maintain regular check-ins and provide real-time updates on product availability, lead times, and marketing initiatives.

**Sales Enablement** – Access and deploy marketing tools, samples, demo gear, and training materials to drive in-field sales success.

**Forecasting & Planning** – Collaborate on territory-level forecasting and product launch strategies to ensure operational efficiency and accurate inventory flow.

**Digital Integration** – Utilize modern B2B systems, inventory visibility, and mobile-friendly ordering tools to streamline transactions.

**Recognition & Incentives** – Reward high-performing reps through bonuses, exclusive access, and co-branded marketing opportunities that encourage long-term alignment.

**Brand Advocacy** – Communicate the brand's story—its innovation, sustainability, and lifestyle positioning—with authenticity and enthusiasm in every market interaction.

### *Reps ↔ Retailers*

**Assortment Planning & Guidance** – Partner with retailers to curate locally relevant product assortments that drive sales and minimize excess inventory.

**Training & Staff Development** – Provide regular product clinics and staff education sessions to build confidence and engagement.

**Responsive Support** – Offer timely assistance with orders, inventory concerns, and promotional initiatives to maintain seamless operations.

**Event Collaboration** – Partner on local demos, clinics, and brand activations that deepen community engagement and increase sell-through.

**Feedback Loop** – Channel valuable insights from retailers to brands, influencing product design, marketing strategy, and service improvements.

### Reps ↔ Community Organizations

**Advocacy & Connection** – Act as a bridge between community organizations, brands, and retailers to mobilize resources for events, outreach, and education.

**Event Participation** – Attend and support grassroots festivals, clinics, and safety programs that grow participation and awareness.

**Education & Outreach** – Share technical product knowledge, safety guidance, and paddlesports best practices with local participants.

**Inclusivity & Access** – Collaborate with organizations focused on expanding representation and accessibility in paddlesports for underrepresented groups.

### *Community Organizations*

#### Community Organizations ↔ Brands

**Shared Purpose** – Align around sustainability, inclusion, and participation initiatives that reflect brand values and industry stewardship.

**Event & Program Support** – Collaborate on local programs and events with product donations, sponsorship, and promotional backing.

**Education & Advocacy** – Partner on campaigns that promote safe paddling, conservation, and responsible recreation.

**Authentic Storytelling** – Co-create marketing content that highlights real community impact, building brand credibility and emotional connection.

**Operational Collaboration** – Coordinate logistics, provide demo opportunities, and track outcomes to measure and share collective impact.

#### Community Organizations ↔ Retailers

**Local Engagement** – Partner on events, clinics, and community initiatives that drive traffic to stores and encourage local participation.

**Education & Access** – Use retail spaces as venues for workshops, safety sessions, and advocacy initiatives.

**Mutual Promotion** – Co-promote events and programs across social and local media channels to expand visibility and attendance.

**Resource Sharing** – Leverage retailer support for equipment, prizes, or funding in exchange for community exposure and goodwill.

**Inclusivity & Representation** – Work together to engage underrepresented groups, fostering a welcoming culture across the paddlesports community.

**Community Organizations ↔ Sales Reps**

**Advocacy & Representation** – Collaborate with reps to communicate local needs, access challenges, and participation trends back to brands.

**Event Collaboration** – Engage reps to provide demo gear, product expertise, and brand presence at community events.

**Information Exchange** – Share feedback on how products and initiatives resonate with grassroots participants.

**Network Building** – Strengthen ties between the commercial and community sides of paddlesports to ensure mutual support and shared growth.

# Paddlesports Trade Coalition Code of Ethics & Gold Standard Practices

## Purpose

The lens of this document has been carefully vetted through three outcomes that the PTC and its members have identified as **key areas for improvement across our industry**.

Every Gold Standard, guideline, and recommended action is designed to advance these outcomes collectively — not just for individual success, but for the long-term health and growth of paddlesports as a whole.

- 1. Increase Participation & Retention**
- 2. Improve Profitability**
- 3. Strengthen the Paddlesports Eco-System**

## Gold Standard Code of Ethics for the Paddlesports Industry

### Retailer Gold Standard Practices

- 1. Invest in Knowledge & Customer Experience:**  
Every staff member is trained and confident to educate paddlers accurately and safely.
- 2. Champion the Community:**  
Retailers lead and support local paddling events and community organizations, helping new participants connect and thrive.
- 3. Communicate Openly:**  
Feedback to brands and reps is timely, honest, and focused on shared improvement.
- 4. Align with Brand Partnerships:**  
Retailers work with brands on launches, marketing, and programs that drive shared success and profitability.
- 5. Be Strategic:**  
Retailers plan products, partnerships, and events with intention - aligning decisions to strengthen their business, community, and the paddling ecosystem.

