



IDEAS | PEOPLE | TRUST

A YEAR WITH PURPOSE OUR CULTURE REPORT 2020

Autumn 2020



CHAPTER ONE

WHY SHOULD YOU READ OUR CULTURE STORY?



CHAPTERS

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You're likely to have seen this social media meme: "Can we all agree that, in 2015, not a single person got the answer correct to 'Where do you see yourself five years from now'?"

2020 has been a year like no other.

In March 2020, the Prime Minister announced that people across the UK should work from home if they could, as our Government tackled the spread of COVID-19; a terrible virus that has claimed many lives and affected millions around the globe.

Overnight, we asked everyone at BDO to scoop up our business and run it from their homes.

Of course there were some practical steps we needed to take to get us there. Our IT team prepared for what would be billed 'the largest ever working-from-home experiment' to ensure we had the bandwidth and technological skills to adapt. We each needed the right equipment and to find a place in our homes from where we could work. Teams needed to consider how they could deliver work of the utmost quality by working closely together without, well, being close together. Did we have enough hand sanitiser? How many virtual meetings, coffee catch-ups or team quizzes in one week is too many?

But our ability to run a £600m, nationwide, complex accountancy and business advisory firm – committed to

Quality, Independence and Ethics – from our kitchen tables was ultimately not about practicalities; it was about our people. Every single one of our 5,500 individuals – who were personally dealing with 5,500 different lifestyles, home set-ups, physical or mental health challenges, concerns for family or friends, caring or childcare responsibilities and widespread disruption – helped BDO, and thousands of clients, adapt.

Overnight, every single one of us had the same priority: to stay safe.

We were unified in the pandemic, unified by our priority, and unified in our aim: to ensure we could all get through it. Or, in the language of BDO's Core Purpose, to help each other succeed. Perhaps there can be no greater representation of the term 'Unifying Culture' than that.

Which is why – this year – we've used our Core Purpose – helping you succeed – as the thread for this Culture Story.

We'd love to introduce you to the many, many stories of how our BDO people, programmes and priorities come together to create BDO's unique culture. This report will give you a sense of what it's like to work with us or alongside us.

It tells of how our people have helped business, each other and local communities succeed before and during the global pandemic and subsequent recession. It covers the priority cultural agendas, which we have baked into our firm in recent years: how we look after our people's wellbeing, how we challenge ourselves to become a better corporate

Citizen, and how we actively address diversity and inclusion issues as we encourage people to Be Yourself.

We have shared reflections and progress on our work on updating BDO's Values, addressing gender balance and race in the workplace – including Black Lives Matter – and improving our Environment, Social & Governance (ESG) work while progressing to become carbon-neutral. It covers why we think it's critical that an accountancy firm, and all those who work for and with it, are pointed towards Quality, Independence and Ethics. And it looks at how a Unifying Culture can help our colleagues of today, and of tomorrow, succeed.

There was a world before coronavirus and, at some point, there will be a world after the pandemic. But our BDO culture is here to stay. It's a culture that helped us navigate a huge growth spurt in 2019, following our merger with Moore Stephens, increased awareness of our firm in the marketplace and the start of an opening-up of the audit market. And it's a culture that helped us navigate the very real and immediate business and personal impacts of COVID-19 in 2020. It's a culture that will continue to evolve as our workforce, society and individuals evolve. It's a cultural story that never reaches its ending. We hope you enjoy this year's chapters.

The stories and the content are for our financial year ending 3 July 2020.

<p>+8000</p> <p>BDO's global population has increased to 88,120.</p>	<p>91%</p> <p>of BDO people feel able to be themselves at work. See page 36 for more.</p>	<p>1,500</p> <p>people promoted at BDO pre-COVID-19. See page 14 for more.</p>
<p>£7.3M</p> <p>invested in training and people development (including professional qualifications). See page 14 for more.</p>	<p>23,600 personal development objectives created to progress BDO careers. See page 14 for more.</p>	<p>93,600</p> <p>training courses completed on our e-learning system. See page 14 for more.</p>
<p>100%</p> <p>of our training courses became virtual during lockdown. See page 14 for more.</p>		<p>2,200 auditors working to ensure shareholders and businesses have access to trustworthy financial information. See page 54 for more.</p>
<p>13,000</p> <p>audit reports signed off in our last financial year. See page 54 for more.</p>	<p>59 our position in Rate my Apprenticeship Top 100 Employers; up 26 places from last year. See page 66 for more.</p>	<p>20,000</p> <p>applicants to our school leaver and graduate programme. See page 66 for more.</p>
<p>+400</p> <p>new trainees (school leavers and graduates) joined us. See page 14 for more.</p>	<p>EVERYTHING CHANGES BUT</p> <p>U</p> <p>– THE STATS</p>	<p>=17% of our partners are female; this is the same as last year, as we paused promotions and recruitment to help us tackle COVID-19 business impacts. See page 42 for more.</p>
<p>30</p> <p>BDO individuals taking part in 30% Club's mentoring scheme. See page 42 for more.</p>		<p>16.05% our gender pay gap mean, decreased for the third year running. See page 42 for more.</p>
<p>10.74% our ethnicity pay gap mean; our first year of reporting on this. See page 44 for more.</p>	<p>20 Listening Events held to understand more about Black Lives Matter. See page 44 for more.</p>	<p>22 people we've helped through their experience of Shared Parental Leave.</p>
<p>-5%</p> <p>reduction in our total carbon emissions compared to last year. See page 68 for more.</p>	<p>4% of our environmental impact comes from waste, water and paper usage. See page 68 for more.</p>	<p>-28%</p> <p>decrease in our emissions intensity per employee. See page 68 for more.</p>
<p>100%</p> <p>BDO aims for carbon neutral offices in all 17 locations by end 2020. See page 68 for more.</p>	<p>9,500</p> <p>hours we spent volunteering in our local communities. See page 62 for more.</p>	<p>+100</p> <p>people raised money for the 2.6 Challenge. See page 32 for more.</p>
<p>16.8% of people choosing to leave BDO ('standard voluntary attrition').</p>	<p>5,500 people working from home during lockdown as a fully-remote, fully-connected workforce. See page 70 for more.</p>	<p>IDEAS PEOPLE TRUST</p> 

<p>TAX ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, FRANCES EDWARDS, WORKED WITH OUR IT TEAM TO USE ROBOTIC PROCESS AUTOMATION TO AUTOMATE HMRC PAYMENT REMINDERS TO OUR PRIVATE CLIENTS.</p>	<p>TWO TAX COLLEAGUES CREATED AN EVENT CALLED "WHAT WOULD MICHELLE OBAMA DO?" TO BRING TOGETHER FEMALES IN OUR BAKER STREET OFFICE TO NETWORK AND SHARE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT STORIES.</p>	<p>GREG SHEARD, AN ASSISTANT IN OUR SHARED SERVICE CENTRE WHO IS A PHOTOGRAPHER IN HIS SPARE TIME, HAD ONE OF HIS PHOTOGRAPHS FEATURED IN THE DAILY TELEGRAPH.</p>
<p>DARREN ONYEJIKWE, A TAX ADVISER IN OUR LONDON TAX GROUP, IS ALSO A PERSONAL TRAINER AND SHARED HIS TOP WELLBEING TIPS FOR US ALL DURING LOCKDOWN.</p>	<p>LORRAINE MCFAYDEN FROM OUR BUSINESS RESTRUCTURING TEAM IS A WELLBEING CHAMPION AND MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AIDER, SUPPORTING HER TEAM WITH WELLBEING TIPS AND RESOURCES DURING COVID-19.</p>	
<p>KALEY CROSSTHWAITE, KUDZANAI MUMBURE, STUART DEACON, NICOLA LALLY, SARAH HILLARY AND LENG MONTGOMERY SHARED THEIR PERSONAL STORIES OF BEING OR SUPPORTING WORKING PARENTS DURING LOCKDOWN DURING A LIVE VIRTUAL EVENT FOR 75 COLLEAGUES.</p>	<p>OUR TECHNICAL STANDARDS GROUP FORMED A VIRTUAL CHOIR DURING LOCKDOWN, FEATURING CHOREOGRAPHY, FRIENDS, FAMILIES AND NHS HEROES.</p>	
<p>OUR MIDLANDS TRANSACTION SERVICES TEAM CLIMBED THE VIRTUAL 29,030 FEET CLIMB OF MOUNT EVEREST, RAISING FUNDS FOR NHS CHARITIES TOGETHER.</p>	<p>MARIE CLAIRE LEVARTY WAS NOMINATED AS A FINALIST IN THE SCOTTISH FIRST AID AWARDS.</p>	<p>WENDY WALTON WAS RECOGNISED AS MANAGEMENT TODAY'S MENTOR OF THE YEAR.</p>
<p>100+ BDO COLLEAGUES RAISED MONEY FOR THE 2.6 CHALLENGE VIA VIRTUAL PERSONAL CHALLENGES, HELPING THOSE CHARITIES MISSING OUT ON FUNDS FROM THE LONDON MARATHON.</p>	<p>EVERYTHING CHANGES BUT</p> <p>U</p> <p>– THE STORIES</p>	
<p>SATVIR BUNGAR, MANAGING DIRECTOR & HEAD OF FACILITIES SECTOR M&A, WAS RECOGNISED IN THIS YEAR'S EMPOWER ETHNIC MINORITY ROLE MODEL LIST.</p>	<p>PROJECT MANAGER, SANDEEP BERMI, FILMED HOME-SCHOOLING CLASSES OF BRAZILIAN JIU-JITSU TO HELP COLLEAGUES KEEP THEIR CHILDREN BUSY AND ACTIVE DURING LOCKDOWN.</p>	
<p>VANESSA LEE SHARED HER ACCOUNTANCY AND BUSINESS EXPERIENCE IN THE COMMUNITY THROUGH POSITIONS ON A NUMBER OF BOARDS, INCLUDING THE REGIONAL BOARD FOR THE PRINCE'S TRUST AND ADVISORY BOARD FOR TAX AID.</p>	<p>BRONWYN PRIOR, ASSISTANT MANAGER IN LONDON TAX GROUP, WAS AWARDED AS THE HIGHEST-SCORING GRADUATE IN ENGLAND AND WALES FOR THE STEP DIPLOMA IN TRUSTS AND ESTATES.</p>	
<p>SHARON TAYFIELD WAS RECOGNISED AS 2020 GLOBAL PAYROLL TITAN BY THE GLOBAL PAYROLL MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE.</p>	<p>ONE OF OUR OPERATIONS MANAGERS, KATERINA DAYANTIS, ACHIEVED A HIGHLY COMMENDED NOMINATION IN THE RISING STAR CATEGORY IN THE INSPIRING WOMEN IN BUSINESS AWARDS.</p>	<p>ANDY HALL HAD THE HIGHEST SCORES IN THE WORLD FOR THE ACCA STRATEGIC BUSINESS LEADERS EXAM.</p>
<p>KATE DAVIS FROM OUR INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS & DONOR ASSURANCE TEAM VOLUNTEERED AS A SPECIAL CONSTABLE, WORKING TO HELP MAKE HER LOCAL COMMUNITY IN LONDON SAFER.</p>	<p>JILL HALFORD VOLUNTEERED HER TIME AND EXPERTISE BY SITTING ON THE BOARDS FOR THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS AND THE ASSOCIATION OF CHIEF EXECUTIVES OF VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS.</p>	
<p>ASSISTANT MANAGER, PAUL EKWERE, SHARED SOME OF HIS PERSONAL ARTWORK ON OUR INTERNAL SOCIAL MEDIA TO RAISE AWARENESS OF THE BLACK LIVES MATTER MOVEMENT.</p>	<p>JANIE REID WAS NAMED IN THE 2020 TIMEWISE POWER 50 AWARDS, A ROLL CALL OF 50 SENIOR LEADERS IN THE UK WHO WORK PART-TIME OR FLEXIBLY.</p>	<p>IDEAS PEOPLE TRUST</p> 

2019

JULY

- ▶ Invest in internal Wellbeing and CSR expertise
- ▶ BDO's annual football tournament.

AUGUST

- ▶ Launch our new 5+5 Citizenship strategy
- ▶ BDO Inspire event: 'Done is better than perfect'.

SEPTEMBER

- ▶ BDO's Chain Challenge: a series of outdoor cycling events + each office hosted a series of physical, mental and financial wellbeing activities
- ▶ National Inclusion Week: our people share their diversity characteristics as part of our BDO DNA Survey, in which we could learn more about how our BDO population is made up
- ▶ 'Our Culture Story': live discussion of BDO's culture at a conference for 700 of our partners, directors and principals
- ▶ Gender Pay Gap report published to Government
- ▶ Women In Finance Charter report published to HMT
- ▶ Bantz with BAME networking event.

OCTOBER

- ▶ World Mental Health Day: employee survey with MIND to see how our people think we're doing on the Wellbeing Index
- ▶ Black History Month: personal stories shared from our BAME Network
- ▶ BDO Inspire event: Female role models – a Q&A with partner Dawn Register.

EVERYTHING
CHANGES BUT

U

– THE YEARBOOK

NOVEMBER

- ▶ Launch of our new Values Project, to refresh our Values which are now 18 years old
- ▶ BDO Inspire event: Positive Role Models, to mark International Men's Day
- ▶ Our annual Listening Programme goes live.

DECEMBER

- ▶ A Year of Giving: share Citizenship stories from around the business to mark International Volunteers Day
- ▶ Invest in internal Diversity & Inclusion expertise
- ▶ We run a pilot of new Inclusive Leadership training for our Transaction Services partners.

2020

JANUARY

- ▶ Greeting the New Year with a focus on MIND's 5 Ways of Wellbeing
- ▶ BDO announces its commitment to going carbon neutral
- ▶ Our Gender Balance Programme – called BE INSPIRED – is updated with new actions for 2020
- ▶ Our U Board Chair, Chris Grove, is shortlisted for 'Best Exec Sponsor for Wellbeing' in the Inside Out Awards
- ▶ Our Islamic Network holds dedicated mindfulness sessions to aid wellbeing
- ▶ BDO Inspire event: 'Visibility in the Workplace'
- ▶ Bantz with BAME networking event.

FEBRUARY

- ▶ Celebration of one year since BDO's merger with Moore Stephens
- ▶ National Apprenticeship Week: our apprentices take over BDO's social media
- ▶ BAME event: our Managing Partner meets former London gang leader, Karl Lokko, to discuss how to spot hidden talent

- ▶ Members of our BLEND Network attend the InterTech LGBT+ Diversity Forum
- ▶ Director Janie Reid named in the TimeWise Power 50 list
- ▶ Six BDO partners and directors shortlisted for various categories for the inaugural Women In Accountancy and Finance Awards.

MARCH

- ▶ International Women's Day: Personal Charisma and Pitching event led by psychologist, Judi James
- ▶ International Women's Day: a series of events including stories, videos and thought leadership shared around the firm to mark #eachforequal, promoted by BDO Inspire and external partner, One Loud Voice
- ▶ BDO named 'Company of the Year: Creating Change for Women' at the PowerWomen Awards 2020
- ▶ World Book Day: our Managing Partner launches a virtual business book club for employees

- ▶ #StayConnected: a COVID-19 internal campaign launches to help our people stay connected through lockdown with hints and tips on Wellbeing, Technology and Working Together. This campaign lasts throughout lockdown, and beyond
- ▶ We share an employee's story on Trans Visibility Day to explain why staying in during lockdown didn't need to stop people being visible.

APRIL

- ▶ We activate COVID-19 Taskforce to pull together the full power of the firm to support our 40,000 clients to tackle their COVID-19 impacts and to help them react to immediate business challenges
- ▶ To preserve people's pay packets and protect their jobs, we introduce a COVID-19 package of measures, including:
 - BDO's Flexi Force tool: we launch a digital tool to help us redeploy and retrain people to support our busiest areas of the business
 - Our partners agree to reduce their monthly earnings by up to 25% and forego their quarterly dividends, likely until 2021
 - As we don't foresee 'normal' trading conditions resuming until 2021, we inform our people that we are pausing 2020 promotions and pay reviews
 - To protect people, preserve jobs and support UK employment, we ask our first-year trainees and some of our support staff – whose jobs were quieter due to COVID-19 – to use the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme
 - Flex Hours: we create a simple process to support any partner or employee who wants to reduce their hours to help them cope with living through the COVID-19 crisis
- ▶ We launch a newsletter to our furloughed employees called Keeping U Connected; this carries on throughout their furlough period, sharing tips on how to keep motivated from others on furlough and what training they are able to do
- ▶ We are awarded 'Silver' in MIND's Wellbeing Index
- ▶ Our Jewish Network celebrates Passover in lockdown
- ▶ Our Islamic Network shares daily blogs on what it's like marking Ramadan during lockdown.

