



GUIDE

What You Need to Know to Support Muslim Employees

From Heritage Months to Everyday Considerations

What You Need to Know to Support Muslim Employees

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Education During Tumultuous Times

The Global Rise of Islamophobia

Between 2018 and 2019, European surveys conducted by the United Nations showed [nearly four in 10 people held unfavorable views about Muslims](#). According to a UN spokesperson discussing the survey's results, international governmental agencies "adopting measures which disproportionately target Muslims and define Muslims as both high risk and at risk of radicalization" was driving the increase in hate crimes against the population. These measures include restricting Muslims from living according to their belief system, the securitization of religious communities, limits on access to citizenship, socioeconomic exclusion, and pervasive stigmatization of Muslim communities. Further, the spokesperson raised concerns that in places where Muslims are a historically excluded group (HEG), they are frequently targeted based on stereotypical "Muslim" characteristics, such as names, skin color, and clothing, including religious attire such as headscarves.

From policy to discrimination, ill intentions against the Muslim community are termed Islamophobia. This term, according to The Bridge Initiative—a research project based in Georgetown University's Prince Alwaleed bin Talal Center for Islamophobia Understanding—came about for the same reason as terms such as "anti-Semitism," "racism," and "homophobia." [There needed to be a way to talk about the bigotry and discrimination that Muslims were facing](#), in the same way discrimination against Jews, African Americans, and LGBTQ+ individuals was discussed.

The Council on American-Islam Relations (CAIR) provides the following [definition](#): "Islamophobia is closed-minded prejudice against or hatred of Islam and Muslims. An Islamophobe is an individual who holds a closedminded view of Islam and promotes prejudice against or hatred of Muslims." In October 2023, CAIR reported an unprecedented [1,283 reports of anti-Arab and Islamophobic bias in the US](#). The organization stated this reflects the increased violence in the Middle East, and they have further tracked [hundreds of inflammatory posts and hate speech](#) that have been shared across social media platforms. A few examples of this language include people calling Muslims and Palestinians "savages," "terrorists," and "barbarians."

Tanenbaum: Center for Interreligious Understanding, a secular, nonsectarian nonprofit that provides thought leadership, innovative trainings, and comprehensive solutions to foster respect for religious and nonreligious beliefs in the workplace, offers the following [ways to counter extremists on social media](#):

1. **Report hate speech and rhetoric.** Social media networks count on engaged users to report hate speech and content that promotes extremism. Report the user to the appropriate social media platform so their account can be investigated. Even if the perpetrator creates a new account, they will have lost their followers.
2. **Commit to sharing information that counters extremism.** Share stories and news articles that give the sourced facts and thereby counter extremist agendas. Powerful content to share may include firsthand accounts by individuals who experienced hate speech or extremism, news of solidarity among diverse religious or ethnic groups, and volunteer or donation opportunities.
3. **Join a hashtag campaign.** Trending topics, labeled with hashtags, are a great way to raise awareness, counter stereotypes with facts, and challenge the

misinformed. Hashtags provide opportunities for social media users to speak out and find others who are reacting to the same topic.

4. **In crises, provide information in real time.** In the immediate aftermath of a crisis, social media users can provide helpful information, such as the location of blood banks or where services and materials are needed locally. Remember to check the facts and look for updates before sharing. Seramount also has a [Crisis Communication Toolkit](#) companies can use to plan, enact, and review their crisis response systems.
5. **Hijack a hashtag.** It's possible to "hijack" a hashtag used by extremists as a way to disable and challenge hateful propaganda on social media. When ISIS used the hashtag #alfurqan to promote an official statement, [anti-ISIS Twitter users "hijacked" #alfurqan](#) by tweeting positive, anti-ISIS messages with the hashtag. Some users tweeted more than 100 anti-extremism tweets each, so when extremists tried to find the statement, they found anti-ISIS tweets instead.

Gallup offers a more detailed [definition of Islamophobia](#): "An exaggerated fear, hatred, and hostility toward Islam and Muslims that is perpetuated by negative stereotypes resulting in bias, discrimination, and the marginalization and exclusion of Muslims from social, political, and civic life." According to Gallup, [52 percent of Americans agree the West does not respect Muslim societies](#), and their study found that the negative public opinion of Muslims has continued to increase in the US.

