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Avnet celebrates Black History Month

Terms:

Black History Month [1] is an annual observance to honor the many achievements made by people of African descent. While celebrated in the United States during the month of February, Black History Month is also celebrated in other countries around the world like Canada, United Kingdom, Germany and Netherlands. The origins of Black History Month date back to 1915.

Fast forward more than a century later, the observance of Black History Month is more impactful than ever. This year, the central theme of Black History Month in the U.S. is, "African Americans and the Vote," — in honor of the centennial anniversary of the sesquicentennial of the 15th Amendment [2] (1870) giving black men the right to vote and the 19th Amendment [3] (1920) granting women's suffrage.

To commemorate Black History Month at Avnet, we are spotlighting black leaders from around the world who are inspirational to our employees. While it is impossible to highlight them all, it is important for us to recognize the significant contributions by leaders who have helped shape history, society and the world around us.

Below are just a few of the responses we received from employees. In addition to serving as incredible role models for our employees, these honored leaders epitomize traits common with Avnet's core values and company culture. By taking time to celebrate and acknowledge these leaders, we strengthen our ability to embrace diversity to its fullest — reinforcing the importance of inclusion for all as Avnet continues to reach further.

Inspirational Leader: Numerous!
"In recognition of Black History Month, I'd like to take a moment to honor a few individuals who have personally inspired me to live with purpose and stand for something bigger than myself.



Few people embody true courage and grit like **Harriet Tubman**. Born into slavery, she experienced terrible conditions well into her young adulthood until she escaped to freedom. Then, she put herself in the face of danger thirteen times to rescue 70 more people from the horrors of slavery. Beyond this incredible bravery, she served as a spy for the Union Army during the Civil War and later became a notable advocate for women's suffrage. This amazing woman deserves to live on in our history forever as an example of what it truly means to fight for what's right.

I think actor **Denzel Washington** is a contemporary figure who also lives by a set of guiding principles and always strives to do what's right. He's an incredibly hard working self-starter and serves as a role model to so many others, not to mention one of our finest actors.

As we are celebrating black leaders throughout history who have impacted our lives in different ways, I think it's important to recognize current contributions of African-American leaders in business. I happen to have the honor of working closely with three amazing people on our board of directors here at Avnet: **Jo Ann Jenkins**, **Brenda Freeman** and **Rodney C. Adkins**. They bring a level of business acumen, civic duty and leadership experience—from the federal government to some of the world's largest corporations—to their work with our organization that has contributed significantly to our transformation. Diversity of thought, experience and background is extremely important to us at Avnet, and these three are helping us drive it from the very top. I consider myself fortunate for the opportunity to learn from these incredible people." — *Bill Amelio, CEO*



Inspirational Leader: Arthur Ashe
"Arthur Ashe said, 'Success is a journey, not a destination. The doing is often more important than the outcome.' An athlete, leader, activist and author, Arthur Ashe modeled this quote throughout his life. During his career as a tennis amateur and pro, he earned 800 career victories including three Grand Slam singles titles. His tennis career would drive him into being a civil rights activist for blacks in the U.S. and South Africa. As one of the early founders of the Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP), he was instrumental in helping shape the sport of tennis into what it is today. After surgeries led to Ashe contracting AIDS, he would go on to start the Arthur Ashe Foundation for the Defeat of Aids and the Arthur Ashe Institute for Urban Health. Named *Sports Illustrated Magazine's* Sportsman of the Year in 1992, his legacy continues to live on today in the world of tennis, and his name is synonymous with other athletes who exhibit courage in the face of adversity." — *Prentis Brooks, talent management professional III*

Inspirational Leader: Michelle Obama
"Michelle Obama inspires me; she is America's first African-American First Lady — an exceptionally strong woman who exudes determination, perseverance, intellect, morale and spiritual value. She is self-confident, compassionate and graceful. She leads by example, has her own identity, and is unapologetically herself. She's a Princeton and Harvard Law School graduate. She empowers young women across the world with her LetGirlsLearn [4] initiative, helping grant young women access to education. It's part of her passion and mission to make sure that every girl on the planet has the same opportunity that she had and that her daughters have. In her Democratic National Convention speech, she shocked the world saying, 'I wake up every morning in a house that was built by slaves.' It was a reminder of how far African-Americans have come. It is important to use the past to see how far we have come today and how we can continue to grow from it. She even won a Grammy award for her book *Becoming*. Michelle Obama rocks!" — *Dawn Hourston, head of HR-Sales, Marketing, Product, Newark*