MAY

- ▶ To mark Mental Health Awareness Week, people take on personal and local Wellbeing challenges
- ▶ More than 100 people – including each member of our Leadership Team – take on the 2.6 Challenge to raise money for those charities usually supported by London Marathon fundraising
- ▶ Our Shadow U Board have their first meeting
- ▶ Our Islamic Network share positive messages to celebrate Eid ul-Fitr
- ▶ Hamid Ghafoor, our BAME Network partner sponsor, joins in a podcast to share race challenges he has faced in his personal and professional career.

JUNE

- ▶ Wendy Walton is named Management Today's "Mentor of the Year"
- ▶ We re-promote BDO's mentoring schemes
- ▶ We respond to Black Lives Matters. We sign up to the Race At Work Charter, hold a series of Listening events, share educational resources for colleagues,

- expand our BAME Network out of our London offices to cover all BDO regions, and create two new groups – including a consulting group of black employees – to define our Race Action Plan
- ▶ We interview carers among BDO's community to share what it's been like to be a carer during lockdown to mark Carers' Week
- ▶ As our BDO logos turn rainbow, we ask our colleagues to share how they are celebrating virtual PRIDE this year and what it means to be an active ally
- ▶ To make World Environment Day, we create a dedicated section of our intranet to capturing BDO's ESG actions and stories
- ▶ Two of our male colleagues share their experiences of lockdown to mark Men's Health Week
- ▶ We conduct local surveys to see how people are feeling and what they are thinking about returning to the offices. We set a plan to open some of our office space from 3 August to support those who would really benefit from working from the office.



CHAPTER THREE

HELPING 'U' SUCCEED

A YEAR LIKE NO OTHER



The week before UK schools closed in Spring, I was asked: “how flexible can we be?” For me the right answer had to be: as flexible as we need to be.

PAUL ENGLAND

Managing Partner, father, husband, son, brother, swimmer, mountain biker, passionate about walking everywhere and avid reader of business philosophy and psychology.

CAN YOU RECALL A WORLD BEFORE COVID-19?

I can. BDO was advising 40,000 entrepreneurially-spirited businesses and individuals, helping them achieve their ambitions and successes by delivering high-quality work.

Our 2019 merger had created an incredibly successful business, cementing our position as number one auditor for AIM companies and the second biggest auditor for listed entities. Our brand strapline of IDEAS | PEOPLE | TRUST resonated in the market, attracting 1000s of new enquiries from some of the country's most ambitious businesses.

Over 20,000 apprentices and graduates (the UK's future talent) had applied for our Autumn 2020 intake of trainees. Our team of 5,500 people were working incredibly hard advising businesses and auditing companies and, of course, collaborating and developing their own skills.

We had just committed to going carbon-neutral, heavily engaged in the Audit Reform debate and fully braced for Brexit. Innovation was running at an all-time high. We were running Wellbeing challenges to help smash the stigma of talking about mental health. Little did we know that our biggest firm-wide Wellbeing – and business – challenge was about to hit us, and the rest of the world.

Once COVID-19 hit and the UK went into lockdown, our business – like most – saw immediate and very real impacts. Our purpose, values and culture were about to be put to the test. Whilst, in the past, I have publicly stated that I subscribe to the philosophy that “culture eats strategy for breakfast”, the first thing I learned during the pandemic was that only businesses

with a strong culture even get a seat at the table during a global crisis. I'm proud to say BDO is one of those businesses.

"TAKE THE FIRST STEP IN GOOD FAITH"

By pure chance, lockdown coincided with my fellow partners re-appointing me to the position of Managing Partner for my second and final term. I remember thanking them for showing confidence in me, recognising that I was going into my next term facing the biggest challenge of our careers: to steer both our people and our business through the uncharted waters of COVID-19.

History shows that humans have an amazing ability to adapt and survive the most horrendous and unexpected events. Indeed, BDO has successfully navigated many periods of change in our 80-year history. As I composed myself after my immediate lockdown sleepless nights, I carefully reflected on the situation. I moved my frame of mind from one of simply thinking that 'spreadsheets, together with working day and night' would get us through this crisis to a mindset of 'confidence and trust'. Confidence and trust in our Core Purpose, our values, our culture, our people and our clients.

When we first introduced our Core Purpose – helping you succeed – it unlocked something very powerful for our culture. As we prepared for COVID-19, it was clear to me that we would benefit by drawing on our experience of the last three years by ensuring that every decision we make, to keep BDO steady during COVID-19, is based on our Core Purpose: what will help our people, business, wider stakeholders and local communities successfully navigate this crisis?



Our strategy specifically includes fostering a **Unifying Culture**, where you are:

- ▶ **Encouraged to be yourself:** we value you as an individual and want you to realise your aspirations. We know that if you bring your 'real' self to work you are far more likely to be successful. You have a voice and your opinion counts
- ▶ **Inspired and challenged:** few firms offer the same breadth and quality of work at all stages of your career. Your personal career plans are designed to inspire and challenge; we enable you to shape your career according to your strengths, skills and personality
- ▶ **Collaborative:** sharing and applying knowledge and ideas remains one of the most powerful things an organisation can do, it provides a competitive advantage. We are moving towards a culture of innovation to ensure that everyone has a chance to contribute their ideas and share knowledge with colleagues
- ▶ **Successful:** each of us has our own definition of success, we want to help you define, achieve and celebrate yours. In doing so, we will ultimately contribute to the overall success of the firm.

My faith was boosted as I engaged with the entrepreneurially-spirited businesses we advise, whom invariably confirmed that they were absolutely determined to deal with the situation we all found ourselves in. I took faith from the Government's macro-economic objective to keep UK employment as high as possible, for as long as possible, for example through the introduction of furlough and emergency finance. I also drew confidence from the fact UK regulators opened communication channels to ensure audit quality could be maintained during such unprecedented times.

I had faith that we'd built a solid Wellbeing programme over the previous three years that would provide critical support for our people during COVID-19. Faith that our historical investments would mean our people had the training and commitment to quality, independence and ethics that would keep many of us able to win and deliver work from our homes.

This faith was to be rewarded. As the weeks and months ticked by, I was nothing other than impressed by the reaction and commitment of our people. Their thirst for innovation saw us launch our first BDO e-Store and a new online tax checker app (all during lockdown) and 5,500 people became experts on holding team and client conversations virtually; continually volunteering to help one another.

Our Unifying Culture demonstrates that, even during a global crisis, we remain a people-powered business. Which brings us back to our Core Purpose and culture; both of which need to be nurtured as we lean into the future chapters of BDO.



Take the first step in good faith.

PAUL ENGLAND

A PEOPLE-POWERED BUSINESS

BDO is made up of 5,500 individuals – 10% more than this time last year – who each bring something special and unique. Our employees each deserved to have their jobs and pay packets protected through lockdown, by using all the resources available to us; and they each deserve to be celebrated in this Culture Story.

And our people certainly rose to the occasion. Our Head of People personally dealt with every single suspected or confirmed COVID-19 case of BDO individuals. Our Facilities team located hand sanitisers, desk wipes and tissues seemingly from nowhere. One of our local operations managers personally drove to deliver a desk and chair to a disabled member of the team who needed to shield overnight. One team fundraised to help a former colleague who was stuck overseas. One of our Lead Partners was handed a High Sheriff award for her contribution to her local community during COVID-19. One colleague helped her neighbour set-up 3D printing of Personal Protection Equipment for frontline workers. Many colleagues signed up for the NHS Volunteer Scheme. Our furloughed colleagues were running local community volunteer programmes and completing life-changing online courses. And so many working parents and carers took on their daily 'juggle struggle' with professionalism, honesty and aplomb.

And another phase of adaptation soon followed, as offices opened in line with Government guidelines and BDO became a hybrid workforce, in which some people chose to work in the office and some chose to work remotely. COVID-19 has shown the importance of both 'trust' and 'choice'. Some people really needed office spaces to open again for either their own personal or business reasons; others may rarely need to visit a traditional office space again. Both deserve to be trusted and, I'm sure, will continue to earn our trust through their high-quality work and personal contributions to BDO's culture.

COVID-19 ISN'T THE ONLY GLOBAL AGENDA

While COVID-19 may have felt all-consuming in 2020, it isn't the only global watershed we are all facing.

Although research is suggesting there has been a very temporary positive impact on carbon footprints in 2020, we still face a climate change emergency. In January, BDO committed to going carbon neutral. Working with independent sustainability consultants, we immediately offset our 2018 and 2019 carbon impacts and thus funded an African climate project, which provides efficient and safe Gyapa cookstoves to families across Ghana. We are also working to create carbon-neutral BDO offices across the UK. See our chapter on Environment, Social and Governance on page 68 in this report for further details.

Reignited by the senseless death of George Floyd in the United States in May 2020, the Black Lives Matter movement gained further widespread awareness and activated a new wave of global protests, including here in the UK. BDO stands in solidarity with both the Black Lives Matter movement and our black colleagues. There are many complex political, historical and cultural aspects to racism but the simple point is this: it is unacceptable and we need to talk about it, even if – or indeed especially if – it feels uncomfortable. See our chapter on Race in the Workplace on page 44 in this report for further details.

Only global solutions will tackle these global agendas. It may feel slower than everyone would like and it will require a mix of bravery and patience. But, COVID-19 has proved to us that – once we are all unified by both the need and the action plan – we have the people, skills and energy to steer us on the best and right course.

I have the utmost pride in, and gratitude for, my BDO colleagues this year. I hope you also enjoy reading more about them in this Culture Story.

ONE YEAR ON MERGER – 5,500 PEOPLE, 500+ WINNING STORIES

#WINNING STORIES



CHAPTER THREE A CULTURE THAT UNIFIES



Our internal strategy is 'BUILD', and the U in BUILD stands for 'Unifying Culture'. That means a culture where we are encouraged to be ourselves, inspired and challenged, collaborative and successful.

CHRIS GROVE

Chair of BDO's U Board, Leadership Team member, very, very keen cyclist and sometime surfer and skier.

Our culture isn't something we 'create' from the top; it evolves and develops on the back of daily interactions between 5,500 people – even in these surreal times when interactions are more often through a laptop camera rather than in person. Which means we certainly don't seek to 'establish' our BDO culture by sitting in U Board meetings. Instead, our U Board uses our Core Purpose – helping you succeed – as a starting point to then:

1 UNDERSTAND

The U Board hosts long-term strategic discussions about how we protect and celebrate what makes our culture special. Importantly, we have a community of 45 people, whom we call U Leaders, across the UK who act as a 'link' between central and local initiatives, so we can make things relevant locally and celebrate them more broadly across the firm. This helps to set the tone at a senior level and highlights to our people the importance we place in developing their talents and in helping them to succeed. This is proving a vital link during COVID-19, as we can better understand what our people are going through and what support they may need.

2 UNCOVER

We're overseeing some important debates. For example: how is our culture going to evolve and adapt to the 'new way to work' in a post-COVID-19 world? What are the long-term cultural impacts of important topics such as ESG and Black Lives Matter? How can we protect the parts of our culture that people love, as we move to more agile and flexible working styles? We'll continue to explore these long-term topics with our people.

3 UNIFY

We've been making connections between existing and new communities across BDO, encouraging people to share their stories. We meet regularly with our various network groups – individually and collectively – such as BLEND (our LGBTQ+ group), BDO Inspire (our women's network), Islamic Network, Jewish Network, BAME Network and newly-formed Christian Network, to help us better understand the barriers and opportunities that those groups are seeing.

As a U Board, we have three initial priorities – which will naturally evolve as we develop as a business and respond to the changing world and our evolving workforce:

1. Wellbeing
2. Be Yourself
3. Citizenship

As a result of the U Board's focus on these priorities, we now offer an impressive suite of Wellbeing support tools; these formed a major component of our coronavirus support for our people. We have a clear 'Be Yourself' strategy and actively support our local community networks. And within our Citizenship programme, our 5+5 CSR days encourage people to help their local community in a really meaningful way, and we are developing our BDO ESG strategy. That's progress to be proud of – and you can read more detail in this report.

We believe that by articulating, future-proofing, connecting and celebrating our Unifying Culture, we will achieve our vision to be an independent, sustainably profitable and globally focused firm, known for helping businesses and people succeed.



A purpose is for life, not just for a crisis.

ZOE BAILEY

U Board member, Chief Strategy Officer, published academic, art lover.

At BDO, our Core Purpose has never been a PR exercise. It's never been a brand strapline. It's never been a phrase on a piece of paper that was put away in a drawer shortly after launch.

Our Core Purpose – helping you succeed – has been a guiding force for our business decisions and how we have operated every day for the last four years. It helps us start conversations with: what is success and how can I make that happen? That success is not limited to the individual, the team, the shareholder, the audit committee or the client. It also means success across

BDO – which helps us to connect with, and learn from, our colleagues in other business areas. As a large business we have a responsibility to society; success at its broadest sense is helping people, each other, business and society succeed.

We have 64 passionate people leading this across BDO and – four years later – they are still ensuring we hold true to our Core Purpose. We asked some of our 64 Core Purpose Champions how 'helping you succeed' made a difference in the last 12 months; their stories are peppered throughout this report.



CHAPTER FOUR

HELPING YOU SUCCEED

YOU AND YOUR CAREER



ROB WORRALL

U Board member, Head of People and HR Director, father to teenagers and very grateful for his garden office.

Whether you work for audit, tax, advisory or our support teams – and wherever you work in the UK – we have one clear framework to guide our personal career development. Called 'Achieving My Potential' (AMP), it gives us a set of helpful and clear criteria that underpin our journey through our lifetime at BDO.

In the last year – and COVID-19 notwithstanding – we have:

- ▶ listened to our people – through formal channels. For example, our annual Listening Programme – which gave us a wealth of data from what nearly 4,300 people were thinking; our Values survey and workshops; our Speak Up! campaign (see page 65 for more information); our Black Lives Matter Listening Events; our Shadow U Board; local Staff Engagement Groups; and a number of local surveys through lockdown
- ▶ listened to our people – through informal channels. For example, the trends and insights our local U Leaders,

OUR UNIFYING CULTURE WILL ONLY SUCCEED IF WE CAN HELP OUR EMPLOYEES OF TODAY, AND OF TOMORROW, TO SUCCEED. EACH OF US HAS OUR OWN DEFINITION OF SUCCESS. WE WANT TO HELP OUR PEOPLE DEFINE AND ACHIEVE THEIRS. IN DOING SO, WE WILL ULTIMATELY CONTRIBUTE TO THE OVERALL SUCCESS OF BOTH OUR CLIENTS, OUR TEAMS AND THE FIRM.

- ▶ HR Managers, Wellbeing Champions, Diversity & Inclusion Manager and Mental Health First Aiders are seeing as they talk to their teams and on Yammer
- ▶ worked with our people to agree more than 23,600 personal objectives in total to help develop themselves, their careers and deliver quality work
- ▶ promoted 1,500 people in November 2019; promotions in 2020 were deferred due to coronavirus
- ▶ welcomed our biggest cohort of trainees yet, as both apprentices and graduates;
- ▶ delivered a virtual summer internship programme during lockdown
- ▶ introduced a pilot 'learning morning' in our Midlands offices called Learn First, where everyone puts their pens down for half a day once a month and takes time to collectively improve their technical, business or knowledge skills
- ▶ consistently achieved above the ICAEW's average pass rate (our pass rate is 82%; average ICAEW is 71%)
- ▶ been named as a finalist in both the 'Best Employer of the Year' category for the Tolley's Tax awards and 'Best Company' in the London Evening Standard awards

- ▶ and of course, once coronavirus struck – focused on protecting our people and the firm; this will continue as we work through COVID-19 and beyond.



ALISON EAGLE

Head of People Development, keen gardener and cake baker.

We have revamped our trainee recruitment and Early in Careers programme, as well as how we support people through exams. This work continues, with a dedicated team working to identify the best talent from schools and universities across the UK, support them through the application process, welcome them into BDO and help them succeed in their professional qualifications.

This year, we have launched new modules of our popular programme called the Career Development Programme. Our Pathways are there to support an organised and structured approach to career planning. For colleagues looking for the next challenge, role, promotion or development, a place

on the Career Development Pathway Programme activates dedicated activities, guidance and support to stretch their thinking and help them prepare for the next step, as well as identify and support high-potential performers within the business.