Tanenbaum has the following suggestions to [explain and address Islamophobia](#), and some can be incorporated into the workplace:

1. **Expand knowledge about Islam and other religions.** Anti-Muslim discrimination stems from prejudice and stereotyping, which, in turn, stem from ignorance. Many people know very little about the beliefs and practices of the major world religions when they are not their own. If all an individual knows about Muslims is what they see in the media, they may jump to the conclusion that all Muslims are terrorists and that all terrorists are Muslims. With a greater understanding of Islam, people will gain the context to differentiate between the mainstream followers of the religion and its extremists—and to debunk the stereotypes they see portrayed in the media.
2. **Go beyond textbook descriptions of Islam and other religions.** Allow people to gain insights into the lived experiences of Muslims by encouraging them to read personal narratives and short stories, interact with guest speakers, and interview community members. This will not only make lessons more meaningful, but it can enable people to see the diversity that exists within the Islamic community.
3. **Demonstrate that extremists represent a very small population within Islam.** It's important to emphasize that 1.6 billion people around the world practice Islam, and only a small portion of them support extremist organizations or terrorist acts.
4. **Make it clear that extremism is not unique to Islam or any religion.** Examples of violent extremism can be found in all religions, from Christian identity groups in the US to Buddhist supremacist groups in Sri Lanka and Myanmar. Emphasize that extremism is a complex phenomenon and religious extremists often distort religious texts and teachings to mask political and economic goals. Acts of terrorism can never be explained by the terrorists' religious affiliation alone.

5. **Teach people to recognize Islamophobia and understand its consequences for their Muslim coworkers and neighbors.** Help people identify Islamophobia and recognize it for what it is—a form of bigotry that does great harm to individuals and communities. Expose people to stories of those hurt by Islamophobia and reflect on the real-life experiences of discrimination.

It is not only Muslims who suffer from Islamophobia. [Many individuals who are perceived to be Muslim](#), including Sikhs, South Asians, and Arabs of various religious practices, have also been the targets of hate crimes and profiling.

Islamophobia at Work

When companies do not identify and implement needed policies and practices to include Muslim employees, they miss opportunities for increasing their market share and driving social change. There are many ways in which Islamophobia shows up in the workplace and workforce. Consider the following [real-life situations](#) that partners of Tanenbaum have shared:

- Muslim employees experiencing increased scrutiny going through airport security while traveling for business.
- Muslim employees being called “terrorists” by customers and colleagues.
- Muslim employees being moved to “back of the house” roles from public facing positions so that customers/clients do not get upset, or because their physical appearance did not match the company’s brand.
- Muslim employees feeling unsafe commuting to work/in the workplace and/or having to manage safety concerns for family members (ex: a Muslim parent worrying about their child being bullied at school).

Those examples are overt. There are many more subtle ways in which Muslim employees can feel excluded or disrespected at work, in the form of microaggressions.

Consider the following [examples](#) from Tanenbaum:

- An employee doesn’t drink as part of his observance of Islam and isn’t comfortable going to a bar. He, therefore, doesn’t attend team happy hours and is labeled “anti-social.”
- An employee fasting for Ramadan is constantly asked why she is not eating at lunch meetings and other events during the day where food is served.
- An employee gets criticized for not being “sharp” at weekly team meetings which are held at 4 p.m. during Ramadan (at which point, he has been fasting since sunrise).

DEI Initiatives to Support Muslim Employees

[Muslims are overrepresented in EEOC workplace discrimination claims](#), comprising about 40 percent of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) claims of workplace discrimination even though they only account for about one percent of the US population.

Below are [examples of four inclusive measures](#) corporations are taking based on information from Tanenbaum:

- Holding a Q&A session about religion after the attacks in Paris (Horizon Blue Cross and Blue Shield of New Jersey)

- Providing transportation to mosques and other places of worship for employees who do not have access to onsite prayer space (JPMorgan Chase)
- Using an interfaith calendar to avoid scheduling events on Muslim (and other) holidays (Accenture)
- Supporting a Muslim ERG (Texas Instruments)

[Halal/Shariah compliant investment options](#) for retirement accounts can be another change companies can make to support Muslim employees while educating the entire employee population. [401k and HSA accounts are excellent tools](#) for growing savings and providing a safety net for employees and their families. Part of what makes them great is that savings are compounded and grow. For Muslims who want to follow their religious beliefs, company plans may not allow them to keep those savings and profits they make from their investments.

What makes a [Shariah compliant fund different](#)?

