

How to create a more inclusive workplace for Muslim colleagues

If you have a Muslim colleague and want to help them, feel comfortable and included at work, here are a few small things that can make a big difference:

Handshakes

Some Muslims choose not to shake hands with members of the opposite sex as part of their faith. It's never personal, just a religious boundary. A simple hello and a warm smile can mean just as much. You might want to put your hand on your heart instead as a greeting.

Secret Santa

While Muslims don't celebrate Christmas as a religious holiday, many still enjoy the time off and family gatherings. Some may be happy to join in workplace traditions like Secret Santa, while others may prefer not to. The best approach is always to ask rather than assume. If they do choose to participate, it's best to avoid giving alcohol as a gift, as practising Muslims do not drink.

After-work socials

Some Muslims may not always be up for bars or drinks after work, so please don't take it personally if they say no. Others may be happy to come along and simply not drink. Everyone is different!

Team meals

If you're organising food, having halal, vegetarian, or pescatarian options can make people feel really considered and included. Many Muslims will only eat meat if it is halal and do not eat pork.

Don't forget sweets!

Some sweets contain gelatine or alcohol-based ingredients, so vegetarian, halal, and alcohol-free options are always appreciated.

Prayer space

It doesn't need to be anything fancy, but offering an unused room or quiet corner for prayers can mean so much.

Ramadan

Ramadan is a very special and spiritual month when Muslims fast from sunrise to sunset. And yes, before you ask, not even water.

Muslims celebrate two Eids each year.

A simple "Eid Mubarak" can mean a lot and is always appreciated. Managers and team leaders: Eid doesn't fall on a fixed date. It's based on the Islamic lunar calendar, so they often don't know the confirmed date until a day or two beforehand. If a Muslim colleague requests leave around

that time, it's not last-minute for the sake of it, it's simply the nature of how the date is determined.

♥ Ask questions. It is lovely when people are curious and respectful enough to ask. Most people would rather answer a genuine question than have others worry about getting it wrong. Most Muslims don't want special treatment, to be singled out, or to inconvenience their employers and colleagues. But these small gestures can make people feel genuinely welcomed, understood, and included.

♥ Only through understanding each other can we truly include each other.