And, of course, we've reflected on the impact of coronavirus, lockdown, people's wellbeing and the global recession on career development. We successfully switched 100% of our training courses to become virtual during lockdown. Our online Learning Catalogue boasts a wide range of online training modules, TED Talks and Virtual Classroom events that help people succeed in a way that matches their personal ambitions.

NEW IN TOWN?

Each year, we welcome many people from BDO offices around the world to work in the UK with us – and we arrange international secondments for many of our people from the UK.

In the last five years (up to March 2020), we ran 373 secondments – from Australia to South Africa. This was paused during COVID-19 to protect everyone's health and safety; and it also meant we needed to help people get to where they needed to be during lockdown.



CHAPTER FOUR THE VALUE OF VALUES



KAREN DUFFIN

Director of Transformation, interior design fan and weightlifting enthusiast.

BDO has had a set of Values in place for more than 18 years. Since then, we've experienced change in the external market, growth in our firm and new generations of people working with BDO. As a £600m business with 5,500 people across the UK, we recognised that it was the right time to rearticulate our Values and ensure they are fit for the firm we are today, and for the future.



For me, our Values authentically describe what's important to BDO; the great thing is that they describe what's important to me at BDO too.

EMMA OAKES

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY VALUES?

Our Values are the cultural glue of our firm. They are a core element of our strategic framework. Our Core Purpose - 'helping you succeed' - defines 'why' we do what we do, and our Values define 'how' we behave.

WHY ARE VALUES IMPORTANT?

Our Values are more than just a component of our Strategic Framework. They set out what is important to us and define the behaviours that we all commit to live by with each other, our clients and society as a whole. Our Values are not just the cultural glue or our firm; they also represent what we all have in common that binds us together as a community. Now redefined, our Values are being rebuilt into everything we do, for example how we recruit, how we promote and how we measure performance.

HOW DID WE DISCOVER OUR NEW VALUES?

We wanted everyone across the firm to have their say in shaping what our new Values would be. In Autumn 2019, we began a 12-month programme of focus groups, workshops and surveys so all our people could influence what they thought BDO's Values were today, and what they believe they should be for the future.



Lockdown hit when we were only a third of the way through our Values research. But I needn't have been concerned that people would lose interest in contributing their ideas and nominations for our Values. We switched to virtual workshops - and each session was fully booked within days of opening them up. Clearly, people were reflecting on the Values and behaviours they could see around them, and wanted to have a say in how we could capture and retain that special culture, even in the midst of a global pandemic.



These values really resonate with me as they continue to demand the highest ethical and moral standards. It is incumbent upon us all to live these values daily in order to create the future we wish to see.

DALTON BROOKS



Values provide a sense of purpose and belonging and importantly they inform our actions. As we go through these unprecedented times watching history in the making, the importance of values is even more acute as they make for a strong foundation and provide a unified corporate identity resonating with our core personal beliefs.

KRISTINAH SAMY





BEING BOLD

BEING BOLD means we are ambitious, innovative and passionate about the things we do. We're curious, initiate ideas and make change happen – even if it sometimes feels uncomfortable. We are willing to try something new and prepared to take appropriate risks but never to the detriment of quality or our code of conduct. Today's fast-changing world demands us to be forward-thinking, pragmatic and willing to positively challenge the way things have always been done – to come up with new and innovative ways to help us succeed.

WE DO THE RIGHT THING BY:

- ▶ innovating and being open to new ways of doing things
- ▶ being solution-focused and passionate about the things we do
- ▶ challenging the status quo
- ▶ stepping out of our comfort zone
- ▶ leading by example.

AND WE DON'T:

- ▶ allow fear of failure or uncertainty to hold us back
- ▶ assume innovation is someone else's responsibility
- ▶ give up when things don't go to plan.

BEING COLLABORATIVE means that we recognise the power of supporting and working with each other, our firm and our clients. It is a way of working where everyone has an important role to play, and we believe in empowering and helping one another. To enable this, we build meaningful relationships based on trust, understanding and respect for the unique perspectives, skills and qualities that we each bring. Above all, we are committed to supporting each other and sharing our knowledge, experience and expertise to help others to succeed.

BEING COLLABORATIVE

WE DO THE RIGHT THING BY:

- ▶ working as a team to achieve successful outcomes aligned to our strategy
- ▶ supporting and encouraging each other
- ▶ helping one another to overcome challenges
- ▶ sharing our knowledge, skills and experience and learning from everyone we interact with
- ▶ acknowledging others for their contribution and celebrating achievements.

AND WE DON'T:

- ▶ create barriers that disrupt collaboration
- ▶ forget the wider needs of the business and our teams
- ▶ take people or relationships for granted.

BEING RESPONSIBLE AND ACTING WITH INTEGRITY starts with a recognition that we have a choice in how we act, respond to and influence the world around us, conscious of our impact on others, our firm, our clients and the environment. It is about taking responsibility for our actions and learning from our mistakes. It extends to our commitment to acting ethically with integrity, professional competence and scepticism, objectivity, due care, confidentiality and, when appropriate, with independence. Always delivering high quality work with the public interest in mind.

RESPONSIBLE AND ACTING WITH INTEGRITY

WE DO THE RIGHT THING BY:

- ▶ acting objectively and with good judgement
- ▶ taking responsibility for the impact of our choices, actions and behaviour on those around us, our local communities and the environment
- ▶ delivering to the highest possible quality standards and taking pride in everything we do
- ▶ being professional, thoughtful and considerate in all our interactions
- ▶ acknowledging when we have made a mistake and taking action to correct it.

AND WE DON'T:

- ▶ compromise on quality
- ▶ avoid problems if they need resolving
- ▶ fail to consider and apply the Audit Firm Governance Code and the Ethical Standards.

BEING GENUINE means we are true to who we are. We're honest about what we think, believe and feel – as well as our own vulnerabilities. We embrace individuality and difference, which means we don't judge the beliefs and opinions of others, but listen and, where appropriate, learn from them. Being true to ourselves means we speak up when we don't agree with something, but also acknowledge when we're unsure or have got something wrong. Trust has to be earned and we nurture it by being authentic, generous and respectful of others.

WE DO THE RIGHT THING BY:

- ▶ remaining committed to who we are
- ▶ sharing our opinions and listening to the views of others
- ▶ respecting and learning from each other's differences
- ▶ treating others with kindness, respect and understanding
- ▶ asking for help when we need it.

BEING GENUINE

AND WE DON'T:

- ▶ pretend to be someone we are not
- ▶ accept dishonesty, insincerity, exclusion or harassment
- ▶ disregard opinions and beliefs because they differ from our own.

CHAPTER FOUR KEEPING SAFE AND CONNECTED DURING COVID-19



ANDY BUTTERWORTH

Chief Operations Officer, morning runner and weekend motorcycling enthusiast.

In last year's Culture Report, I included my personal philosophy: "I don't need a desk in an office so I can hang my jacket on a chair at 8am and come back to collect it when I've finished my meetings at 5pm. I strongly believe people should work where best suits the task at hand. That might be at home, at a client office, in a café or in a collaborative area where the whole client team can sit together to work through a proposal. And the 'agile working' mindset is one we continue to promote."



We worked with health and safety experts, Safer Work, to create dedicated home-working DSE assessments to keep our people safe.

We ensured our colleagues had the right skills and kit to help them stay connected and secure, and we set in place a process for people to order home-working equipment, such as headsets, monitors, keyboards and chairs.

Zoom forward just a few months, and we have seen just how agile people can be. As COO during a global crisis, I have a dual role: to ensure our people are safe and well, and to keep our business going as effectively and efficiently as possible to minimise the impact of the pandemic. As a professional services firm that had invested in digital technology and mindset long before the crisis, we have been very thankful that our people can work from home far more effectively than in many other industries. This helped keep our people safe at home, as we followed Government guidelines, while also ensuring our business could keep trading – even if at a reduced level during and post-lockdown months – because our people could stay connected and perform most of their work remotely.



OLIVIA NISBET

Audit Assistant Manager and member of our Shadow U Board says:

BDO really seemed to understand the shift in people's priorities during COVID-19 lockdown, for example needing to show flexibility around childcare or caring for elderly relatives. My father contracted coronavirus, and the partner I work for was so understanding about me having to go and take him food, and kept regularly checking whether I was mentally coping with it all and whether I needed time off to help."



WENDY BOND

Executive Assistant in London Tax added:

BDO stepped up to lockdown quickly, responding to the demands of a sudden major change to people's lives and the impact physically and mentally. Wellbeing was taken virtually, through yoga, meditation and interactive webinars with a wide spectrum of resources and support; how to juggle work and kids to managing negative thoughts! The sessions, most importantly, kept people connected in a time of uncertainty and often isolation.

CHAPTER FOUR A YEAR WHEN GOOD COMMUNICATIONS MEANT EVERYTHING



NICOLA LALLY

U Board member, Director of Communications, winner of Best Culture of Communications award, home-school Ofsted rating of 'needs significant improvement'.

We took an early decision that – in a global crisis filled with uncertainty, anxiety and rapid change – it was better to over-communicate rather than under-communicate. Our Leadership Team and Crisis Management Committee met together daily, including weekends, for four months. We provided our business leaders with regular updates after those meetings so they felt briefed on our decision-making and messages, and could immediately translate those meaningfully to their teams.

And a crisis as significant as COVID-19 created a lot of information to share, worries to ease and behaviours to encourage. People were rightly hungry for information – but were personally bombarded with social media content and confusing media headlines. So we created

four fixed tools – that are still carrying on now – to help people navigate to what they needed to know at the right time and via their preferred channel:

1 THE BDO RESPONSE

We recognised that we were watching the same daily Number 10 Briefings at exactly the same time as our 5,500 people. We knew it was simply the right thing to do to communicate BDO's awareness of, and responses to, the changing Government position as quickly as possible – on the same evening or by first thing the next morning – so our people knew what it meant for their BDO lives. Our BDO Response bulletins would headline any changes directly to people's inboxes; some were emails, some were videos from our Managing Partner, Paul Eagland, and some were personal interviews with the Crisis Team to help show our faces when people really needed more human connections.

2 DEDICATED INTRANET PAGE

From February, our coronavirus pages held all the latest need-to-know information – from which NHS website to visit if people were worried about symptoms to tips on how to use MS Teams, the phone number for our Employee Assistance Programme, how to order equipment to work effectively from home and hundreds of FAQs that we updated each week.

3 #STAYCONNECTED CAMPAIGN

On Day 2 of lockdown, we launched our #StayConnected campaign – which still carries on into the Autumn and Winter. It covers three areas:

Technology: launch of new tools, technology tips and how to be cyber-safe at home

Wellbeing: how to help 'working from home' avoid becoming 'living in the office'. Access to helplines, tips and stories from experts and colleagues, bespoke mental-health training modules we created with MIND and links to live Wellbeing events with experts such as Rob Stephenson from Inside Out, therapist Jay Rai and Sha Hussain, Founder of The Wellness Movement

Working Together: tips on how to work virtually as teams and to deliver virtual client service, promotion of learning and training sessions, stories on how teams were coming together to support our clients through their own business impacts, how our Flexi Force approach was working – through which we could redeploy and retrain people to busier areas of the business – as well as how BDO people were coming together to help each other succeed.

4 WEEKLY CORONAVIRUS UPDATE

From March onwards, our COO sent a Coronavirus Update newsletter to the firm every single Monday. This included latest news and our #StayConnected campaign updates. We also included a collection of some fantastic Winning Stories that we were hearing around the firm each week; we knew people needed to hear positive news about their colleagues' work or new business wins to counter the worrying external headlines. Readership of those updates remained at well above industry average every week, and many people told us it was the first thing they read on a Monday morning.



My 'cultural' lockdown learning is to remember that your workforce are simply human beings. Nothing evidences that more than this fact: our most popular online group during lockdown was our Pet Appreciation Society group on Yammer. That reminded us where people's hearts were really at: sharing hundreds of photos of their furry work colleagues so they could feel socially connected at a time when they were physically apart.

NICOLA LALLY



ANDREA HUNT talks about virtual relationships in our advisory business:

The Service Charge Accounting team worked through our busy season with lockdown restrictions and they showed great team spirit, perseverance and commitment to meeting our client deadlines. We had great experiences of getting to know people better. One day, we were chairing a tense client meeting when, all of a sudden, one of our team member's large black cat appeared on screen and joined the meeting. It completely changed the tone of the meeting; everyone laughed and grabbed their pets to share. We felt closer to our client and understanding their motivations. The black cat always gets a mention with our client!



Our Business Services & Outsourcing team in London arranged fortnightly 'Virtual Hangouts' to welcome new joiners and stay connected with colleagues.

Our Markets, Sales & Clients introduced #TalkToMeThursday interviews to get to know new members of the virtual team.

Core Purpose Champion, **HANNAH MACDONALD** says: "Each Thursday, one of our newer team members is interviewed by another, covering off both their role within BDO as well as some more personal things, such as favourite holiday destination, go-to Karaoke song and something no one would expect about them. It's been a great way of getting to know all of our new joiners, and helping the new individuals build relationships."

Many people turned to our internal social media network, Yammer, to #StayConnected during 2020.

IN THE FIRST TWO MONTHS OF LOCKDOWN, WE SAW A BOOST OF 415% IN CONTENT SHARED

WHAT WAS IT LIKE JOINING BDO'S CULTURE DURING LOCKDOWN?



FRANK SHEPHERD

PR Manager

Starting a new job during lockdown while juggling unexpected home-schooling responsibilities hasn't exactly been straightforward, but neither has it been as hard as you might imagine. The virtual induction and on-boarding process was very smooth, all the tech worked from day one and my team could not have done more to make me feel welcomed, valued and supported right from the off. In fact, knowing that everyone has been experiencing their own lockdown-related challenges and pressures has probably helped foster a sense of solidarity and common purpose. I've also been very impressed by the level of focus placed on my personal wellbeing as well as my professional development. I probably won't be able to fully appreciate the firm's culture until I've spent time in the office and met my colleagues in person, but my first impressions are that this is a very special place to work.



SUPPORTING OUR PEOPLE ON FURLOUGH

With the aim of protecting jobs of those people whose productivity was expected to reduce significantly as a result of COVID-19, we used the Government's Job Retention Scheme to furlough circa 700 people – topping up their salary to ensure they received full pay packets throughout.

We supported and stayed connected with our colleagues on furlough through local conversations, a regular newsletter and virtual training sessions. We also thought carefully about how we could welcome them back when they returned from furlough, with return-to-work guidance, top tips, videos and re-induction sessions for both the individuals and their managers in their first week back.

WHAT WAS IT LIKE BEING ON FURLOUGH?



CATH MCCORMICK

Senior Assistant in our Shared Service Centre

My days on furlough were varied, from shopping for people who are unable to get out themselves to collecting and delivering medication for vulnerable people. The enjoyable part of what I did is that I still got to see people and came across some characters along the way! But also importantly for me, I was still able to apply the BDO Values – mutual support and respect for everyone I come in contact with and also doing the work with honesty and integrity. It gave me the chance to raise my profile with the charities, as well as the opportunity to talk about BDO and what we do. I received some great feedback and have been asked to pass on their thanks to BDO to enable me to help out.



GEORGE BUCHANAN

Marketing Projects Adviser

During my time on furlough, I completed two external courses in management and business development, both of which I am interested in. I also used my skills to help a family friend at City Harvest, a brilliant charity that reorganises the distribution of food to the vulnerable. I know that these will both help prepare me for the future.

FACILITATING HAPPINESS



CHRIS GEORGE

who works in our Bids team, is accredited by the Museum of Happiness as a Happiness Facilitator.

She ran 20-minute Happiness Sessions during Mental Health Awareness Week:

When I first offered the sessions as part of Mental Health Awareness Week, little did I know that, instead of a room in Baker Street, we'd be 'meeting' in each

other's homes (or gardens). But, amidst what seemed like endless online meetings, for 20 minutes people had a chance to connect with each other in a different way – and to think about their own happiness.

We tried out some practical tools like gratitude bingo or how to soothe yourself when you felt overwhelmed. There was one exercise, though, that many of us struggled with – being kind to yourself and speaking to yourself like you would to a dear friend. It was a real privilege to share my knowledge with over 100 colleagues (plus those who watched the video later), so thanks to our Wellbeing Manager, Marie Broad, and BDO for making it possible.





