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11 Women's History Month Ideas to Use All Month — or Year — Long

Part of a series | Women's History Month Series



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There are several great ways to observe Women's History Month and recognize the many contributions women have made to culture and society. Here are 11 ways organizations can celebrate the women on their teams not only in March but throughout the year.

With March being Women's History Month — and March 8 being International Women's Day — many organizations are planning to pay tribute to the women on their teams and recognize the many contributions they have made throughout the years.

There are many great Women's History Month ideas to implement. While it's imperative to acknowledge the impact women have had on culture and society during this celebratory month, leaders can also ensure these acknowledgments are made all year long.

Here's a look at how Women's History Month came to be, how organizations can honor this group of workers and some of the important roles women have played in history.

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When did Women's History Month start?

The custom of annually honoring the influence of women on history began with just one day. It eventually became a week and is now a monthlong celebration.

The first National Women's Day was held in the U.S. on Feb. 28, 1909. The idea was well-received globally, and the first [International Women's Day](#) took place in 1911, drawing more than 1 million people to rallies worldwide. Decades later in 1975, the United Nations General Assembly officially marked March 8 as International Women's Day.

The first Women's History Week was observed in 1978, when educators in Santa Rosa, California, publicly commended women's contributions and achievements with a local celebration to generate awareness. The initiative, set during the first week of March to coordinate with International Women's Day, gained momentum, and other cities across the country joined in. A consortium of women's groups and historians then successfully lobbied for national recognition of the observance, and in 1980, President Jimmy Carter proclaimed March 8 as the start of a National Women's History Week.

Finally, in 1987, Congress declared the entire month of March as Women's History Month. Support for the monthlong celebration has continued with every president since.

Evolution of themes for Women's History Month

Each year, the [National Women's History Alliance](#) chooses a theme for Women's History Month. Previous themes have included:

- Honoring Trailblazing Women in Labor and Business (2017)
- Nevertheless, She Persisted: Honoring Women Who Fight All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (2018)
- Visionary Women: Champions of Peace and Nonviolence (2019)
- Valiant Women of the Vote (2020)
- Valiant Women of the Vote: Refusing to Be Silenced (2021)
- Women Providing Healing, Promoting Hope (2022)
- Celebrating Women Who Tell Our Stories (2023)

For 2024, the theme is Women Who Advocate for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. You don't have to abide by the theme, but it can give you a starting point for ideas. According to the National Women's History Alliance, this year's intent is to recognize "women throughout the country who understand that, for a positive future, we need to eliminate bias and discrimination entirely from our lives and institutions."

11 ways to honor women's history in the workplace

Apart from centering around the designated theme of the year, Women's History Month continues the conversation about women and their contributions not only during March but year-round. Business owners, leadership teams and others in the workplace can take several meaningful measures to show solidarity and support for their female colleagues and coworkers throughout the year.

Here are several ideas to consider championing at your organization on behalf of women's contributions throughout history:

1. Host insightful lunch and learns

Consider coordinating an information session during a lunch break where presenters can highlight influential women throughout history and in the present day. This offers an opportunity to educate co-workers about prominent historical figures and celebrate their accomplishments. Topics can include everything from pivotal women in politics to inspiring women business leaders to [famous female inventors](#) who have changed the world.

2. Initiate an employee recognition program

Ask employees to nominate a "Woman of the Year" to show appreciation for an outstanding woman on your staff. Recognize the winner company-wide by hosting a ceremony at an all-hands meeting or by

making an announcement via a company newsletter, email or webpage. You might even honor the recipient with a prize, plaque or poster that includes their colleagues' words of praise. Consider administering other awards throughout the year, perhaps quarterly. You could, for instance, recognize a "Woman to Watch" or "Women Who Support Other Women."

3. Plan a virtual museum outing

You can learn about trailblazing women past and present through virtual online exhibits, documents, video clips and photographs offered by organizations such as the [National Women's History Museum](#). The museum covers a variety of topics related to women's history, including the women of NASA, women in social justice, women in STEM and women involved in wars, governments and more. They also have a "[First But Not the Last](#)" exhibit that documents the stories of women who ran for president. Another to consider checking out is the "Standing up for Change: African American Women and the Civil Rights Movement" [online exhibit](#), which features the remarkable women who spurred the fight toward equity.

4. Hold a book club centered on women's stories

From fictional characters to real-life icons, there are many popular books about powerful women and many amazing stories told by [women authors](#) to help start meaningful conversations about women's challenges and contributions. Choose a book, give people time to read it, then select a date and place to discuss it as a team. This can even be done virtually and recur often — book clubs generally meet every month or two.

5. Encourage thoughtful reflection and interaction

Inspire employees to interact with each other by inviting them to post notes on a bulletin board or other community space sharing a tidbit about a woman who has made a positive impact on their lives. Spotlighting incredible women within the company or announcing specific contributions and achievements of the women on your team are other creative ways to spark appreciation and bonding. Activities like this can foster conversations and create deeper connections among employees.

