



Galentine's Day in the Workplace: 10 Ways to Empower Women in 2024

Insights

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The day before Valentine's Day is about "ladies celebrating ladies," as Amy Poehler's character on the TV show *Parks & Rec* put it – it's Galentine's Day. But this year, your organization shouldn't just leave it to women to help celebrate and empower other women in the workplace. You should make it an organizational priority to ensure 2024 is the year that you make clear to the women in your workplace that you are there for them. What are the 10 ways you can use Galentine's Day to kickstart your newest initiative?

Galentine's Day, Explained

The annual festival of sisterhood was born in 2010 on the hit TV show *Parks and Recreation*. On February 13 that year, Leslie Knope (played by Poehler) invited her female friends from the office to a special breakfast where she handed out presents and read essays celebrating each of them. From there the holiday was born – and in the years since, it is now observed by women across the country in their own way.

The simple premise is that women "forget about any significant others for the day and solely focus on celebrating the female friends in their lives." And dispelling the myth that the holiday is a way for bitter single women to commiserate over their dismal love lives, the holiday is actually meant to be a day of empowerment. It's "a reminder for women to support and uplift one another."

10 Ways to Support Women in the Workplace

1. **Ensure Equal Pay.** Employers are more likely to attract women when they prioritize pay equity, conduct regular pay audits, place a high value on transparency, and share with their workforce the steps taken to improve equity in the workplace. Equality in pay includes all forms of compensation, including base salary or wages, overtime, bonuses, benefits, and any other perks or remuneration. If you decide to conduct a pay audit, we recommend you work with counsel so that the results of the audit are protected by the attorney-client privilege.
2. **Focus on Inclusion.** Take a look at your diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programs. Employers that embrace racial and gender diversity on their executive teams and publicly commit to supporting and advancing women in the workplace are more likely to attract and retain women in their workforce. Other women will invariably view those organizations as places where they will be valued and empowered.

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3. **Create and Support Affinity Groups.** Do you support affinity or employee resource groups (voluntary employee-led associations)? Does your organization have a group that's dedicated to women in the workplace? Do you ask the group for feedback about their work experiences? Do you incorporate their suggestions into your policies and practices? This can help your organization foster an inclusive environment and allow your employees to thrive.
4. **Boost Engagement.** Brainstorm the ways you can increase employee morale, job satisfaction, and productivity by creating a workplace where women feel empowered to fully participate. Do you have an effective rewards and recognition program? Do all workers have an opportunity to contribute their ideas? Do you dedicate time to teambuilding activities that allow for meaningful participation from all employees?
5. **Offer Flexible Work Arrangements.** Many women in the workforce today are part of the "sandwich generation," meaning they are raising children while simultaneously caring for aging parents. Therefore, employers that offer flexible work arrangements can likely attract a broader and more diverse workforce that includes women with competing obligations. While flexible work arrangements can take many forms, the most common is remote work. But even for roles that require in-person work, employers can still look for ways to offer flexibility through compressed workweeks, flexible hours, job sharing programs, and other benefits.
6. **Create Mentorship Programs.** A strong mentorship program can help women in your workforce connect, set career goals, and learn from each other's experiences. Consider designing a program that includes formal goal setting, milestones, check-ins, and support from leadership to ensure it is lasting and effective.
7. **Support Work-Life Balance.** Do you periodically review your programs and policies to ensure they allow for work-life balance? This can bolster your efforts to retain women, who are often disproportionately responsible for caregiving and household management on top of their work obligations and career aspirations.
8. **Provide Opportunities for Growth.** Providing education, training, and promotion opportunities is also critical for retaining women in the workplace. These opportunities can set a clear path for women to enrich their work experience and advance in their careers, particularly when they are juggling personal and professional responsibilities and may also be facing societal pressures and expectations.
9. **Create a Wellness Program.** Consider supporting your employees by prioritizing health and well-being. Do you offer an onsite yoga class or membership to a nearby fitness center? Do your remote employees have access to online wellness activities? Do you set up group challenges to encourage participation? Do you contribute to employees' health savings accounts (HSAs)?
10. **Offer Flexible Benefits.** In addition to creating a wellness program, you may want to review your employee benefits package to ensure you're offering a variety of options that cater to the diverse needs of your workplace. Not all employees have the same priorities, and likewise, women in the workplace will have a variety of individual priorities and preferences for the benefits that make sense to them. As always, flexibility is an essential ingredient for success.

Conclusion

Proactively strategizing on ways to bolster women in the workplace will help improve your company's efforts to hire, retain, and promote women. If you are reevaluating your approach to managing your workforce and are focused on recruiting and retaining a more diverse candidate pool, contact your Fisher Phillips attorney or the authors of this Insight to brainstorm and carry out effective ways to do so.

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