AJIBOLA LAWAL
Senior Associate



KATERINA DAYANTIS
Audit Operations Manager



JOHN WOOLLER
Strategy Operations Manager



ELAINE CHUNG
Assistant Tax Manager



LISA CLAMPIN
Partner

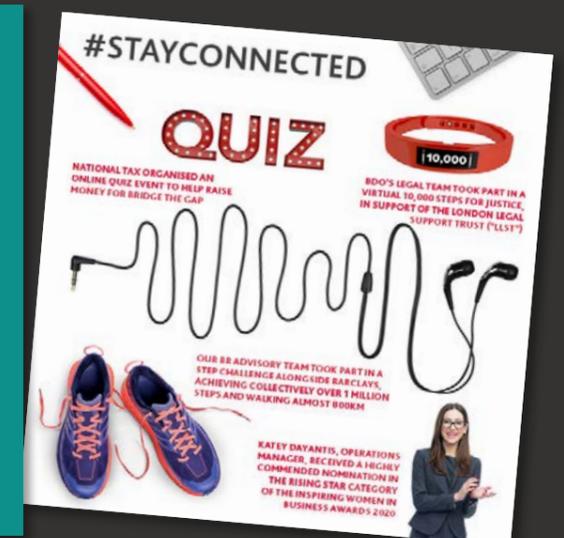


GARETH MORTON
SSC Senior Assistant

QUIZ TIME

And it wouldn't have been lockdown if we didn't have plenty of virtual #StayConnected quizzes:

- ▶ Our Leeds team ran a Family Fortunes quiz
- ▶ Our IT Department held a virtual quiz with family members encouraged to attend
- ▶ Our London Audit Group ran a 'Mug of the Week' competition to guess whose cup of tea belonged to whom
- ▶ Our Markets, Sales & Clients team ran a regular quiz during their 'wine over Wi-Fi' sessions on a Thursday evening, including a 'Globetrotting and Safari' special featuring safari fancy dress
- ▶ Our Public Sector Assurance team completed a virtual Escape Room challenge
- ▶ Our National Tax team held an online quiz to raise money for 'Bridge The Gap' charity.



CHAPTER FOUR A YEAR WHEN WELLBEING STIGMAS WERE SMASHED



RASHPAL VIRDEE

Head of HR Generalists and football super-fan (how he missed the beautiful game in lockdown!).

We want to create a positive working environment, where our people can thrive, are happy and bring their best selves to work each day.

Our lives, both inside and outside of work, can be hectic, exhilarating, challenging, relaxing, fun, overwhelming – and often many of those things all at once. We know we're much more effective at our job if we're feeling refreshed after a break from the laptop, are energised by a lunchtime walk, run or yoga, or simply know we're supported in trying to find more headspace in a world that moves at a rapid pace with 'information overload'.

Three years ago, we launched a Wellbeing programme across BDO using MIND's '5 Ways of Wellbeing' as our framework. This included a dedicated Wellbeing portal, firm-wide promotions, team challenges and

events and company-wide 'Performance Under Pressure' resilience training.

We hired a Wellbeing Manager to co-ordinate and develop our employee support, and created a network of Wellbeing Champions across the firm to share ideas and stories about how to improve our mental resilience and physical health in the workplace.

That we had already recognised Wellbeing as an important part of our BDO culture – including being awarded 'Silver' in the MIND Wellbeing Index – was a huge asset to the firm as coronavirus hit the UK. Supporting our BDO workforce to care for their physical and mental health during the global pandemic was non-negotiable. We shared Wellbeing resources and tips through our weekly #StayConnected bulletins, partnered with external Wellbeing experts to host live wellbeing webinars, promoted our Employee Assistance helpline, trained even more Mental Health First Aiders – and, critically, looked out for each other.

A CHALLENGE OF TWO HALVES



MARIE BROAD

Wellbeing Manager and lockdown meditation convert.



PRE-COVID-19

In September 2019, we created a 'chain reaction'. As part of BDO's Chain Challenge, we tasked all of BDO to work together on a shared challenge to improve our personal and collective wellbeing.

Nationally, we hosted a series of outdoor cycle challenges. In support of the challenge, Rollapaluzza visited our offices with their indoor racing and smoothie bikes.

Locally, each office played host to a series of physical, mental and financial wellbeing activities, discussions and promotional events.

DURING COVID-19

With the emergence of the pandemic, we knew supporting our people's wellbeing would be vital, and that we needed to boost and broaden our support.

Marking Mental Health Awareness Week

In May, we used Mental Health Awareness Week to check-in again on how our colleagues were doing. Many of our partners and teams agreed to set a Wellbeing Challenge for May. Our Manchester office agreed to collectively reach five million steps during the month. Partner Fiona Condron pledged to do a 5km walk and a Headspace meditation every day, while partner Phil Hall pledged to cycle 75km for every week of lockdown.

And, in a series of honest and moving videos, ten of our brave and brilliant colleagues – including two Leadership Team members – shared their very personal stories of dealing with mental health issues, how they were coping with COVID-19 and why Mental Health Awareness Week is important.

The 2.6 Challenge

More than 100 colleagues joined in the 2.6 Challenge in April, an external challenge created to raise money for those charities normally benefitting from London Marathon fundraising. BDO people raised £10,000 for the charities on 26 April. The challenge organisers were so impressed at how BDO got involved – "you smashed it" and "I've not seen a business get as stuck in" were their quotes – that they asked us to be a media case study. See pages 32 and 33 for more details of activities our team came up with.

#StayConnected: a Wellbeing focus

From March 2020, individuals and teams were encouraged to reflect on, talk about and care for their Wellbeing.

Just some examples:

- ▶ Our BDO Velo team instigated virtual bike rides (stationary or on-road) with business contacts

- ▶ Our London Tax Group held virtual meditation, yoga and personal training sessions
- ▶ In Leeds, 14 people completed a virtual running relay challenge, 'passing' the baton via video link
- ▶ Our Financial Services and Business Restructuring teams created 'working parents' groups to listen to and support working parents
- ▶ Our London Audit Group shared 'workout of the day'
- ▶ Two of our Ipswich colleagues took part in a virtual dressage competition with their horses
- ▶ Our International Institutions and Donor Assurance team held a webinar with a Sleep Consultant to hear advice on how to improve sleep whilst working at home full-time
- ▶ Our Technical Standards Group formed a virtual choir – complete with adapted lyrics and dance moves – and shared a video to celebrate their colleagues, families and our NHS Heroes
- ▶ Our Midlands Transaction Services team found 'summit' to do – climbing 49,764 steps using their staircases at home, equivalent to the height of Mount Everest. They raised money for a great cause in doing so: for NHS Charities Together
- ▶ In East Anglia, we launched a Mindfulness Monthly newsletter, with the first edition focused on dealing with anxiety
- ▶ Our BDODrive team held virtual Pilates classes
- ▶ Some of our Corporate Finance team members completed a virtual Keepy Uppy 5k football challenge
- ▶ During Men's Health Awareness Week, Alex Traill and Dan Bonner in our Risk and Advisory Services team shared their personal stories of how they were coping during lockdown when juggling work and childcare.

- OUR LOCAL TEAMS HELD:
- LUNCHTIME YOGA SESSIONS
- LUNCHTIME PARK WALKS
- CYCLING GOALS
- LUNCHTIME PEDALOS IN REGENT'S PARK
- TREASURE HUNT
- TABLE FOOTBALL TOURNAMENT
- IN-OFFICE MESSAGES
- A 'BREATHE' WORKSHOP
- BLOOD DONATION VISITS
- OPTIMISING HEALTH' WORKSHOP
- CROCHET SESSION
- BAKE SALE
- MEDITATION DAYS
- CREATION OF QUIET AREAS WITH HEALTHY SNACKS
- TRAFFIC-FREE CYCLE RIDES
- TASTER SESSIONS AT THE MANCHESTER VELODROME AND HIRING LOCAL SPORTS HALLS FOR NETBALL AND FOOTBALL TOURNAMENTS.



the
2.6
challenge
Save the UK's Charities

BDO'S 2.6 CHALLENGE

To support those charities normally benefitting from London Marathon fundraising, our BDO colleagues raised £10,000 by joining in the 2.6 Challenge:

- ▶ **PAUL EAGLAND** – 26-mile mountain bike ride through Epping Forest
- ▶ **CHRIS GROVE** – 26-mile cycle ride with his wife and a 2.6-mile run with the family dog
- ▶ **WENDY WALTON** – 26-minute run followed by a 2.6 minute headstand
- ▶ **SIMON GALLAGHER** – 26 virtual miles on a stationary bike
- ▶ **SCOTT KNIGHT** – lifted 62 tonnes – equivalent of four double decker buses or one tank (clearly this wasn't a single rep but in total)
- ▶ **JON RANDALL** – took the dog for (yet another) 2.6 mile walk
- ▶ **ANDY BUTTERWORTH** – a 2.6-mile run 2.6 times
- ▶ **GERVASE MACGREGOR** – moved 26 cubic metres of compost
- ▶ **MATT WHITE** – ran 2.6 miles
- ▶ **MARK SHERFIELD** – rowed 2.6 miles as part of post-operation physio
- ▶ **LEEDS TS TEAM** – completed a 26.2-mile relay marathon
- ▶ **LONDON TAX GROUP** – all LTG partners did a Yoga session and all of LTG did a competition for 26 of the best jokes
- ▶ **JILL HALFORD** – completed a family relay on a paddleboard over a paddling pool in the garden
- ▶ **ED DWAN** – ran 2.6 miles and completed 26 'top bins' goals
- ▶ **TOM PREECE** – 26.2-mile bike ride on Friday, Saturday – R&R including 2.6 beers and Sunday – a 26.2 mile run
- ▶ **ALISON ROWE** – 2.6-mile run
- ▶ **DAWN GASGARTH** – 2 runs – 2.6 miles and 2.6km
- ▶ **SARAH HILLARY** – 26 minutes of hula-hooping
- ▶ **LISA CLAMPIN** – 26 minutes of dancing with her family
- ▶ **DEBBIE THOMSON** – 2.6 hours of activity including a Body Pump and Bounce class
- ▶ **LOUISE SAYERS** – 5.2 km around the Chigwell Country Way with a trainee Guide Dog for the Guide Dog charity
- ▶ **PAUL DAVIES** – a 26.2-mile bike ride, including climbing Holme Moss 2.6 times – and in 2 hours and 26 minutes
- ▶ **NEIL EBDON** – 26km run
- ▶ **DAVID OGDEN** – family ride of 26.2 miles
- ▶ **LYDIA BURNS** – 26.2 miles cycling
- ▶ **KAREN DUFFIN** – 26 kettlebell swings, 26 tyre flips, 26 TRX Bulgarian split squats, 26 TRX jumping squats, 26 dumbbell walking lunges out and back and 26 sprints of the length of the garden

#TWOPOINTSIXCHALLENGE
ALMOST **£4,500**
RAISED FOR UK
CHARITIES THROUGH
INDIVIDUAL PLEDGES
ACROSS THE FIRM

#TWOPOINTSIXCHALLENGE
OVER
1,500 HITS ON OUR
INTERNAL INTRANET ARTICLE

#TWOPOINTSIXCHALLENGE
TWITTER ACTIVITY REACHED OVER
1,200 IMPRESSIONS

#TWOPOINTSIXCHALLENGE
INTERNAL ANNOUNCEMENT
EMAIL OPENED BY
OF OUR PEOPLE **80%**

- ▶ **JESSICA MEALING** – 26.2 miles cycling
- ▶ **NAZIA NATHU** – 26 minutes of non-stop Bollywood and Bhangra dancing x 2.6 times
- ▶ **DEREK NEIL** – 26-mile bike ride, with his family doing a series of mini runs and bike rides alongside him
- ▶ **DAWN REGISTER** – 260 burpees with her family
- ▶ **LUCY HILL** – 26 minutes of hula-hooping and 2.6 hours of gardening
- ▶ **NICOLA HETHERINGTON** – 26-mile bike ride, 26 handstands, 26 star jumps and 26-second planks with her family
- ▶ **JON GILPIN** – 2.6-mile run, 26 basketball spins, 26 tetherball hits, 26 football 'keepy ups' and 26 tennis ball bounces
- ▶ **JAMES PATERSON** – 2.6-mile walk with his son
- ▶ **STUART COLLINS** – cycling 26km around the Basingstoke Canal and Surrey lanes
- ▶ **FIONA CONDRON** – 26km run
- ▶ **JULIEN RYE** – 2.6-mile walk followed by 26 frisbee throws for the dog
- ▶ **IAN MCBANE** – 26km run x 2.6 times
- ▶ **JO GILBEY** – 2 x 26-minute runs
- ▶ **LORRAINE MCFADYEN** – 2.6-mile walk daily for 26 days with her dog
- ▶ **MATT CRANE** – 2.6-mile run and 26 hill sprints
- ▶ **STEPHEN CORRALL** – 26-mile bike ride with his daughter
- ▶ **FIONA BROWN** – 2.6-mile walk
- ▶ **PHIL COWAN** – 6.2km run and 6.2km walk for the rest of the family in the local park
- ▶ **FIONA RAISTRICK** – helped Vincenzo, who has Global Development Delay and low muscle tone, to walk 26 steps
- ▶ **TARA MCLEMMEN** – 26-mile bike ride
- ▶ **TARA JOHNSON** – 2.6-mile run and 26-minute daily workout for 26 days
- ▶ **MARK LANGFORD** – 2 training sessions plus 6 laps of the garden
- ▶ **MATTHEW TAIT** – 6.2km walk with his wife
- ▶ **ANNE CLARK** – 26-mile bike ride on Sunday, and on Saturday started picking sycamore seeds and gave up at 2,600
- ▶ **IAN BOWDEN** – completed 263 miles on the turbo trainer during the week, his children completed 2.6km on scooters and his wife ran 2.6 miles on Saturday and Sunday
- ▶ **STEVE WATTS** – cycled for 2 hours and 60 minutes (yes, we know that's 3 hours) at average speed 26km/hour

BDO donated £20,000 to mental health charity, MIND, this year through various fundraising activities.

Chair of our U Board, Chris Grove, has been shortlisted as 'Exec Sponsor of the Year' for the Inside Out mental health awards.

Five of our partners stepped up to take part in the MINDCycle, a cycling challenge created by social enterprise, Inside Out, to help smash the stigma of mental health. As well as showing their support for a culture that's resilient, mentally healthy and free of stigma, the team achieved bronze in the challenge.



NIMA MISTRY

Wellbeing Champion:

Even as a Wellbeing Champion, it has been challenging at times to practice what I preach. Living alone meant I was able to create a healthy routine and good habits at the start of lockdown; however, it also meant I didn't have distractions or reasons to switch off (physically or mentally) from work. The past few months have been a reminder to focus on that which we can control. I have a People Manager and colleagues who encourage me to maintain my good habits (the things in my control).

I have felt supported and taken care of by BDO as a firm too – from issuing me a computer screen, to our COO's weekly coronavirus updates, and the proactivity around Black Lives Matter. BDO is living its Core Purpose of helping me to succeed.



GERALD BATES

Director in our International Institutions & Donor Assurance team and Core Purpose Champion:

Working in a team of itchy-footed travellers who are usually en-route to their next assignment location, the travel and lockdown restrictions imposed by COVID-19 have been particularly dislocating. Both on a firm and team level it has, though, been particularly heartening how we have responded: ensuring we are regularly checking in with one another, talking about our mental health and supporting each other with empathy and flexibility.

The resilience, support and compassion shown by colleagues has been inspiring and, in many ways, it has helped bring us even closer together as we find out more about what everyone has hanging up on their walls or sitting on their shelves and/or meeting each other's children when they come wandering in mid-client call to introduce themselves!

Ipswich Virtual Dressage

Finding ways to stay connected while we're apart is really important to us. Our team here in Ipswich actually has not one, but two dressage enthusiasts. "We decided to take part in a Virtual Dressage Competition. We did really well and won the team class as well as coming first and second place in our individual classes. We're really proud of the achievement and it has been a fantastic way to keep active as well as spending 'virtual' time together with each other outside of work."

#stayconnected



MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AIDERS

BDO began to train colleagues as Mental Health First Aiders (MHFAs) in 2019. We have increased the number of trained MHFAs this year.



LORRAINE MCFADYEN,

Associate Director and MHFA says:

Mental Health First Aiders are not there to diagnose a mental health condition. We are not therapists or counsellors. We are there to listen without judgement, provide support and information and act as a point of contact and reassurance for a person who may be experiencing a mental health issue or emotional distress. If necessary, we can encourage the individual to get appropriate professional help.



