

How to Celebrate International Women's Day and Make Your Work Place Better for Men and Women

International Women's Day is a global event aimed at highlighting the achievements of women around the world and a catalyst towards greater gender equality.

Fathers and mothers are celebrated every year. Why? Because we rarely take time to say 'thank you' to everything our parents do to ensure our happiness and success.

The very same reason applies to celebrating women (some of whom are mothers) on their own day. This is the only holiday that reminds us of all that women have contributed to our world and continue to do. Women have been grossly missing from history books, museums, and national holidays, although their accomplishments are huge. Take a look at www.womenshistory.org - the National Women's History Museum – an online museum which features the contributions of women in every field.

So here's how you and your organization can celebrate International Women's Day and benefit:

1. With some quick online research, identify the women who have made great contributions in your industry or field and (1) share on social media and (2) send an email to your colleagues distinguishing these women.
2. Recognize women within your own organization who have made a difference. Thank them and acknowledge them through an internal email, a lunch or a town hall meeting of all employees.
3. Bring in a speaker about gender equality during the month of March and invite the entire organization – men and women – to participate.

4. Start making gender equality an important part of your organization's culture. Analyze how many female managers vs. male managers there are, as well as whether pay and promotions are equal. Begin the process of moving more women up to leadership positions with equal pay. Let your employees know you are doing this and then DO IT! You will attract the best people, have an improved retention rate, and your revenues will benefit (research reveals this is true).
5. Look at your c-suite, your board of directors or, if you are a small business, review your advisory board. Commit to add more qualified women. Women are circular thinkers and think through problems differently than men. They also identify new opportunities and ways of doing things that add innovative practices, processes and products. When you have women on your team, make sure they are heard and encourage them to speak out. Listen to them when they share their views.
6. Learn what mansplaining is. Men must call out their male colleagues when they hear it. The same goes for harassment. You will create a culture of respect and success, when men make their male colleagues aware of their behavior and get them to stop before it affects the retention of women, productivity and results.

If you can't squeeze all of this into one day, don't worry. March is Women's History Month, so you have an entire month to show your commitment to gender equality and celebrate women's contributions.

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