- They avoid investing in markets considered forbidden, including businesses that sell adult videos, violent video games, alcohol, and more.
- They avoid gambling with the investor's money, meaning no short-selling or high-turnover strategies.
- They avoid usury, meaning employees cannot loan money and charge interest on it.
- They avoid deeply indebted and economically risky companies.

Muslim Employees in the Workplace

Employees who actively practice religions may have specific needs throughout the year that are not routinely met in a workplace setting. The Religious Freedom & Business Foundation performs an annual survey called the Corporate Religious Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion (REDI) Index that measures [Fortune 500 companies against workplace religious inclusion benchmarks](#), including:

- Having religion featured on the company’s main diversity page
- Sponsoring faith employee resource groups (ERGs)
- Sharing best practices with other organizations
- Clearly addressing religion in diversity training
- Providing chaplains or other spiritual care
- Being attentive to how religion impacts stakeholders
- Accommodating religious needs of employees
- Providing clear procedures for reporting discrimination
- Employees attending religious diversity conferences
- Matching of employee donations to religious charities

When considering the specific needs of Muslim employees, companies may want to address the [following points](#):

1. Islam prescribes [five daily prayers](#), a practice observed by many Muslims. Prayers take place during the following times: dawn to sunrise, midday to late afternoon, later afternoon to before sunset, sunset to dusk, and after dusk. These periods may vary depending on the time of year, and some of the times, such as the evening prayer, are shorter.
 - a. The noon and afternoon prayers usually fall during work hours. Before praying, Muslims are required to wash their hands, mouth, nose, face, arms, and feet, which can be done in a bathroom sink. During the prayer, Muslims quietly recite from the Quran and other prayers as they stand, bow, and prostrate themselves. The prayer should be performed in a quiet, clean, dry space, such as an employee’s office, cubicle, or a company prayer room.
 - i. A person praying is not able to respond to someone talking to them or to a telephone call until they complete the prayer.
 - ii. The time required for washing and prayer is about 10 to 15 minutes.
2. [Friday is the day of congregational worship](#), which includes a sermon and prayer during the time of the noon prayer. It takes place at a mosque or hall and lasts about 45 to 60 minutes.
 - a. A Muslim employee should be able to complete the Friday prayer and service during an extended lunch break. It is appreciated if lunch meetings are not scheduled on Fridays so that Muslim employees are able to attend service.
3. [Ramadan](#) is the name of the ninth month in the Islamic calendar. Because it is a lunar month, it moves eleven days earlier each year.
 - a. During Ramadan, Muslims fast by refraining from food and drink from pre-dawn to sunset. Muslim employees continue to work during Ramadan—the only change is that they will not be able to eat during lunch times.

- i. Some employees may request a change in schedule to come in later since they may be up late at night for special prayers.
 - ii. Some employees may use their personal vacation during the last ten days of Ramadan to engage in extra devotion.
 - iii. Travelers, sick people, the elderly, and pregnant and nursing women are exempt from fasting in Ramadan but may choose to fast anyway.
- 4. Muslim adults are required to go on pilgrimage to Mecca ([hajj](#)) at least once in their lifetime if it is financially and physically possible. The pilgrimage lasts for only five days, but most people remain in the area before and after hajj for a total of two to three weeks.
 - a. Muslim employees may choose to use their vacation days to perform the pilgrimage. Hajj does not fall at a fixed time but moved eleven days earlier each year, like Ramadan.
 - b. When Muslims are on hajj, they are generally not available for phone or electronic communications.
 - c. Muslims may also use their vacation time for a lesser pilgrimage to Mecca known as [umrah](#). While umrah includes many of the same rituals as hajj, it does not have a fixed date and can take place at any time of the year.
- 5. Observant Muslims do not eat pork or pork byproducts. Additionally, some Muslims follow the injunction to eat only meat and poultry that has been slaughtered in a specific manner, known as [halal](#). In situations where halal meat is not available, vegetarian dishes, dairy, and fish products are a good alternative.
 - a. Observant Muslims also abstain from drinking alcohol.
- 6. Some Muslims may be reluctant to shake the hand of an unrelated person of the opposite gender. This is because of Islam's [emphasis on modesty between genders](#).
 - a. This should not be taken as an insult but as a sign of personal modesty.
 - b. Similarly, some Muslims may avoid sustained eye contact with someone of the opposite gender.
 - c. During social events where there is dancing or alcohol being served, some Muslims prefer not to participate for religious reasons and should not be penalized for this choice. Because of the prohibition against selling or drinking alcohol, Muslim employees may also want to avoid serving or selling alcoholic beverages.
- 7. [Muslim attire](#)
 - a. The manner of dress of Muslims has drawn great attention in recent years, with some groups suggesting that restrictions on the dress are demeaning or controlling, especially to women.
 - i. Some European countries have even attempted to outlaw certain aspects of Islamic dress customs, such as covering the face in public. This controversy stems largely from a misconception regarding the reasons behind Islamic dress rules.
 - ii. The way in which Muslims dress is really driven out of simple modesty and a desire to not draw individual attention in any way. Muslims generally do not resent the restrictions placed on their dress by their religion and most regard it as a proud statement of their faith.