NICOLA ELAKEL

Senior People Development Manager and MHFA adds:

My best mental health tip is to be kind – to others and to yourself. It's hard to be happy when someone is giving you a hard time – especially when that someone is you!

CHAPTER FOUR BEING YOURSELF, FROM WHEREVER YOU ARE WORKING



SARAH HILLARY

U Board member, Risk and Advisory Services Partner, Pomeranian dog lover, Trustee of Kidney Care UK and Patron of Access Accountancy.

Our focus on 'Be Yourself' – which includes the diversity and inclusion agenda – is all about encouraging our 5,500 people to feel like they can truly be themselves at work. If people can be true to themselves, they are far more likely to succeed in realising their own potential.

According to Harvard Business Review, 61% of the global workforce 'cover up' some part of their identity. If we were to transpose that to BDO, that's 3,355 people potentially spending effort in pretending to be 'someone else' rather than giving 100% of their true selves in solving clients' problems or coming up with new ideas to win pitches or think differently.

Our experience shows that creating a firm where our people can be themselves leads to enhanced success, increases profitability,

diverse decision-making and – quite simply – makes life more enjoyable. And if you combine it with our Wellbeing priority, they are able to bring their best selves to work each day.

Our strategy, therefore, specifically includes fostering a Unifying Culture where you are encouraged to be yourself. We value you as an individual and want you to realise your aspirations and potential. We know that if you bring your 'full self' to work, you are far more likely to be successful. You have a voice and your opinion counts.

We recognise the responsibility we have to all our people – and to our clients – to build and promote an inclusive and diverse culture. At BDO, 'Be Yourself' is the positive mindset we want to encourage. It incorporates the existing Diversity & Inclusion agenda and helps us to articulate our diversity policy, but also allows us to have a line-of-sight on both our behaviours and our destination – not just the important steps we need to take on the journey. We recognise diversity as the best utilisation of talent and a significant strategic priority, and we aim for inclusion to be embedded into everyday practice.

"Be Yourself: everyone else is already taken." It was true to Oscar Wilde and it's true to us.



In an all-employee survey this year, 91% of BDO's people positively responded to being able to be themselves at work.



"So many people have said to me how much better they've got to know their colleagues during lockdown. Even though they may not be physically seeing each other, they have been seeing each other's homes, families, pets and workout gear – as well as different work attire, beards and hairstyles. Our laptops have been the windows to more of our true selves, as we now know that a team member is an avid guitar player, lover of black and white movie posters or a football fan."

BDO

IDEAS | PEOPLE | TRUST

At BDO, we aspire to build a culture where everyone can be themselves. By living up to our values, we want people to *feel included, feel they belong and are able to achieve their potential* – helping colleagues and the firm to succeed together.



UNDERPINNED BY OUR CORE PURPOSE, VALUES AND BEHAVIOURS

OUR BE YOURSELF STRATEGY

It's clear to us that, if we aspire to build a culture where everyone can be themselves, we need to ensure that people feel they belong and are included at every point of their career at BDO. Our strategy is founded on our Core Purpose – helping you succeed – and allows us to check that at four levels:

- ▶ **Leadership:** Leaders who are open-minded, listen to your voice and understand what will help you succeed
- ▶ **Culture:** Creating a unifying and inclusive environment where you feel valued and respected; connected to the firm and each other
- ▶ **Selection:** Impartial selection processes that actively appeal to quality candidates; broadening the firm's horizons and adding to our diversity of thinking
- ▶ **Development:** Access to opportunities that are inclusive, fair and open to all; supporting you in achieving your potential.



OUR BDO POPULATION

Our culture at BDO is made-up of every daily interaction between 5,500 individuals. We committed to find out far more about our colleagues: who are they, what makes them tick, where should we celebrate or challenge more on certain areas of the diversity and inclusion, and how can we make better business decisions for our BDO population.

In 2018, we launched our first BDO DNA survey to learn about people's diversity characteristics; the data helped us to create our Be Yourself strategy. During National Inclusion Week 2019, we ran our second DNA Survey; 57% of our people have now shared their data with us, representing diversity data from nearly 2,900 colleagues. While we are working with our people to boost this even further for 2021 to ensure we have statistically viable representation, we can still use the insights to help us make better business decisions or set benchmarks.



Following BDO's 2019 inclusion survey – called BDO DNA – we found:

GENDER BALANCE		SEXUAL ORIENTATION PROFILE	
Female:	48%	Heterosexual:	99%
Male:	51%	LGB:	0.48%
Transgender/Non Binary:	0.1%	Prefer not to say:	0.34%
Prefer not to say:	0.09%	Prefer to describe:	0.18%
BAME profile:		10.55%	
Of which 1.66% are Black (figures adjusted to take into account 'unknown' and 'AME' responses)			
Proportion who are working parents:		27.2%	
Proportion who are carers:		3.7%	
Proportion who are disabled or have a long-term condition:		13.6%	



PAUL ENGLAND

Managing Partner adds: "Rather than quote me, I want to quote **Matthew Syed** in his book **Rebel Ideas – The Power of Diverse Thinking**:



"Let's imagine we have ten people and ask for ten ideas. A group of similar people will come up with broadly the same ten ideas. A group of ten very different people is likely to come up with 100 different ideas. That's 900% more different ideas."



CHAPTER FOUR BE INSPIRED ON GENDER BALANCE



WENDY WALTON

Leadership Team member and Global Head of Private Client Services, wannabe runner and lockdown-convert to stationary exercise bike.

It's a fact. Whether you find it a frustrating, unbelievable or pivotal one, it's a fact: at current rates of progress, it may take another 215 years to close the economic gender gap globally, according to the World Economic Forum. Plus there is now research indicating that there has been a disproportionate economic and/or career development impact of COVID-19 on women. Gender diversity – in fact all diversity – creates a stronger, sustainable and valuable business, so we need to keep working to create an environment desirable to all our people and one in which they can succeed.

Like any valued corporate citizen, that's the challenge we've been looking at within our 'Be Yourself' strategy: how do we attract more females into the profession, and how do we keep them here at BDO?

Our results are consistent with our peers but we need, and want, to do better. Our BE INSPIRED graphic summarises a detailed programme of local and national activity led by the Leadership Team, our U Board, BDO Inspire (our women's network) and a group of passionate people, with the aim of ensuring there are no barriers preventing our talented people from succeeding.

BE YOURSELF: GENDER BALANCE – 2020 ACTIONS

- B BELIEF**
 - ▶ Be Yourself strategy promotion and action planning
 - ▶ Be Yourself programme delivered by D&I Manager
 - ▶ Storytelling through role models.
- E EDUCATE**
 - ▶ Ongoing storytelling through central channels
 - ▶ Key dates: March (International Women's Day), June (partner promotions), October (Culture Report, Gender Pay Gap data, WIF Charter report).
- I INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP**
 - ▶ LT and SBU Leaders: gender balance continues to be discussed on regular agendas
 - ▶ Inclusive Leadership training to be rolled out to all partners in 2020 (mandatory)
 - ▶ Visibility programme for WW and PE on this agenda to be created, e.g. partner comms, firm-wide comms (podcast #2), consider specific senior manager/AD engagement.
- N NETWORKS & COMMUNITIES**
 - ▶ Internal networks: continue to meet regularly with BDO Inspire (our gender balance network); support NW Inclusion, Transaction Services' Women's Forum, TRA female group and Corporate IT Forum
 - ▶ External memberships: continue to support Women in Finance Charter, SWIFT, 30% Club, Women Working In International Development Group, 1 Loud Voice.
- S SUPPORT & SPONSORSHIP**
 - ▶ Support through mentoring: partners, firm-wide, 30% club – continue to promote this
 - ▶ Support through counselling managers – link into CM communications via HR
 - ▶ Sponsorship programme for future partners – formalise this in 2020, including guidelines.
- P POLICIES & PROGRAMMES**
 - ▶ Revision of our 'Life Event' policies – check-in with HR team at mid-year point
 - ▶ Regular promotion of success stories – ongoing.
- I INVESTIGATE, INNOVATE & INSIGHT**
 - ▶ Horizon-scanning session to check on other external initiatives, trends or awards may be helpful
 - ▶ DNA survey: WW to reach out to individual partners who haven't completed it.
- R RECRUITMENT & RETENTION**
 - ▶ Active briefings to recruiters on inclusive recruitment actions and stories
 - ▶ Root cause analysis of female manager/senior manager departures.
- E EXCITE**
 - ▶ Introduce 'Allies' to work with and help represent females (partners)
 - ▶ Inspiring stories with a link to our 'Be Yourself' priority – ongoing
 - ▶ Leverage network of champions and U Leaders.
- D DEVELOPMENT**
 - ▶ A clear development plan linked to our 'Achieving My Potential' framework – ongoing.

GENDER BALANCE AT BDO

BDO signed up to HM Treasury's Women In Finance Charter in 2018, a pledge for gender balance across financial services. We signed up with a target of achieving 20% female partners by July 2021. This year, we maintained last year's progress of 17%. Our entire BDO UK population is 48% female. We have continued to improve our Gender Pay Gap year-on-year, now at 16% mean (down from 17.7% in 2018). Our detailed Gender Pay Gap reports for both employees and partners are available on www.bdo.co.uk.

Unfortunately, and very practically, COVID-19 has impacted our short-term gender balance aims. In 2020, we didn't promote anyone to partner and we temporarily paused new lateral partner hires, as we responded to the impact of the global pandemic on our business. This means that we've effectively 'lost a year' of our partner pipeline. We are now targeting reaching 20% by the end of 2022.

We know we'll make it up over the coming years. We know we're already doing a lot of the right things; they simply take time to become sustainable, long-term fixes. It won't happen overnight but, with the support of our people, we know we can make sure our future statistics reflect our current ambition.

To keep our balance, we must keep moving – today, tomorrow and for as long as it takes to remove barriers to equality.



BDO WAS NAMED 'COMPANY OF THE YEAR: CREATING CHANGE FOR WOMEN' AT THE POWERWOMEN AWARDS 2020



Seven of our BDO people have been shortlisted in the inaugural Women in Accountancy and Finance Awards 2020.

WOMEN IN ACCOUNTANCY AND FINANCE AWARDS 2020

WENDY WALTON ANNA DRAPER KALEY CROSTHWAITE SOPHIE MICHAEL STEPHANIE BETTINSON LISA OLUFEMI PAUL EAGLAND

Congratulations to Wendy Walton, Anna Draper, Kaley Crossthwaite, Sophie Michael, Stephanie Bettinson and Paul Eagland. Between them, they were shortlisted for: Female Diversity Champion, National Practice Leader, Outstanding Achievement, National Practice Role Model, Global Practice Woman of the Year, Diversity Champion and overall Woman of the Year.

BDO WAS NAMED EMPLOYEE NETWORK OF THE YEAR AT THE CITYWEALTH POWER WOMEN AWARDS 2019



CORPORATE FINANCE DIRECTOR, JANIE REID, WAS NAMED IN THE 2020 TIMEWISE TOP 50 POWER LIST, A ROLL CALL OF 50 SENIOR LEADERS IN THE UK THAT WORK PART-TIME OR FLEXIBLY.



ANDREA HUNT, Global Outsourcing Partner in Bristol, Core Purpose Champion, keen skier and wildlife enthusiast:

"We had a record-breaking 30 people taking part in our 30% Club mentoring programme this year. In the past six years, more than 100 of our now-senior women have taken part – plus many more offering their time and experience as a mentor."



Over the last 12 months, our BDO Inspire network hosted a series of skills-based, practical networking events in person and online. The events are open to all genders but focus on topics which may be particularly useful to women. There are a number of attributes that traditionally appear in business feedback or performance reviews of females – such as 'requires more gravitas', 'worries too much' or 'can be bossy/aggressive'. Our events explore these topics, connect women across the business, provide practical help for our female colleagues and offer a more balanced perspective for our male colleagues.

Recent events included:

- ▶ 'Done is better than perfect'
- ▶ BDO role models: a Q&A with partner Dawn Register
- ▶ How to be a positive male role model: to mark International Men's Day
- ▶ Positive Charisma and Pitching
- ▶ 'Working parents during lockdown': our stories and how to support us.

Bringing working parents and carers together

Our women's network, BDO Inspire, held a virtual event to share stories of what it's been like for working parents during lockdown. 80 attendees heard stories of how different people across the firm have been balancing their personal and professional challenges and supporting their teams during the COVID-19 crisis, reminding us of the importance of listening to and supporting working parents and carers.

#stayconnected



IDEAS | PEOPLE | TRUST **BDO**



WENDY WALTON, has been recognised as Management Today's Mentor of the Year. As a member of our Leadership Team, Wendy says her primary objective is "to be a role model to help others succeed".

In awarding her as Mentor of the Year, one judge commented that Wendy is "challenging the status quo in her organisation to lift and support others. She is paving the way for future generations."




KUDZANAI MUMBURE, Financial Services Advisory Associate Director, ICAEW Women In Finance Community member, mother of one who trained with the Bermuda National Women's Volleyball team:

"What would I say to an aspiring female chartered accountant in 2020? The profession will open so many possibilities for you in your career. It will provide you with flexibility to work in multiple jurisdictions due to the nature of the transferable skills. Exams will be challenging, training will be exciting and the growth will be swift and enjoyable. Keep an open mind, be curious and be fearless. It almost always pays off to put yourself forward for tasks and responsibilities.

"I am yearning to see more women in chartered accountancy who bring the specialist skills in Technology sitting on Boards and Board Committees. This is something I see less of in my day-to-day work currently when I present to these Boards. Tech is extremely important in my daily work because we now rely on various systems to enable analytics and to discharge our reports. The pandemic has also magnified the importance of Tech as we have had to work remotely."

CHAPTER FOUR RACE IN OUR WORKPLACE



HAMID GHAFOOR

BAME Network partner sponsor, leader of BDO's Risk Advisory Services and Not For Profit teams in the North, and Liverpool FC fan.

The 2017 McGregor-Smith Review found that people from the UK's BAME community were underemployed, underpromoted and underrepresented at senior levels. Since then, Business in the Community issued the Race at Work Charter that includes five calls for action to business leaders.

Three years later, and 2020 was finally the year that so many more people – including many of us in leadership positions at BDO – were stopped in our tracks and actively listened to what was really going on. It was a year when it was absolutely right for our Managing Partner to stand up – internally and externally – to say: "There are many complex political, historical and cultural aspects to racism but the simple point is this: it is unacceptable and we need to talk about it, even if – or indeed especially if – it feels uncomfortable."

For many of my fellow partners – predominantly white – this has been a steep learning curve to understand more about race; and one I'm pleased they continue to support. And, as a British Asian who has certainly experienced moments of racism or discrimination in my personal and professional life, I still had plenty to learn from the Black Lives Matter Movement. The 20+ Listening Events we ran across BDO in the wake of George Floyd's death were helpful for my education and to hear what would really help.

Our Race Action Plan helps us plot how we can increase BAME representation, and senior representation, across BDO. We can draw two things from this: firstly, it's even more important that we understand how to support, develop and retain our growing BAME population; and secondly, that we need to remember that the term 'BAME' is a catch-all and that there are many different communities who are facing their own challenges and that each individual will have their own definition of success for themselves.

As part of us understanding our starting point, for the first time, we've been able to see a draft indication of our Ethnicity Pay Gap. While it isn't yet mandatory to do so, starting to report on our Ethnicity Pay Gap is clearly the right thing to do. Our data isn't perfect, as we rely on people sharing their ethnicity data with us through an individual survey. We therefore can only treat the data as indicative; it's based on 57% of our BDO population. We'll work hard to improve the data next year – but, for now, it's important to look at what those indicative trends may be telling us. Our Employee Ethnicity Pay Gap is 5.28% median and 10.74% mean; based on the data we have, it's clear that

supporting our BAME colleagues into more senior positions in the firm is necessary. Our new Race Action Plan sets us up to keep breaking down barriers and driving sustainable, long-term change.

2020 needs to go down in history as a turning point to sustainable, systemic change in racial justice – in society, for individuals and in the workplace. But it is neither easy nor quick to solve, and racism will not disappear and true equality will not be achieved without consistent, intentional action.

SO, WHAT HAVE WE DONE?

First, we listened, learned and supported

Listening Events: Our immediate response to the reignited Black Lives Matter movement was to listen. There were more than 20 Listening Events held by local teams across the firm. These provided a space for our black colleagues to – bravely – talk, reflect and share experiences, as well as for others to listen and build more understanding on how to make BDO a more inclusive place. This was an important time: we were having meaningful conversations about race. I listened to many of the events, along with our Diversity & Inclusion Manager. Common themes were: unconscious bias, ethnicity pay gap, role models, microaggressions, mentoring and increasing black representation at BDO.