### Brand (Manufacturer) Gold Standard Practices

- 1. Lead with Transparency:**  
Pricing, timelines, and policies are clear, consistent, and shared early with all partners.
- 2. Empower Retailers & Reps:**  
Brands provide high-quality educational materials and product resources to retailers and reps.

### **3. Support Collaboration:**

Manufacturers invest in joint marketing, demos, and training that build community and drive shared success.

### **4. Act Fairly Across Channels:**

Brands align DTC and retail strategies to ensure equitable pricing, transparent promotions, and strong margin protection for retail partners during key sales periods.

### **5. Be Flexible and Supportive:**

Manufacturers adjust support and programs based on retailer involvement, collaboration, and shared goals.

## Representative Gold Standard Practices

### **1. Know Your Territory:**

Representatives understand their communities, customers, and local market dynamics

### **2. Be Present and Responsive:**

Reps communicate reliably, follow through promptly, and show up for their retailers and brands.

### **3. Educate and Inspire:**

Representatives bring products to life through training, demos and events.

### **4. Bridge the Conversation:**

Reps listen actively, carry feedback both ways, and work to align brand and retailer needs.

## Community Organizations Gold Standard Practices

### **1. Grow Participation & Inclusion**

They create welcoming programs, clinics, and events that remove barriers and invite new paddlers into the community.

### **2. Advocate for Access & Conservation**

They lead the charge in protecting waterways and promoting sustainable recreation — often giving paddlesports its moral and civic voice.

### **3. Educate & Empower**

Through safety instruction, stewardship initiatives, and environmental education, they build knowledge, respect, and responsibility on the water.

### **4. Connect Industry & Community**

They are the bridge between business and the public — collaborating with retailers, brands, and reps on events that unite passion with partnership.

# PTC Code of Ethics - Gold Standards - Implementation Guide

## Guidelines for Use

The PTC Gold Standards are designed to inspire consistent, high-quality practices across the paddlesports industry.

This guide helps **retailers, brands, representatives, and community organizations** turn these standards into action — evaluating current performance, setting improvement goals, and engaging other cohorts for shared success.

### Step 1: Self-Assessment

Each cohort begins by assessing how well they currently meet each Gold Standard using this simple 1–5 scale:

Score	Descriptor	Meaning
<b>1 – Not Evident</b>	We rarely or never do this.	The practice isn't part of our operations or culture yet.
<b>2 – Emerging</b>	We occasionally do this, but inconsistently.	It happens ad hoc or only through certain individuals.
<b>3 – Developing</b>	We do this somewhat consistently.	We're making progress, but still have gaps to close.
<b>4 – Strong</b>	We do this regularly and with intent.	It's part of our routine and showing positive results.
<b>5 – Exemplary</b>	We lead by example.	This is fully embedded in how we operate and partner.

#### Action:

Rate yourself on each Gold Standard using this scale.

Document examples or evidence where possible — e.g., training logs, event summaries, communication history, or campaign data.

### Step 2: Reflect Inward

Look within your organization or team:

1. Which practices are already part of your culture?
2. Where do you see room to improve or innovate?
3. Which standards could have the biggest impact on your business, profitability, or influence if strengthened?

## Step 3: Look Outward

Evaluate your relationships with the other cohorts:

1. How does your work support or challenge their ability to succeed?
2. Are there gaps in communication or alignment?
3. Where can collaboration lead to better outcomes for both sides?

## Step 4: Build an Action Plan

Identify **2–3 focus areas** for the next year and outline:

1. **Action:** What will we do differently or better?
2. **Responsibility:** Who will lead it?
3. **Support Needed:** What help do we need from the other cohorts or from PTC?

## Step 5: Engage Your Partners

Use the editable email templates below to start meaningful conversations with other cohorts.

These templates make outreach simple, helping you open dialogue, share intentions, and align on next steps.

## Expected Outcomes

When all cohorts use and act on these standards, the outcomes are collective and measurable:

- **Increased Participation & Retention** – more people joining and staying in paddlesports.
- **Improved Profitability** – better alignment and smarter decisions drive sustainable business.
- **A Stronger Paddlesports Ecosystem** – trust, respect, and collaboration across the entire industry.

## Final Notes

The PTC Gold Standards are not a checklist — they're a **living agreement** between brands, retailers, and reps to elevate paddlesports together.

This guide ensures everyone can:

- **Reflect inwardly** on their own operations,
- **Engage outwardly** with partners, and
- **Take measurable action** toward shared growth, profitability, and participation.