Inspirational Leader: Barack Obama
"Barack Obama inspires me. With injustice still ongoing today, and as a man who grew up relatively close to me in Chicago to St. Louis, he gives hope that we can become whatever we desire to be. We are not bound by our circumstances if we possess the character and ability to achieve." — *Robert Jackson, inside sales representative*

Inspirational Leaders: Numerous!
"I can't pick just one. It is easier to remember the pioneers who have helped shape our country today like **Oprah Winfrey**, **Kobe Bryant**, **Barack Obama**, **Tyler Perry** and **Viola Davis**. Leaders from another era like, **Daniel Hale Williams**, the first black surgeon to perform successful open-heart surgery in America; **Harriett Tubman**, who liberated hundreds of slaves through the Underground Railroad; **Charles Drew**, who improved blood storage techniques and applied his expert knowledge to develop the first large-scale blood banks during World War II; **The Tuskegee Airmen**, the first black military aviators in the U.S. Army Air Corps; **Dorothy Dandridge**, the first Oscar-nominated black actress; **Thurgood Marshall**, the first African-American to be confirmed as a Supreme Court justice. And many others like **Martin Luther King Jr.**, **Collin Powell**, **Michael Jordan**, **Billie Holiday**, **Sammy Davis Jr.**, **Diana Ross**, **Michael Jackson** and **Muhamad Ali**. My parents told me since I was a child, 'Don't forget … always remember the ones who have gone before us.'" — *Linda Love, senior director, Customer Operations*





Inspirational Leader: Jackie Robinson
"As a passionate baseball and LA Dodgers fan, I think Jackie Robinson is a true hero. He possessed many qualities that continue to inspire me and so many others today. He demonstrated the utmost courage, determination and perseverance when he became the first African-American to play in Major League Baseball (MLB). No matter what obstacles or resistance he faced, he always upheld his beliefs while remaining calm, poised and gracious; ultimately inspiring generations of African-Americans to peacefully pursue civil rights. He truly lived by his own saying, 'The most luxurious possession, the richest treasure anybody has, is his personal dignity.' Jackie also exhibited a tremendous passion for excellence in all aspects of his life, from his family to the game of baseball. His strength, resolution, composure and quest for excellence are all qualities that we can apply to not only our personal lives, but as leaders and professionals." — *Scott MacDonald, president, Integrated Solutions*

Inspirational Leader: Bernard J. Tyson
"I was fortunate to attend the Women in the Workplace dinner in San Francisco, hosted by the Wall Street Journal and McKinsey. Mr. Tyson, former chairman and CEO of Kaiser Foundation and Health Plan, participated on a panel at this event, and his comments on diversity and inclusion made a huge impact on me. He explained that he didn't want his team to use the term 'diversity' anymore. Instead, he wanted to focus on 'inclusion'. Diversity implies that we need a specific type of individual, such as a woman or person of color, to make a team diverse as opposed to being inclusive to all." — *Beth McMullen, vice president, Business Operations*



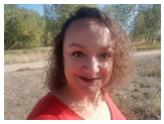


Inspirational Leader: Nelson Mandela
"Hands down, Nelson Mandela, is an iconic leader who inspires me most. Determined to stand firm for his beliefs without regard for his own self-preservation, he was able to successfully lead a nation through a significant transformation with the utmost in humility, compassion and forgiveness.

Nelson Mandela said it best, 'I have walked that long road to freedom. I have tried not to falter; I have made missteps along the way. But I have discovered the secret that after climbing a great hill, one only finds that there are many more hills to climb. I have taken a moment here to rest, to steal a view of the glorious vista that surrounds me, to look back on the distance I have come. But I can only rest for a moment, for with freedom come responsibilities, and I dare not linger, for my long walk is not ended.' These are words we can all live by."— *MaryAnn Miller, senior vice president, Chief Administrative Officer*

Inspirational Leader: Shaune Pittman
"I first met Shaune, Avnet Americas' vice president, Logistics, Warehousing and Distribution, while working as a picking manager 12 years ago. Shaune is results driven and is constantly looking at change within current processes to reduce cost through increased productivity. These driving factors have helped our team become strategic when it comes to making changes within our business. He is an incredible coach, and I personally consider Shaune to be a true mentor when it comes to my personal development. He is someone who I look forward to coming to work for every day. Our team couldn't be more thankful to have Shaune Pittman as our leader!" — *Ron Osmundson, senior operations manager, Logistics*