Education: Key to achieving change is education: we need everyone in the firm to take responsibility to educate themselves on this complex subject. We shared many resources across the firm, storing them in an online library for all to access; and our International Institutions & Donor



RACE ACTION PLAN: OUR 5 COMMITMENTS

 LEADERSHIP SUPPORT	 CAPTURE DATA	 ZERO TOLERANCE	 EQUAL RESPONSIBILITY	 HELPING YOU SUCCEED
01 We will support our Race Action Plan from the top.	02 We will measure and report on our data and progress.	03 We will have zero tolerance to racial harassment and bullying.	04 We will take equal responsibility for equal opportunities.	05 We will help you succeed.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assigned Managing Partner as Exec Sponsor Created a team to support the Exec Sponsor to implement the plan Briefed our Leaders and U Leaders on the plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capture, measure and publish data Starting with our Ethnicity Pay Gap Reporting Use Workday to improve data collection Actively monitor pipeline. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Committed at both Board level and firm-wide to zero tolerance of racial harassment and bullying Define & promote what 'zero tolerance' looks like for us Promote whistleblowing policy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Making it clear that supporting equality in the workplace is the responsibility of all leaders and managers Unconscious bias & inclusive leadership training, starting with partners and people managers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Taking action that supports ethnic minority career progression Career support: launch mentoring circles Tailored development pathways Identify sponsorship & partnership options.

Assurance team held a virtual book club. Out of the various updates we provided on Black Lives Matter over summer 2020, our 'Resources' page was by far the most popular.

Learning: We also engaged with external experts such as Business in the Community, Black Young Professionals Network and EPower, and we are considering how best to use external support – as well as BDO globally, our client base and supplier network – to help us on our journey.

Then, we took action

Race At Work Charter: We signed the Business in the Community's Race at Work Charter in June, with our Managing Partner, Paul England, as the Executive Sponsor. We used the Charter as the framework for our Race Action Plan.

The right people: Because our U Board, our BAME Network and our 'Be Yourself' priority were already established, we were structurally well-set-up to work together on our action plan:

- Our Be Yourself Working Group's priority became the creation, and implementation, of our Race Action Plan to ensure we deliver on our Race At Work Charter commitments, thereby tackling race and ethnicity barriers
- We set up a Black Lives Matter employee consulting group, to whom we listened and with whom we tested our action plan
- We recognised that our BAME Network was borne out of our London office, and it was important to be representative across our whole BDO population. We

now have local representatives from each of our regions that can feed into the national BAME network

- Our HR team – covering Early in Careers, Experienced Hire, HR Generalists, People Development, HR Services, Management Information and Professional Qualifications – came together to review our employee life-cycle and ensure our everyday policies and processes are free of discrimination.

Launched our Race Action Plan: Our Managing Partner launched our Race Action Plan via a live but virtual event. Our Plan has five key commitments – and each has a detailed plan of how we'll implement the actions and achieve change.

ABOUT BLACK LIVES MATTER

REIGNITED BY THE SENSELESS DEATH OF GEORGE FLOYD IN THE UNITED STATES IN MAY 2020, THE BLACK LIVES MATTER MOVEMENT GAINED FURTHER WIDESPREAD AWARENESS AND ACTIVATED A NEW WAVE OF GLOBAL PROTESTS, INCLUDING HERE IN THE UK. BDO STANDS IN SOLIDARITY WITH BOTH THE BLACK LIVES MATTER MOVEMENT AND OUR BLACK COLLEAGUES. THERE ARE MANY COMPLEX POLITICAL, HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL ASPECTS TO RACISM BUT THE SIMPLE POINT IS THIS: IT IS UNACCEPTABLE AND WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT IT, EVEN IF – OR INDEED ESPECIALLY IF – IT FEELS UNCOMFORTABLE.

WE LAUNCHED TWO PILOT MENTORING CIRCLES THIS SUMMER: ONE FOR BAME (MIXED GENDER) AND ONE FOR FEMALES. WITHIN FIVE DAYS, WE RECEIVED MORE THAN 110 APPLICATIONS TO TAKE PART. MENTORING CIRCLES ARE WHERE A NUMBER OF PEOPLE (MENTEES) MEET TOGETHER TO DISCUSS A TOPIC OF INTEREST WITH MENTORS AND A FACILITATOR WHO HAVE EXPERIENCE OR EXPERTISE IN THE SUBJECT MATTERS. THE MENTORING CIRCLE PILOTS WILL COMMENCE IN AUTUMN 2020.



AARON THOMPSON

Audit Trainee:

"When you enter a room or any type of environment, don't go in as a thermometer, simply taking and adapting to the temperature, or the already-accepted norms and behaviours, Enter that room being the biggest and best thermostat you can be – not adapting to the temperature, but setting the temperature. Setting the tone and fundamentally changing the atmosphere."



ALEX TRILL

Risk and Advisory Services Director, adds:

"This year has been an historic one for starting to tackle the many issues surrounding global racism, most noticeably through the Black Lives Matter movement. As a middle-class (and some might say middle-aged) man and someone who has benefited from white privilege, it can be hard to understand race issues and sometimes awkward to talk about

them. However, I have been particularly impressed that BDO has actively promoted these conversations and encouraged openness amongst its people with the aim of creating a better environment for all. This has given me the confidence to engage with others whilst running the risk of saying or doing the 'wrong thing' at the same time as challenging my own microaggressions and unconscious biases. This educational journey, willingness to be vulnerable and acceptance that my perspective is not always shared by everyone will inevitably make me a better person to work with and be around.

Of course, I am not alone on this ongoing journey so the more we individually educate ourselves and understand other people's realities, the greater we can collectively become. Together we will be better at interacting with each other, our clients, our families and our wider communities."



RACHEL AGOROM LLOYD

Senior Tax Associate in our Shared Service Centre:

"The first thing I noticed when joining the SSC was the diversity of employees. This made me feel relaxed and welcomed. Over my 20 years of working in accountancy, this is the first time I have worked for a company that has equality and diversity as a part of their strategy; BDO does not just pay lip service. The Yammer groups are especially important as it allows you to share your views and understand 'that we are in this all together'. In addition, the work the firm did with regards to Black Lives Matter was outstanding. By BDO being "inclusive", they are attracting and retaining the best employees for their company. BDO employees feel they can be themselves ensuring they work to their best ability."



SATVIR BUNGAR, MANAGING DIRECTOR & HEAD OF FACILITIES SECTOR M&A, WAS RECOGNISED IN THIS YEAR'S EMPOWER ETHNIC MINORITY ROLE MODEL LIST.



Assistant Manager, **PAUL EKWERE**, shared some of his personal artwork on our internal social media to raise awareness of the Black Lives Matter movement.



CHAPTER FOUR A NETWORK OF NETWORKS

INDEPENDENT RESEARCH SUGGESTS BDO IS BECOMING MORE FAVOURABLE AMONG FEMALE STUDENTS, LGBTQ+ STUDENTS AND STUDENTS FROM A LOWER SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND THAN OUR MAJOR COMPETITORS. BDO IS ALSO POPULAR WITH THE BAME COMMUNITY – THIRD MOST POPULAR OUT OF THE MAJOR FIRMS; WITHIN BAME, WE ARE MOST POPULAR WITH THE ASIAN COMMUNITY. WE ARE NOT AS WELL KNOWN BY PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY OR LONG-TERM CONDITION (UK TRENDENCE RESEARCH 2020).



During lockdown, we launched a new quarterly Networks Newsletter to promote and celebrate our networks.

More than a third of the world's population has been in lockdown in 2020. Researchers have been considering the impact for individuals, groups, communities and workforces when faced with periods of physical distancing, isolation and even social breakdown. But despite the concerns, behavioural experts are seeing some positive and unexpected results, including widespread outpourings of charity, togetherness and empathy for complete strangers.

As many of us reflect on what 'belonging' and 'community' mean to us in a COVID-19 world, we thank our Network groups for creating a place for our local communities, in which we can provide support, promote inclusivity and encourage us to be ourselves.

We aim for our Networks to be well-represented groups, with access to strong and prominent role models. We embrace individuality along with collaborative working; collaboration is critical between our Networks. We believe that 'difference' is what makes us great and what strengthens our team, which is why we foster an inclusive culture at BDO that encourages people to be themselves.

In the last 12 months, our Networks have:

- ▶ worked together on cross-network projects to share their stories, aims and challenges together
- ▶ hosted a series of skills-based, practical networking events to support female career development – held in London but streamed regionally

- ▶ held Bantz with BAME informal networking events in our London office
- ▶ hosted dedicated Mindfulness sessions
- ▶ attended the InterTech LGBTQ+ Diversity Forum
- ▶ celebrated Passover, Ramadan, Eid, Easter, PRIDE and Trans Visibility Day during lockdown
- ▶ encouraged our colleagues to complete our Inclusion Survey.

See our Yearbook on page 4 for more activities.

BDO NOW APPEARS IN THE FT DIVERSITY LEADERS' RANKING, A REPORT WHICH HIGHLIGHTS THE 700 BEST EUROPEAN COMPANIES THAT OFFER A DIVERSE AND INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE.

CHAPTER FOUR GOTTA HAVE FAITH

At BDO, we have a number of community faith networks:



TAHIR EBRAHIM

Private Client Tax Director, father to two young children and all-round sports fan.

"BDO's Islamic Network supports Muslim employees to practice their religion in a manner balanced to the professional environment; recognising that both work and faith are essential elements of daily life. Our network provides a forum for discussion and events on a variety of topics such as raising awareness and understanding of Islam, charity and community work. We also aim to support the firm's business objectives by promoting the expansion of service lines, such as Islamic finance and the firm's business in the Middle East.

"This year, we shared our real-time experiences of Ramadan during lockdown with our colleagues via a 'Ramadan Reflections' blog. In doing so, we raised £3,000 for Orphans In Need. This helped us stay connected with our network members as well as other colleagues at a time when we couldn't be together to pray or celebrate.

"Majid Hussain, a director, also ran a series of 'Be Kind To Your Mind' mindfulness sessions with an Islamic theme in January to help our people succeed as they started the new year. Very positive feedback was received from Muslim and non-Muslim employees alike."



RICHARD LEVY

Audit Partner, keen swimmer and early riser.

"Our Jewish Network's aim is to raise awareness and understanding across the firm about some of the key elements of the Jewish faith, including dietary laws, weekly Sabbath observance and the Jewish festivals. Each year – COVID-19 aside – we hold a number of internal networking (early evening) events, typically around the dates of the major Jewish holidays. We also encourage our Jewish employees to get involved in the external charity events in which the firm participates on a regular basis. We help to support the firm's long relationship and strong business connections with the Jewish Community, with a view to helping entrepreneurially-spirited and ambitious businesses and individuals to succeed."



ROGER BUCKLEY

Corporate Finance Partner and Christ-loving, rugby-loving, voluminous-tea drinker.

"We are very pleased this year to announce the launch of the Christian network, which joins the existing BDO networks that provide an opportunity for people to celebrate and be visible about their faith and/or culture. Our Christian Network would like to provide a means of connection for followers of Jesus of all denominations and backgrounds. We want to encourage each other in the practice of our faith within the workplace, be there for BDO colleagues in need – for example, for new students and recruits – to help them succeed, and to explain the Christian faith to those who would like to know more.

"The group has been a lockdown success story. Starting with an online gathering of Christians brought together by word of mouth from offices across the UK, we have held twice-weekly meetings during COVID-19."



CHAPTER FOUR A YEAR OF COMING OUT WHILST STAYING IN



TIM THORNTON

BLEND Network co-lead,
Forensics Senior Manager.

BLEND is our lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT) network.

Our network's objective is to help all of you to live your professional life as you. We understand that you are going to be less effective in your job if you don't feel comfortable at work and feel you need to modify your words and behaviours to 'fit in'. We aim to create and promote a safe, open-minded and encouraging work environment when it comes to matters of gender and sexual identity, so that everyone can thrive.

The network name 'BLEND' recognises that BDO, and indeed the world, are not homogenous environments but that society is made up of a blend of countless intersecting identities. BLEND signifies that we strive to employ, support and nurture a diverse workforce.

Through internal and external networking, we aim to:

- ▶ support employees on matters of non-traditional gender and sexual identity
- ▶ provide an official channel for raising and dealing with issues concerning gender and sexual identity
- ▶ tackle and prevent instances of prejudice, improving internal practices as needed
- ▶ enhance our understanding of, and connection into, the LGBT client landscape
- ▶ support inclusive recruitment
- ▶ ensure BDO is partnered with the right organisations to help us succeed; BDO is a Stonewall Diversity Champion
- ▶ bring our network together around social occasions – even if, in 2020, that was through Virtual Pride celebrations.



OISÍN SHARE

Co-founder of BLEND North (our BLEND Network group across our Northern offices), which launched during lockdown, creative media design manager, celebrating 20 years of coffee obsession.

ON COMING OUT

It's important for people to know that coming out never stops, it isn't a tick box on life's to-do list. Some people may still be coming out to themselves, as well as their family, so the workplace may be some way down their agenda. Coming out is different in all cultures, and for many, it can be seen to be something to dismiss entirely from a professional workplace.

Each time I meet a new colleague, I may or may not have to come out to them, even if it's to mention that I am having dinner with my partner after work. It may sound simple, but for some people it can be tough without personal confidence or a supportive work environment. Coming out concerns our identity and true self; consider the many



challenges someone will have if they were to come out as trans mid-way through their career – it's important we are there for each other.

ON BEING OURSELVES

Last year, to coincide with Manchester Pride, my colleague Emelie and I organised a week of LGBTQ events, both in the office and in the community. For our main event, three speakers from charities and cultural organisations were invited to talk to BDO about LGBT+ activism, culture, history and youth. We had some really lovely, heart-touching feedback and I was proud that we were able to foster those connections that day. People shared part of their selves and we all grew from it.

ON THE IMPORTANCE OF ALLIES

Nobody's free until everybody's free is a quote from Fannie Lou Hamer that you will have seen on signs during the Black Lives Matter protests this year. These protests continue, and the fight for an end to racism and injustice is given strength with allies. It's important for people to extend privilege and ability

to whom need it most. As the UK saw with Lesbians and Gay Support the Miners in the mid-1980s, this solidarity continues as activist groups raise the volume of the voice for change. On an individual level, allies can provide energy, momentum and support. It's important that allies take on some of the burden of change – educate yourself about what is happening, how you can help dismantle barriers or injustice, and where you can help fundraise. Very often, resources are what is needed most.



CHAPTER FOUR DISABILITY MATTERS

OUR BDO DNA SURVEY CONFIRMED THAT 13.6% OF OUR PEOPLE HAVE A DISABILITY OR ARE MANAGING A LONG-TERM CONDITION.

THIS YEAR, BDO ACHIEVED DISABILITY CONFIDENT LEVEL 1 ACCREDITATION. THIS IS IN RECOGNITION OF OUR COMMITMENT TO AND ACTIVITY IN SUPPORTING COLLEAGUES WITH A DISABILITY AND BEING MORE INCLUSIVE WITH OUR RECRUITMENT PRACTICES. WHEN RECRUITMENT STARTS AGAIN IN 2021, WE AIM TO PROGRESS TO LEVEL 2 ACCREDITATION. WE ARE ALSO REVIEWING OTHER CHARTERS OR PARTNERSHIPS WITH WHOM WE CAN WORK TO START TO MAKE A MORE TANGIBLE DIFFERENCE TO OUR COLLEAGUES OF TODAY AND TOMORROW.



HANNAH RICHARDS

Senior Tax Associate and proud owner of Taylor, the cat who loves all the cuddles and chin rubs.

At the beginning of COVID-19, I received the fateful letter advising me to shield; I have a genetic condition that means I am deemed clinically extremely vulnerable. I was both thankful for the recognition, whilst terrified of what it meant as the newsreel was never endingly sober. Added to this, you swiftly realise that the perks of living alone and independently in Leeds soon dwindle when you cannot leave the house, so I decided to move back to my parents in Kent. I commandeered their dining room (entertaining was not exactly high on the agenda), and my dad knocked up a desk to the right height for me.