6. Start a business resource group

While planning activities and holding events are great ways to celebrate women's contributions, a long-term workplace culture shift can help your organization keep inclusivity top of mind year-round. For instance, creating [a business resource group](#) encourages employees to come together and share their common interests and experiences. These groups aren't merely social, however. They can influence the organization's approach to diversity, equity and inclusion (DE&I) by sharing awareness and viewpoints across departments, and they may participate in career development, networking, service projects and other opportunities.

7. Create a social media campaign

Social media platforms can be an excellent forum to celebrate and raise awareness about the contributions of women past and present. With the ability to post stories, pictures, infographics or videos, you can use these spaces to highlight influential women in history who have contributed to social progress or made pioneering achievements.

Social media is also an effective medium for recognizing accomplished women at your company. Consider featuring interviews, stories or testimonials from these women.

Other ideas include sharing motivational quotes, stories of resilience and messages of empowerment to inspire and uplift your workplace. Be sure to use hashtags to amplify your message and encourage others to join the conversation.

8. Start a fundraiser for your favorite women's cause

Fundraisers allow women's organizations to stay focused on their mission and goals by providing income to support ongoing initiatives and ensure long-term sustainability. Show your support for Women's History Month by starting a fundraiser to benefit your favorite charity or nonprofit. Campaign ideas include hosting a community-wide event, such as a 5K run or yoga session, where everyone comes together to support a women's health nonprofit organization. Invite women from women-owned establishments to join the cause and consider using fundraising platforms that have been built or are run by women.

9. Promote women's health and well-being

Create a workplace environment that prioritizes women's health and well-being by providing resources to help women balance their work and personal responsibilities. Flexible policies such as paid parental leave, accommodations for breastfeeding, gym memberships and wellness programs can promote a healthy lifestyle and reduce the risk of chronic diseases and other health conditions. Encourage employees to take breaks throughout the workday and provide opportunities for relaxation, mindfulness and stress reduction activities, such as meditation sessions or wellness challenges.

To further accommodate women's diverse needs, including caregiving responsibilities, medical appointments and personal well-being, you can offer flexible work arrangements, such as remote work options, varying working hours or compressed workweeks.

10. Support women-owned businesses

The next time your company thinks about procuring products or services for your organization, consider buying from [companies, vendors or suppliers owned by women](#). The possibilities could be anything from catering special lunches for meetings to office supplies to decor and desk plaques for employee anniversaries. You can use social media and other channels to leave reviews about the

products or services you purchased to show your support and help spread awareness about buying from women-owned companies.

11. Plan a movie night

Hosting a movie night is a simple and engaging way to celebrate and honor the contributions of women throughout history. Choose documentaries or feature films that showcase the activism, leadership, empowerment and cultural impact of women. Consider selecting a theme for your movie night, such as women who made their mark in the colonial era, women's suffrage in the roaring twenties or women who called for change through the government.

When planning your movie night, be sure to create a cozy atmosphere with comfortable seating and set aside some time to discuss the film afterward. Consider ordering takeout from a woman-owned restaurant to make the evening even more special.

Pivotal contributions by women in America's history

Women have long played an important role in shaping history, society and culture while bringing attention to issues of gender discrimination, inequity and rights. These are some of the notable figures who are often spotlighted during Women's History Month:

- Sacagawea: a Native American woman who helped make Lewis and Clark's expedition to map parts of the West in the early 19th century a success
- Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony: two Americans who fought for women's equality in the mid-19th century, more than 70 years before the 19th Amendment gave women the right to vote in 1920
- Harriet Tubman: a brave and determined woman who led hundreds of slaves to freedom during the Civil War
- Amelia Earhart: one of the world's first woman pilots — and first woman aviator to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean — who disappeared over the Pacific Ocean in 1937
- Madeleine Albright: a diplomat and political scientist who became the first female Secretary of State in 1996
- Misty Copeland: the first Black woman to be named a principal dancer in the 75-year history of the American Ballet Theatre in 2015

By celebrating the lives of notable figures in women's history, we help preserve their legacy and ensure their contributions are not forgotten. This is integral because they helped pave the way for many [influential women of today](#) across many disciplines, including science, business, politics, philanthropy and more.

Getting everyone involved in Women's History Month

While you can come up with many Women's History Month ideas for your workplace to honor the historic accomplishments women have made, it's a good idea to ask your employees how they want to celebrate. You might set up a survey or send an email asking for input. This will not only help relay a message of commitment to the women on your staff, but it will also ensure you're choosing the right campaigns to support your [DE&I strategy](#).

As more focus is placed on inclusion, planning to celebrate women's history year-round can help strengthen an organization's culture and help individual workers feel seen and supported.

Visit [ADP's DE&I Resource Hub](#) for more on how your organization can do and be its best.

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