- b. Islam has two sources for guidance and rulings: the Quran, which is considered to be the revealed word of Allah, and the Hadith—the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad, who serves as a human role model and guide.
 - i. It should be noted, too, that codes for conduct when it comes to dressing are greatly relaxed when individuals are home and with their families. The following requirements are followed by Muslims when they appear in public, not in the privacy of their own homes.
 - ii. Some followers of Islam also choose not to follow traditional Muslim attire rules, but that does not make them any less Muslim than those who do. Clothing choice is a personal choice for many that follow the Islamic faith.
- c. The following is a traditional list of clothing requirements as outlined by the above texts:
 - i. **First requirement: Parts of the body to be covered** The first bit of guidance given in Islam describes the parts of the body which must be covered in public.
 - A. For Women: In general, standards of modesty call for a woman to cover her body, particularly her chest. Most Muslims interpret this to require head coverings for women, although some Muslim women, especially those of more conservative branches of Islam, cover the entire body, including the face and/or hands, with a full-body chador.
 - B. For Men: The minimum amount to be covered on the body is between the navel and the knee. It should be noted, though, that a bare chest would be frowned upon in situations where it draws attention.
 - ii. **Second requirement: Looseness** Islam also guides that clothing must be loose enough so as not to outline or distinguish the shape of the body. Skin-tight, body-hugging clothes are discouraged for both men and women. When in public, some women wear a light cloak over their personal clothing as a convenient way to hide the curves of the body. In many predominantly Muslim countries, men's traditional dress is somewhat like a loose robe, covering the body from the neck to the ankles.
 - iii. **Third requirement: Thickness** See-through clothing is not modest, for either men or women. The clothing must be thick enough so that the color of the skin it covers is not visible, nor the shape of the body underneath.
 - iv. **Fourth requirement: Overall appearance** The overall appearance of a person should be dignified and modest. Shiny, flashy clothing may technically meet the above requirements for exposure of the body, but it defeats the purpose of overall modesty and is therefore discouraged.
 - v. **Fifth requirement: Not imitating other faiths** Islam encourages people to be proud of who they are. Muslims should look like Muslims and not like mere imitations of people of other faiths around them. Women should be proud of their femininity and not dress like men. And men should be proud of their masculinity and not try to imitate women in their dress. For this reason, Muslim men are forbidden from wearing gold or silk, as these are considered feminine accessories.

- vi. **Sixth requirement: Decent but not flashy** Clothing worn by Muslims should be clean and decent, neither excessively fancy nor ragged. One should not dress in a manner intended to gain the admiration or sympathy of others.

Important Holidays and Heritage Days to Recognize

Throughout the year [several holidays](#) and noted heritage celebrations that companies can integrate into diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) action plans are recognized globally. These include:

- [Ramadan](#)
 - The holy month of Ramadan is a time when observant Muslims ask forgiveness for past sins, pray for guidance, and seek to purify themselves through self-restraint and good deeds.
 - Ramadan traditionally begins with the sighting of the new moon that marks the start of the ninth month in the Islamic calendar.
 - Fasting is one of the most important practices when observing Ramadan. Each day, the fast begins just before dawn and ends at sunset. During that period, neither food nor drink is consumed.
 - If a Muslim employee is observing Ramadan and scheduled to work through sunset, it is important to be aware of their need for a break to end the fast.
 - It is important to take fasting into account when scheduling business-related luncheons or office parties. Invite employees to share about how they personally observe Ramadan and what practices should be respected during the 30 days.
- [Eid-al-Fitr](#)
 - Arabic for “Festival of the Breaking of the Fast,” this marks the end of Ramadan and is traditionally celebrated after a confirmed sighting of the following new moon.
 - It is important to note that the duration of the Eid celebration can vary by location.
 - For instance, many Muslims in the US celebrate the Eid for one day. In Turkey, all government offices and schools are closed for three days in observance of the Eid.
 - Because the new moon may be sighted earlier or later in specific locations, it can be difficult to decisively pinpoint the dates of Ramadan and the Eid based on US calendars.
- [Haji](#)
 - The Hajj, or annual pilgrimage to Mecca, consists of several rituals which symbolize the essential concepts of the Islamic faith, such as devotion to God, brotherhood, and unity. The rituals of the Hajj also commemorate the trials of the Prophet Abraham and his family. Hajj is required once in a Muslim’s lifetime if one is financially and physically able. Two to three million Muslims perform the pilgrimage annually.
- [Eid-ul-Adha](#)
 - Arabic for “Festival of the Sacrifice,” this holiday takes place on the third day of Hajj and lasts for four days. The holiday commemorates Abraham’s willingness to sacrifice his son, who was miraculously replaced by a lamb. The holiday is

celebrated much like Eid ul-Fitr with the addition that Muslims sacrifice a lamb, goat, or cow, and share the meat with friends, relatives, and the needy.

- [Islamic New Year](#)
 - Islamic New Year marks the beginning of the new year on the Islamic calendar. The Islamic calendar began with the migration—or Hijra—of the Prophet Muhammad and his followers from Mecca to Medina. This event has a special significance in Islamic history as it marks the end of the period of persecution in Mecca and the transition to a recognized faith community in Medina.
- [Ashura](#)
 - Ashura falls on the 10th of Muharram, the first month of the Islamic calendar. For Sunnis, Ashura commemorates the exodus of Moses from Egypt, and is usually observed by completing an optional fast as practiced by the Prophet Muhammad. For Shi'as, it marks the anniversary of the tragic death of the Prophet's grandson, Husain, at the hands of the Umayyad ruler, Yazid. For Shi'as the day is marked with mourning and often enactments of the tragic event.
- [Eid-Milad-un-Nabi](#)
 - Muslims following the Sufi or Barelvi school of thought celebrate the birth anniversary of Prophet Muhammad as Eid Milad-un-Nabi, also known as Eid-e-Milad. This celebration occurs during the third month of the Islamic calendar, Rabi' al-awwal.

Islamic Nonprofits

[Islamic Relief Worldwide](#)

- Islamic Relief is a faith-inspired humanitarian and development agency working to save and transform the lives of some of the world's most vulnerable people. Established in 1984, they now work in over 45 countries assisting individuals, families and communities through emergency response and development projects that typically help over 10 million people each year.

[Muslim American Society](#)

- Established in 1993 as a non-profit 501(C)(3) organization, the Muslim American Society (MAS) is a dynamic charitable, religious, social, cultural, and educational organization. Over the past two decades, MAS has expanded to more than 50 chapters across the United States. MAS offers unique programs and services that seek to better the individual and in turn, the greater society by imparting Islamic knowledge, promoting community service, engaging in political activism, and much more.

[Yaqueen Institute for Islamic Research](#)

- The institute's purpose is to move people to a realization of Islam that inspires faith, grounds it with intellect, and creates a world of doers who are tranquil, confident, and purpose driven. The organization does this by dismantling doubts in an increasingly skeptical world rife with confusion and Islamophobia, nurturing conviction by instilling the truth of what Islam is, and inspiring contributions by engaging with faithful changemakers.

[Inner-City Muslim Action Network \(IMAN\)](#)

- The Inner-City Muslim Action Network (IMAN) is a community organization that fosters health, wellness, and healing in the inner city by organizing for social

change, cultivating the arts, and operating a holistic health center in Chicago and Atlanta. The organization models an integrative approach that employs holistic interventions to address a spectrum of structural and systemic injustices, incorporating primary and behavioral health; artistic expression; leadership development; organizing and advocacy; housing; and job training, in an effort to substantially increase the quality of life for people in marginalized communities.

[Islamic Services Foundation](#)

- Islamic Services Foundation (ISF) is a non-profit, tax-exempt organization established and registered in the State of Texas since 1989. Today Brighter Horizons Academy (BHA) is the first full-time accredited Islamic college preparatory academy in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex. It is also the largest in Texas and the southern United States. Since its inception, the Academy has grown from 10 students in 1989 to over 800 today, ranging from PK to 12th grade.

