

How Marketers Co-opted International Women's Day—And What They Should Change

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Remember the one where McDonald's flipped its golden arches from an M to a W? Then KFC replaced its Colonel Sanders mascot with an image of his wife Claudia Sanders for a day. British retailer Ann Summers temporarily rebranded as WomAnn Summers. NBCUniversal-owned TV channel E! transformed into SHE!

These and other past marketing stunts for International Women's Day (IWD) received backlash from critics who called them “tokenistic” or “hypocritical” gestures. Far from its original intent, IWD has morphed into a marketing event akin to Valentine's Day or Mother's Day, sparking a flurry of activity from brands purporting to show support for women.

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