One of the few things from this pandemic that was spot on every time was the clarity from the firm in relation to closing the

offices, and when we might start to see a return to the office. From the start, the firm has taken this very seriously. Signposting well ahead of time when things will change – “take your laptops home every evening” was a mantra by the end of February. I remember we were all a little jokey around the huge tubs of disinfectant wipes; now I’m impressed at the foresight.

A second comfort was the near identical, supportive view coming from the firm of working from home; which chimed with my own needs. Having watched the ever-negative newsreel over the weekend, I spoke with a partner on the morning of Monday 16 March explaining that I wished to work from home from the following day, due to my elevated risk, and could I commandeer a meeting room for the day to work on software that, at the time, only worked in the office – “no problem” was the response. By the following day, everyone in the firm was in the same boat.

This gave me real comfort that the health and safety of everyone at BDO was the number one priority. Time and time again, this message has been reiterated in our COO’s weekly emails.

From a personal perspective, it has been lovely reconnecting with my parents, and Taylor loves my parents’ garden. More importantly, amongst all of this personal benefit, I have been able to work just as effectively as when I was in the office.

My mantra that has kept me going has been:

- ▶ Stay Connected – with your team, your family, and your sanity
- ▶ Do not be afraid to ask for help
- ▶ We will get through this, and be more resilient for it.



CHAPTER FIVE

HELPING BUSINESS SUCCEED

THE YEAR WE ALL NEEDED TO RETHINK



SIMON GALLAGHER

Leadership Team member, Chair of BDO's COVID-19 Taskforce, lover of hill-walking.

In the early part of March, just before the UK went into national lockdown, the most frequent question BDO people were asking me was: "what can we do to help?"

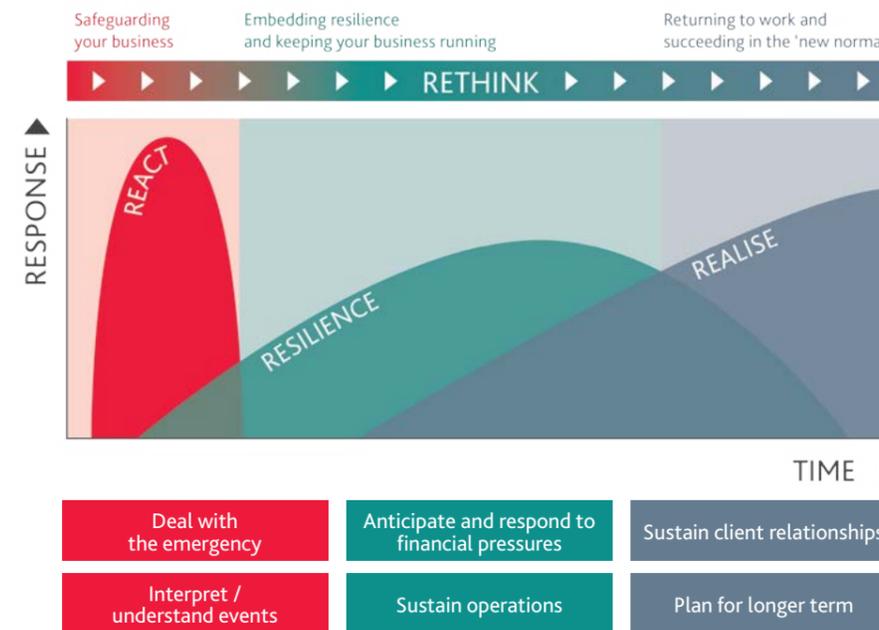
Our BDO advisers wanted to use their skills, experience and time to help business succeed. They might not yet have known the scale or length of the lockdown, nor how quickly the global recession would strike. But they knew they were in the privileged position of having knowledge, skills and contacts that could help 40,000 businesses and individuals to endure, if not then succeed.

So the Leadership Team's question was this: "How do we pull together the full power of our firm to help UK's entrepreneurially-spirited businesses through COVID-19?"

I chaired our newly-created COVID-19 Taskforce, a group of experienced partners representing all areas of our business – and we were tasked with finding the answer to that question.

A MODEL

We created a simple 'Rethink' model; this helped us to frame our external conversations during COVID-19. It helped our teams to have real business conversations with manufacturers, retailers, software companies, real estate developers, building societies, tech and media companies, law firms, private wealth individuals or private equity companies about how to 'Rethink' how they operate in a COVID-19 world.



The model covered three stages: React, Resilience, Realise. It recognised that, for example, our advisory clients were at different stages in their business life-cycle as they entered the crisis. It allowed us to talk to businesses and individuals about the immediate actions they needed to take to React to the immediate crisis. But it also helped to frame discussions about how companies can build Resilience through the uncertain times and – in time – to Realise their potential as new ways of working became the reality.

A MINDSET

But having thousands of individual conversations was just the first step. The Rethink model aimed to consider likely business needs throughout COVID-19 – but also BDO's capability as a firm to respond with suitable support and solutions.

One of the important aspects of our 'Unifying Culture' is that we can pull the right experts together to then work collaboratively to help those businesses tackle their challenges at the right time. Which meant we needed to do two things: spot trends, and share tools.

In this way, we could spot that one of our retail clients hadn't claimed a particular COVID grant; going on to receiving this grant meant they could protect 14 people's jobs during lockdown. We also spotted that companies who needed to use shared workspaces to continue operating during lockdown were unable to claim rates relief – so we boosted our support in this area to help those businesses with greater cash-flow, at a time when cash was king for them. And we could identify early that – for

one set of clients – it was hard to get to grips with the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS), so we developed an easy model to help them understand the scheme and aid their decision-making.

Helping business succeed during COVID-19

We are very proud of the work our people have been doing to help businesses succeed during COVID-19. Here are just a handful of examples; we:

- ▶ used our M&A sale support, modelling services and due diligence expertise (across commercial, financial and tax vendor) to land the sale of a medical business that pioneered the development of medicines for rare conditions, including paediatric and neonatal patients
- ▶ shared a passion to keep people active during lockdown with Sport England and UK Sport. They needed to act as a supporting body to the organisations they fund who were facing financial issues because of the crisis. To 'react', we helped them develop a microsite, including advice on tax, fraud, IT and financial planning and set up a helpdesk to offer support to funded bodies. To build 'resilience', we organised informative blogs to share best practice and answer topical questions
- ▶ supported a global manufacturer, severely hit by a fall in orders in lockdown, to demonstrate resilience by redirecting some of their goods to pop-up hospitals, reorganising their group to tackle longer-term COVID-19 impacts and altering their operations to preserve the continuity of their critical functions



- ▶ helped a company – at that time, without a Financial Director – to understand what would be involved in raising debt funding, as one of their possible measures to tackle COVID-19 impacts. We built them a financial forecast model to help them make their immediate decisions – but to also build resilience into their financial planning
- ▶ actively supported the Small Business Council to role-model best-practice behaviour in payment practices during the crisis. Research from the Federation of Small Businesses showed 62% of small businesses experienced late or frozen payments from April '20. This not only put untold pressure on smaller businesses trying to react to the crisis – but it also stored up problems for all large UK companies who are required to report publicly on their payment practices, policies and performances. We contacted our large clients to encourage them to consider their payment practices – and to ensure they would be publicly reporting their payment practices in the year ahead; just as we do.
- ▶ ensured businesses had access to robust, accurate and dynamic financial modelling. On the cusp of a global recession, we built models that generated vital financial information, which then assisted management teams to make business-saving decisions, conserve cash and protect future operations. This helped them to react – but also then build in resilience as they had a better understanding of the key drivers for their business and funding requirements.
- ▶ recognised that management teams across the construction sector needed support in their resilience. Short-term, there was bad press on health and safety measures on-site; long-term, the sector needed resilience until the economy strengthened and the confidence to invest returned. We hosted a webinar to review the impact on the UK construction sector, joined by the Chair of the Construction Leadership Council and CEO of MACE, as well as the Small Business Commissioner and host of the Prompt Payment Code.



What business leaders said about how our Rethink model helped them to succeed:

“What a great piece of thinking.”

“This is really important and has got me thinking about what we need to do.”

“I love this model – can I use it to underpin my discussions with my management team on what we need to focus on.”

“The most useful document I have seen in a long time.”



WHEN OFFICES CLOSE, MINDS CAN OPEN



DAN FRANCIS

Head of Innovation and Digital, amateur futurologist and taught his Golden Retriever to paddleboard during lockdown.

For the last four years, BDO's business strategy has been BUILD. The 'D' stands for Digital Mindset – something that was transformed almost overnight as we went through the largest-ever agile working experiment and really put our digital technology to the test with 100% of our firm working remotely and often using new technology such as Teams.

Because we had already invested in encouraging a culture of innovation, we were quick to recognise that 'necessity is the mother of invention'. During lockdown, we created our first BDO Digital Store which included a range of digital products that can be bought and used in seconds. We also fully digitised our Private Client Services tax return process so it became fully online, digital and mobile-friendly. We even allowed our clients to pay us securely and online to avoid our colleagues using office-based payment terminals.

That provided businesses and individuals with digital solutions – at a time when nearly everything needed to be digital.



STUART LISLE

Tax Partner, Sales Board member, one of the original architects of BDO's Core Purpose, life-long Saints fan, petrol head and beach-hutter.

Nearly three years ago, we did a belt-and-braces review of what the BDO brand really meant: to companies we worked with, to our people and out in the marketplace. What were our 'true colours'? After reviewing the thousands of datasets, evidence packs and quotes that we gathered over the 12-month process, we identified that people wanted to work with BDO for three reasons: firstly, because they liked the different characters in the BDO team; secondly, because of the quality of our work; and thirdly, because we provided ideas they could trust.

Which is how we came to our brand strapline: IDEAS | PEOPLE | TRUST.

Now we're in 2020 – dealing with a global pandemic and recession – and we're reminded of the saying that 'tough times reveal true colours'. The 40,000 entrepreneurially-spirited and ambitious businesses and individuals that we advise greatly needed our ideas. They needed access to quality people who understand business and its needs for resilience and re-imagination. And they needed to work with people they could trust to deliver for them during turbulent times.



Rethinking: it starts with thinking

During COVID-19, BDO leaders around the world wanted to share their insights and reflections to help other business leaders to remain resilient and forward-looking. We captured their thoughts in a new global podcast series, called 'Time To Lead'.

Topics discussed included the power of purpose, building a sustainable business and how mid-market businesses are coping with globalisation. Our own Managing Partner, Paul Eagland, led a podcast debate called 'Over the Horizon' to explore the important lessons from the crisis and what both the economic landscape and businesses will look like after the crisis.

DEVELOPING SKILLS DURING COVID-19



WENDY WALTON

Leadership Team member and Global Head of Private Client Services, wannabe runner and lockdown-convert to stationary exercise bike.

During lockdown, we recognised that some people's roles were much, much quieter because of unavoidable COVID-19 business impacts to some of our client base. We were really clear about what our role was as a major employer in the UK: to protect our people's health and wellbeing – and their jobs. An important programme to help us achieve that was called 'Flexi Force'.

First, the mindset

We introduced the 'Flexi Force' concept early in lockdown to ensure we had a flexible mindset when it comes to using our skills in the best way, at the right time. This ensured we could support each other – for example, our working parents who needed flexibility in hours or projects

to cope with home-schooling, childcare or other caring responsibilities. But it also ensured we could support the thousands of entrepreneurially-spirited businesses who suddenly found themselves needing new advice to tackle the short- and long-term impacts of the pandemic. It was an obvious way to show how our Unifying Culture is put into practice in a commercial way.

Then, the tool

During lockdown, we created a Flexi Force tool, which we continue to roll out across the business. This tool will unite the firm on a common platform and will help us to monitor and deploy the best skills to the right areas of our business. Our intention is that the tool will channel all requests for, and availability of, resource into one portal for resourcing managers and business leaders to review. This will accelerate how soon we can put the right people, with the right skills on a project to help a business at their stage of the Rethink model.

And the skills development

We were able to identify, develop and deploy people across different areas of BDO to areas in which they could best add value as work levels fluctuate. Where people had time available but not yet the practical skills, we created bespoke training and induction sessions to develop the right level of know-how or software skills they needed to support the team.

"I'm so proud of how our Flexi Force came together across the firm to support thousands of entrepreneurially-spirited businesses and individuals to get through this crisis.

"How did it look in action? In the early stages of lockdown, some companies put tax projects on the back-burner. We redeployed some of our London Tax Group colleagues into our Valuations, Business Restructuring and Shared Service Centre to help them deal with an uplift in their work. The following week, our Business Services and Outsourcing team needed additional people to support on some major client projects during lockdown. We redeployed and retrained colleagues from our Gatwick, East Anglia and Technology Risk Assurance teams to help.

"Very quickly, we saw that Flexi Force was an important measure in helping as many of our colleagues stay productive – and in giving our clients access to broad skills and experience in their teams."

CHAPTER SIX

HELPING SOCIETY SUCCEED

GREAT EXPECTATIONS: OF OURSELVES



ANGELA CROSS

U Board member, North West Head of Tax, ecstatic Liverpool FC fan and new-found gardening lover (lockdown has a lot to answer for).

Spot the difference between these two paragraphs.

We're a major UK employer, a regulated audit firm, and accountancy and business advisers to 40,000 entrepreneurially-spirited companies – so we choose to stand up to scrutiny. We expect ourselves to stand for the right things.

We proactively seek to be a responsible business in which we are aware of the wider community in which we work – and we want to inspire our people, clients and the wider community so we collectively contribute to a successful society. This leads to the overall success of the firm, our people, our clients and audited entities, and our local communities and environment.

Not only is this, in my view, a much more satisfying, rewarding, sustainable and more enjoyable way to work, it also helps society to succeed.

It may be just a few words that are different – but there is a world of difference in mindset, behaviours and decision-making.

Reflecting on my time at BDO – first as an employee – and then progression to becoming partner, U Board member and now local business leader, the second paragraph describes what I see in BDO's culture.

And we have so many stories of how we help society to succeed.

I describe it as helping society to succeed in two ways: with our jobs and with our time.

With our jobs: being an accountant or a business adviser is a noteworthy profession. It's a skill, a learned mindset, and a responsibility that underpins transparency and integrity in business. An auditor needs to provide trustworthy financial information on company performance, thus ensuring the proper functioning of a market economy. A tax adviser plays a role in creating a strong, competent and transparent tax profession, which is vital to supporting growth and competitiveness of the UK, as well as getting the right funding to the public purse. And our advisory experts are clear that all organisations – of any size or sector – should be able to access quality advice so they can do the right things, and do them right, as their business grows. These are important jobs that help society succeed. Which is why it's quite right that we keep needing to raise the bar on quality, independence and ethics to build back trust in our profession.

With our time: at BDO, we have a fantastic approach to Citizenship called our 5+5 Programme. Every employee at BDO can take ten days as paid leave to work on strategic and action-orientated community projects. We have offered these ten days for circa 14 years; that's how long our CSR commitments have been embedded in our job offers. Read more on page 62.

HELPING SOCIETY SUCCEED DURING COVID-19

At BDO, we aim to work with organisations who share similar values to us. So it's inspiring to see how our people and clients were working hard in the fight to tackle the major challenges of 2020:

- ▶ Our Lead Partner for East Anglia, Lisa Clampin, was handed the High Sheriff of Essex award in recognition of her 'great and valuable services to the community during the COVID-19 pandemic'
- ▶ Our International Institutions & Donor Assurance (IIDA) team completed the world's first Good Financial Grant Practice (GFGP) certification of a healthcare research facility in Bangalore. This is the world's first international standard to help strengthen the governance of grant funding – so donors know exactly how funds will be managed. As a leading provider of services to the global donor community, our work facilitates aid and development flows, in turn saving lives, building economies, educating children and funding academic research, developing vaccines and healthcare treatments, providing shelter to

those in need, and protecting our environment. GFGP is just one way in which we help make a difference

- ▶ We were referenced in the Sunday Times in an article exploring how large companies were treating smaller companies and suppliers during the pandemic. One of our research agency suppliers, Halo Works, quoted us as being "outstandingly good" in how we treated them in light of COVID-19
- ▶ Six teams shared one common purpose: to help an important medical company succeed in its development of medicines for rare conditions. Advisers from our M&A, Financial Due Diligence, Commercial Due Diligence, Modelling, Tax and Forensics teams came together to complete its sale to a speciality pharma company, which helped it to create more medical products in more parts of the world
- ▶ Our International Projects Group (IPG) helped to deliver 'Manufacturing Africa', a flagship programme to support increased foreign direct investment. When COVID-19 hit, our team responded fast to the outbreak, particularly to support manufacturers in East Africa who needed to adapt to the pandemic
- ▶ As lockdown began easing in Summer 2020, we supported a new campaign called 'Because I'm A Londoner'. Run by a collection of businesses, called The London Alliance, and Visit London, the campaign aims to rebuild consumer confidence across every borough of London
- ▶ We host events for the 'Women Working in Development' network.