[International Institute of Islamic Thought \(IIIT\)](#)

- The International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT) is the premier international organization focusing on providing a platform for the unique perspective of Muslim thinkers, scholars, and practitioners in the humanities and social sciences. For 40 years, IIIT has been a voice for moderation, diversity, and modernity in Islamic thought, with an emphasis on concepts such as co-existence and building the capacity of communities to address their common global and local challenges. Today, IIIT is the voice of the Muslim intellectual tradition in the West, and a champion for scholarship, knowledge, and learning in Muslim societies across the world.

[Muslim Public Affairs Council Federation](#)

- Founded in 1988, the Muslim Public Affairs Council (MPAC) is a national public affairs nonprofit organization working to promote and strengthen American pluralism by increasing understanding and improving policies that impact American Muslims. Over the past 30+ years, MPAC has built a reputation of being a dynamic and trusted American Muslim voice for policymakers, opinion shapers, and community organizers across the country.

[International Islamic Charity Organization \(IICO\)](#)

- In 2020, the International Islamic Charity Organization (IICO) partnered with UNRWA with the aim of assisting in providing primary healthcare to Palestine refugees in Gaza. The contribution enabled the agency to purchase essential antenatal screening and laboratory equipment for all 22 UNRWA healthcare centers in the enclave.

Speakers for Muslim Heritage

The list below is not vetted or directly recommended by Seramount. Any interaction a company may initiate with the following individuals is solely the responsibility of the company. This list is not exhaustive, and companies should check to see if there are local speakers to partner with as well. Contacting local Muslim Community Centers (MCC) or mosques would be a great starting point.

- [All American Entertainment \(AAE\) Speakers](#)
 - AAE is a full-service speakers bureau and talent booking agency dedicated to meeting the needs of event professionals to book the best keynote speakers for their live and virtual events.

- Some of this organization’s Muslim Heritage speakers include:
 - [Asma Khalid](#)
 - Khalid is a White House Correspondent for NPR and the co-host of “The NPR Politics Podcast.” She has been a guest on numerous TV programs and her reporting has been recognized with the Missouri Honor Medal for Distinguished Service in Journalism as well as awards from the Society of Professional Journalists and the Gracie Award.
 - [Bushra Amiwala](#)
 - Amiwala is the youngest Muslim elected official in the US, a political and diversity activist, and has spoken at several colleges and universities, organizations, and international companies, with live audiences ranging from 25 to 15,000 people. She is the subject of an original PBS documentary called *And She Could Be Next*.
 - [Linda Sarsour](#)
 - Sarsour is an award-winning racial justice and Civil Rights activist and a community organizer. She is the co-founder of the first Muslim online organizing platform, MPower Change, and co-founder of Until Freedom. She is the author of “We Are Not Here to Be Bystanders: A Memoir of Love & Resistance.”
 - [Amal Kassir](#)
 - Kassir is a Syrian American international spoken word poet. Her work has been heavily influenced by the war in Syria, her experience as an “other” in the United States, and the plight of the oppressed all over the world. She is the founder of the Writing Hour and House of Amal, both of which stem from the isolation and need for guidance during the darkness of the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - [Blair Imani](#)
 - Imani is the executive director of “Equality for HER,” an activist, and mental health advocate. She is the creator of the viral web series “Smarter in Seconds,” co-founder and Head of Education at FEMINIST, and the author of “Read This to Get Smarter.”
 - [Alaa Murabit](#)
 - Murabit is an architect of the Sustainable Development Goals, a Nobel Peace prize nominee, Gates Foundation director, and a UN High Level Commissioner. Her achievements have earned her over 100 honors and awards, including being named a World Economic Forum Young Global Leader, CNN Leader, and *New York Times* TrustWomen Hero.
 - [Maysoon Zayid](#)
 - Zayid is a comedian, actress, writer, and disability advocate. She is the co-founder and co-executive producer of the New York Arab American Comedy Festival and The Muslim Funny Fest.
 - [Sara Minkara](#)
 - Minkara is the founder and president of Empowerment Through Integration (ETI), a nonprofit focused on the empowerment and inclusion of youth with visual impairments in the Middle East-North Africa (MENA) region. She is a blind Lebanese American and founded the organization because of her personal experience and wish for more

opportunities as a child. She is an internationally recognized advocate in the areas of disability inclusion and social entrepreneurship.