Inspirational Leader: Queen Latifah
"Not just a rapper or idol from my childhood, Queen Latifah is a strong black business woman who exudes self-pride. She supports and encourages other women of all backgrounds to do their best in everything they do. She is a philanthropist and humanitarian, an artist and activist, a mentor to younger women, and a motivational and inspirational role model. She exemplifies what it takes to be a woman who is true to herself and shows how women around the world can prosper in a 'man's world." — *Jeannette Sanchez, specialist II, Diversity and Inclusion*

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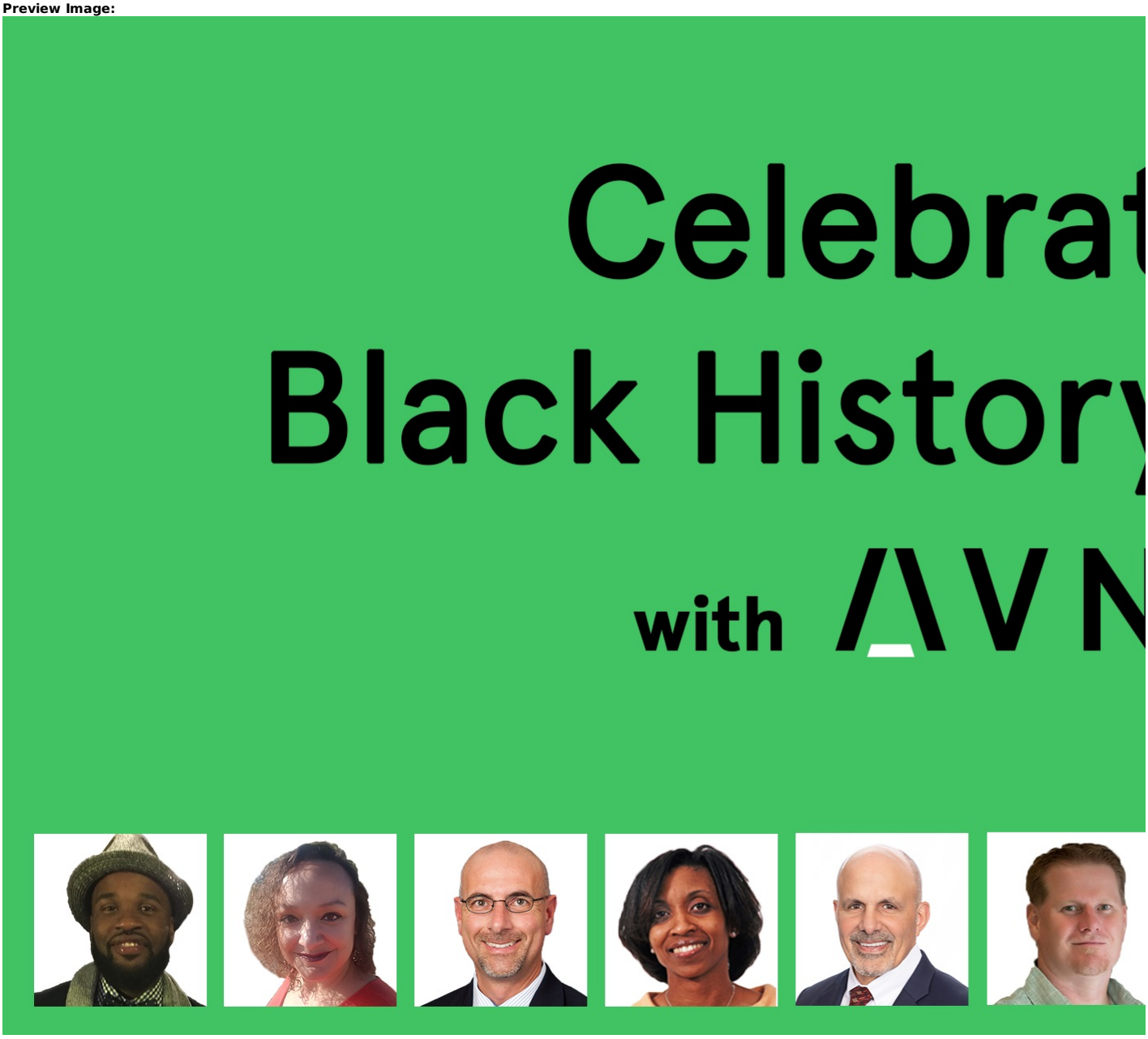

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