- [Suhaib Webb](#)

- Webb was named a Faith Leader to Watch by The Center for American Progress in 2016, was selected by the Muslim community as one of CNN’s 25 Most Influential Leaders, and is one of the Five Hundred Most Influential Muslims through the Royal Islamic Studies Center. His writings have appeared in the *New York Times*, and he has been on several major news stations.

- [Ibtihaj Muhammad](#)

- Muhammad is the first woman Muslim American to win a medal at the Olympics and is a member of the US Fencing Team. She is the author of “Proud: My Fight for an Unlikely American Dream” and she co-developed the first hijab Barbie as part of the “Shero” line of dolls.

Company Case Studies

Additional Resources

Seramount's "[The Aftermath of the Derek Chauvin Trial: Helping Employees Through Racial Trauma](#)" guide gives company leaders tools to prepare for crises, support healing in the workplace, and more.

Seramount's [Diversity Holiday Calendar](#) lists many of the world's religious events for companies to utilize in event planning for employees.

"[Countering Islamophobia](#)" offers lessons from Learning for Justice.

These [Easy Read Guides](#) from Muslim Friendly Employers can help employers support their Muslim employees in the workplace.

These [Workplace Resources](#) from Tanenbaum equip employers and employees alike to create workplaces that are inclusive of all faiths.

Companies that are striving to create an inclusive work culture that recognizes and values the differences of their employees should work to create more inclusive practices for Muslim employees. Below are some ways companies are creating safe workspaces where Muslim employees can feel they can bring their authentic selves—something that has been shown to improve worker efficiency, increase job satisfaction, and promote lower turnover rates.

[SAP](#)

According to Jada McFadden, a people experience manager who oversees the strategy for SAP's employee network groups (ENGs), a Muslim employee suggested that the company provide training resources so all employees could know how to support Muslim employees during Ramadan. McFadden, with the aid of a team of employees including the Muslim employee that requested the resource, wrote a "how to be an ally" guidebook for SAP employees. The guidebook highlights the unique challenges of working through Ramadan—fasting, scheduling, exhaustion, and the need to find a place to pray—and led the way for further changes across the company. From this resource, the company established prayer rooms and foot-washing stations in their Montreal, New York, and Philadelphia offices, and the company provides these spaces at their global Sapphire customer conferences as well.

[Intuit](#)

Offering space for religious rituals was a priority when Intuit recently moved from a Mississauga, Ontario office with a "makeshift" prayer room that "wasn't terribly nice" in its former office—according to David Marquis, vice president and Canada country manager. At the company's new downtown office, the 19th floor prayer spaces are a focal point. In addition to sprawling views, there are washing stations, separate areas for men and women, and a supply of prayer mats. Members of the Intuit Muslim Awareness Network were "so touched" when they first visited the space. Aside from prayer rooms,

Intuit hosts a month of Ramadan-centric activities meant to teach workers about Islamic rituals and how to be mindful of practicing colleagues.

[Tyson Foods](#)

The team of chaplains at Tyson Foods includes one Muslim but is overwhelmingly Christian. However, the team's director, Karen Diefendorf, says the chaplains are trained to provide empathetic pastoral care to employees and their families regardless of what faith—if any—the workers belong to. Often, the chaplains are sought out by employees struggling with difficulties at work or at home, but the team members sometimes act proactively—for example, finding tactful ways to signal to a supervisor that their management practices are causing problems for workers.

Google

In the days after the Trump administration enacted a "[Muslim ban](#)," the Muslim employee resource group at Google decided it was time to create more resources that could reach more people to celebrate and educate about Muslim heritage. Through a series of initiatives around Ramadan, which helped the company improve both the employee experience and its core product, a comprehensive Ramadan guide that helps non-Muslim Googlers understand how to support their colleagues was developed. Learning from small changes—like a new holiday-themed Google Meets background or advice on how to connect with Muslim consumers around the joy of the season—have been baked into a renewed Ramadan search experience that better reflects the needs of Muslims and allies around the world.

PepsiCo

As part of a diversity initiative, PepsiCo employees in the UK were invited to fast from sunrise to sunset during one day of Ramadan. Many employees stopped themselves from staying hydrated and eating, a completely voluntary choice, to show support to their Muslim colleagues during the month. An employee posted on LinkedIn her experience, and said she grew closer to a Muslim colleague as they fasted together during the day, and that fasting helped her become more attuned to her state of mind and engagement level. Employees that participated in the fast were also invited to share an iftar or breaking of the fast. They were also given the option to give to charity.