Given the importance of the Black Lives Matter movement in 2020, the team hosted their first virtual event on the topic of diversity in development with the simple title: Are we doing enough?

- ▶ Our London Tax Group hosted their annual Charity Week during lockdown. This included a bake-off competition virtually judged by the CEO of Maître Choux. They raised £6,600 for their four chosen charities: Tax Aid (a chosen BDO charity that provides tax advice to people on low incomes – especially the elderly – whose problems cannot be resolved with HMRC), Great Ormond Street Hospital, Refuge (supporting victims of domestic violence) and the Diversity Project Charity that supports charities with social mobility, diversity and inclusivity aims
- ▶ We took on many 'step' challenges to raise funds for charities. This included our Legal team talking part in a virtual walking challenge to raise money and show support for the London Legal Support Trust, and our International Institutions & Donor Assurance walked at least 8,000 steps a day to raise money for Young Minds
- ▶ Our BDO South East colleagues joined together to knit mini bobble hats in support of Age UK's The Big Knit.



MICHAEL YEBOAH

Tax Technician and Church youth leader.

"We all make a difference in our day jobs at BDO: the role we play in capital markets, in supporting an entrepreneur to succeed, in providing assurance to Audit Committees, in advising a business owner on their next step towards successful growth. We understand that the talent and energy we have can contribute to the kind of society we all want to live in."





VANESSA LEE

Tax Partner:

I have been volunteering for Tax Aid for 15 years, supporting with face-to-face meetings and helping on the phone lines. Having spent my career in Private Client Services, I have been able to assist the many people who need support and have lost their way. Individuals who are on low incomes and have become widowed, are facing capacity issues or are in distressing social situations can be terrified with correspondence from HMRC, but providing support can be transformative to their wellbeing and in getting them on the right path. I am now on the national advisory board and have been supporting them by ensuring the charity remains financially sustainable. The board is made up of senior tax practitioners and a key focus is on working with HMRC and improving their approach on a variety of matters, for example the approach to outsourced debt collection which can create a genuine source of anxiety for vulnerable individuals.

5+5 CITIZENSHIP PROGRAMME

5+5

At BDO, our 5+5 Citizenship Programme gives you ten days' paid leave:

- ▶ 'My Action 5' – five days can be used for the usual fundraising, volunteering or team-building days
- ▶ 'My Strategic 5' – five days for people to use their professional skillsets to make a difference. It might be as a trustee of a charity, working on a big societal challenge with some of our entrepreneurial clients or supporting schools to help with interview prep or CV writing.



OUR BDO PEOPLE SPENT 9,500 HOURS VOLUNTEERING IN THEIR LOCAL COMMUNITIES, AS THEY USED THEIR CSR DAYS TO HELP SOCIETY SUCCEED.

Thank you

It has been extremely inspiring and encouraging for us to see many of our healthcare and life sciences clients making their own contribution to attempt to overcome the coronavirus and its impact on society. We have been proud to have them as BDO clients and hope that their efforts continue to prove to be fruitful.



MONEY MATTERS

- ▶ We offer a 'Give As You Earn' arrangement that allows our people to make tax-free donations to charities of their choice directly from their salary. BDO employees have generously donated a combined total of nearly £110,000 over the last financial year to a range of good causes through this arrangement. This arrangement is fully funded by BDO ensuring 100% of donations reach the chosen charities or trusts
- ▶ This level of payroll giving has been recognised with a Bronze award, according to the Payroll Giving Quality Mark
- ▶ The BDO Charitable Trust makes discretionary grants and matched donations. In the financial year to July 2020, the total Matched Giving contribution from BDO was £42,500
- ▶ We have a broad range of core and voluntary benefits which our people have access to through our flexible benefits platform, Flexcel

Virtual Big Knit

Next up in our #StayConnected stories, our colleagues in Gatwick and Guildford have come together virtually to knit mini bobble hats in support of Age UK's "The Big Knit".



#stayconnected

IDEAS | PEOPLE | TRUST



- ▶ Our employees can obtain discounts on goods and services through our Employee Discounts arrangement, learn more about finances through various financial wellbeing portals, have access to free mortgage advice, and the ability to contact our Employee Assistance Programme for information or help around financial and personal matters.

CHAPTER SIX

THE ONLY WAY IS ETHICS



DAVID ISHERWOOD

Ethics Partner and devout Northerner. Participates on committees with many acronyms (WCCAEW, ICAEW, IFAC FOF, ACE, GPPC, PRG...).

We live and work in a time when the public spotlight is focused on the quality of work from, and the role of, accountants both in the UK and more globally. Our economy and capital markets rely on reliable informative and accurate corporate reporting; and independent audit plays a key role in that. High-quality audit is of significant public interest and societal value, establishing trust in both transparent corporate reporting and integrity in business as a whole.

The audit reform dialogue that started over two years ago with the work of Sir John Kingman is one that we welcome. It involves enhancing the effectiveness of all the participants in the corporate reporting ecosystem and, although the pace of regulatory reform is rather measured, it is narrative that continues to advance in

the UK and, as corporate scandals emerge elsewhere, is one that is also starting to take shape in Europe and beyond.

A MATTER OF QUALITY AND A MATTER OF CULTURE

Every accounting and advisory firm needs to pay attention to quality now more than ever; they need to ensure that quality is embedded at a cultural level. The Financial Reporting Council defines culture as "a combination of the values, attitudes and behaviours manifested by an organisation in its operations and relations with its stakeholders." Audit quality and culture are intrinsically linked. Integrity, objectivity, independence and professional scepticism are the foundations of a strong audit practice and are all areas we take extremely seriously.

We recognise that we are in a constant improvement environment and we continue to make investments in our people and procedures in order to achieve and maintain the highest industry-wide standards. Audit is core to BDO's business and accounts for a third of our total revenues. It is therefore something we pay a huge amount of time and care in getting right. We continue to work to cement, promote and embed a culture that is committed to delivering consistently high-quality audits.

This is why ethics surrounds the way we behave in our personal lives and business and, quite rightly, underpin our BDO Values. In fact, it's so important that our commitment to Quality, Independence and Ethics is scribed into BDO's strategic framework and we have Quality Cornerstones that apply to our whole business.

Whether it's the Chartered Institute of Taxation, one of the Institutes for Chartered Accountants, the Society of Trust and Estate Practitioners or the Insolvency Practitioners Association, each of the professional bodies requires their members to act in accordance with five fundamental principles:

1. Integrity
2. Objectivity
3. Professional competence and care
4. Confidentiality
5. Professional behaviour

Because BDO LLP is a member firm of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW), every single one of our 5,500 people is required to abide by the ICAEW Code of Ethics – even if they are not a member of the Institute or any other professional body.

At BDO, we firmly believe living by these principles is a privilege, not a burden. They are already embedded in the firm's values, our commitment to quality, our strategic framework and critically our culture. This very report that you are reading reinforces that we're keen to provide more extensive and transparent public reporting on our culture to enhance engagement with stakeholders and to build confidence and trust. You can also read more in our 2020 Transparency Report.



PAULINE MCGEE

Head of Quality & Risk Management Team and fitness enthusiast.

Via our 'Speak Up' campaign, we encourage our people to speak up and raise any concerns they may have about the conduct of colleagues, clients and suppliers. We have three tools to practically help people: firstly, our Values, which people can use as a guide for what behaviours are or aren't acceptable. Secondly, our Code of Conduct, which is a framework to help us do the right thing. And thirdly, on the (hopefully rare) occasions when people have concerns, they can access a completely independent organisation to confidentially report these concerns, free of charge and available 24/7.



CHAPTER SIX MOVING ON UP WITH SOCIAL MOBILITY

Given that our Managing Partner joined BDO straight from school in 1987, after working in Walthamstow Market and choosing to join the workforce rather than go to university, you'd expect us to care a great deal about social mobility.

And we do. We:

- ▶ were a founding partner in the creation of the social mobility drive called 'Access Accountancy' in 2014. This continues to provide greater opportunities to talented UK students from disadvantaged backgrounds
- ▶ hold a position as a Trustee on the Access Accountancy Patron's Group through our partner, Sarah Hillary
- ▶ took part in a pilot programme run by the ICAEW with other major accountancy firms called RISE to encourage students from disadvantaged backgrounds to consider accountancy as a profession

- ▶ were the first major accountancy firm to offer the higher apprenticeship in audit
- ▶ expanded our long-established school leaver programme. Both our graduate and apprentice programmes are now aligned to the Level 7 Accountancy / Taxation Professional Apprenticeship standard. Upon completion, our trainees will then qualify as an ICAEW, CIOT, CIMA or ACCA member and will also hold a Level 7 Accountancy / Taxation Professional Apprenticeship, which is the equivalent to a Master's degree
- ▶ take part (COVID-19 excepting) in a range of mentoring and internships with organisations specifically targeting inner city schools and students from disadvantaged backgrounds
- ▶ support our trainees through their exams, including study time, and our excellent results speak for themselves – regularly up to 10% above the national average
- ▶ are delighted to have welcomed 90 new apprentices into last year's new cohort of BDO trainees; and will welcome 70 more before 2020 is out
- ▶ crafted our newly defined Employer Brand Promise, so we can clearly, consistently and coherently communicate what makes BDO a unique and attractive place to work.



HOLLY THOMPSON

Audit Trainee, Glasgow:

I knew becoming a Chartered Accountant was the path I wanted to go down, so going to university just didn't seem worth it to me, so I joined BDO's school leaver programme in Audit. I'm gaining experience and studying towards qualifications which BDO funds and I get paid!

Now most of the way through my five-year programme, I can honestly say I don't have any regrets. BDO was the only firm I applied to as I knew that their ethos, values and opportunities could get me where I want to go and resonated with my character. I've really enjoyed the past few years and am excited to use my experience so far as a launch pad to progress through the firm.

BDO took part in National Apprenticeship Week 2020 hosting Insight Days across the country in London, Reading, Birmingham, Liverpool and Leeds.

We had 29 people on Industrial Placements join us over summer 2020 and we are recruiting for the same next year.

ONE EVENT, SO MANY LEARNINGS

In February 2020, we hosted what was called "one of the best events I've been to in years" – and a post from the event went on to trend on LinkedIn under #inclusion that afternoon. Perhaps it can be best summarised as: the moment the former leader of the most-feared London street gang met the leaders of a top accountancy firm.

'In conversation with Paul Eagland' was Karl Lokko, a campaigner for Gang Reform and Social Justice and Motivational Speaker. Paul and Karl discussed why we must unearth hidden talent by focusing on future potential – and the role of business leaders and colleagues in discovering and nurturing this.

Two different stories, many commonalities

Our two speakers shared their backgrounds, how they broke the mould with their mindset and choices, and the critical importance of the people they met along the way in helping them achieve their successes today:

- ▶ Paul Eagland, growing up working on a market stall in Walthamstow – and now Managing Partner of a £600m UK success story
- ▶ Karl Lokko, former leader of one of the most-feared London gangs in Brixton – and now a campaigner for gang reform and social justice, and adviser to business leaders.



In summer 2020 – as COVID-19 guidelines meant we couldn't run a full summer internship programme – we welcomed our interns onto a Virtual Internship Programme. Thanks to all of you for joining us.

KATE HILLAS: "In just a week I feel like I got a really great immersion into what life at BDO is like, and I particularly enjoyed connecting with a group of interns while working on the group presentation project. The audit training allowed me to put the theory from my degree into practice, and the buddy lunch gave me a great opportunity to ask about the BDO graduate programme. Despite lockdown challenges, BDO filled the week with as many opportunities as they could to connect with a wide range of interns and current employees which was great."



BDO WAS HANDED THE 'BEST FOR SKILLS DEVELOPMENT' AWARD AT THE LATEST SCHOOL LEAVERS AWARDS

CHAPTER SIX

YOU CAN'T TALK ABOUT THE GOOD YOU DO,
UNTIL YOU DO NO HARM

MATTHEW WHITE

Senior Partner, husband,
father, chef, cyclist.

"How do we all work together to tackle climate change?" It's a big question! A non-negotiable one in our eyes, and one that every company is (or should be) working on. Climate change is considered a global emergency. Current government plans and commitments are not remotely close to achieving carbon emission reductions of 45% by 2030 – which itself is believed would only avoid some of the worst outcomes of climate change.

At a macro level, we believe businesses have an economic imperative and a moral responsibility to do everything they can to ensure a thriving world. At a micro level, clients, employees and regulators are demanding more evidence of companies' Environment, Social and Governance (ESG) actions.

WHAT CAN WE DO AT BDO?

At BDO, we act on climate change because it is the right thing to do, our employees expect it, and our clients and future generations deserve it. Our Core Purpose is 'helping you succeed' – at its core, this is about societal purpose; there is perhaps no greater alignment than with the Climate Change agenda. How we act on environment, sustainability and governance (ESG) matters sits squarely in 'Citizenship' – which we have identified as a priority for our Unifying Culture. Looking specifically at the 'E' in ESG:

AS A FIRM

- ▶ BDO UK has signed up to the UN Global Compact Agreement
- ▶ BDO has committed to going carbon neutral
 - In January 2020, we let our people know that, via independent sustainability consultant, Carbon Smart [now Avieco Ltd], we had offset our identified carbon footprints from 2019 and 2018 combined
 - Offsetting our emissions in this way helps to fund an African climate project, which provides efficient and safe Gyapa cookstoves to families across Ghana
 - We are working with Avieco to create carbon neutral offices and a Carbon Neutrality route map
- ▶ We have been reducing our actual carbon footprint at a steady rate year-on-year: last year, we reduced the firm's intensity per FTE by 28% and the year before by 13%

- ▶ We reduced our energy consumption, total emissions and emissions intensity for a third consecutive year; naturally, COVID-lockdowns played a part in this, as with many businesses
- ▶ We review supplier contracts for their environment and sustainability commitments
- ▶ We continue to be recertified for important environmental credentials (ISO14001:2015) which our clients and employees expect of us
- ▶ More than half of our office locations are rated either very good or higher, with six offices rated 'excellent', by independent environmental consultants
- ▶ We are working with our travel booking provider to measure and promote the carbon impact of each business journey requested in a post-COVID-19 world
- ▶ Our people can now order and choose carbon-neutral BDO stationery and merchandise
- ▶ We planted 300 trees in the UK as part of our Sunday Times Fast Track marketing partnership.

WORKING WITH OTHERS

No single firm or individual can tackle climate change alone. The solution is collaborative.

- ▶ Our Senior Partner, Matthew White, has joined Chapter Zero, a climate forum for Board Chairs and Non-Executive Directors to ensure climate change appears on the agenda of every boardroom table this year

- ▶ We are helping many clients succeed on a variety of sustainability projects, including the development of Circular Economy, forest protection technology and renewable power programmes
- ▶ The accountancy and business advisory work we do to help Renewable Energy companies with their corporate finance, forensics, audit or tax requirements is growing. Our partner, Marc Reinecke, has taken on the role as leader of BDO's Global Renewables sub-sector, a team which is now receiving further attention and investment from across BDO globally
- ▶ We partner with CleanGrowth, supporting tech start-ups find funding and a space to develop tech
- ▶ Our Model Audit team is ranked #1 globally in the Renewables sector.

AS INDIVIDUALS

- ▶ We want to keep working with our BDO people to identify the next right things to do
- ▶ Our 2019 Carbon report revealed something very stark: 74% of our carbon output was generated as a result of travel pre-COVID-19. There is one very obvious way to bring that down! We are encouraging all our people to think twice before travelling as we 'build back greener'
- ▶ We have trained Environment Champions in each office to help activate environment programmes locally
- ▶ We have opened up a 'There Is No Planet B' group on our internal social media tool to share personal hints, tips and stories

- ▶ BDO employees can contribute to charities that deal with carbon offsetting, for example the Woodlands Trust, through bespoke Give As You Earn benefits
- ▶ Our partners are also showing their commitment by personally paying to offset their individual footprints each year
- ▶ At BDO, we offer a generous ten CSR days each year. We are asking our people to think about how they can use some of their days to get involved in local Sustainability or Climate Change initiatives.

CHAPTER SEVEN

HELPING *BDO* SUCCEED

In summer 2020, our Transformation team started work to define what BDO's 'new way to work' will be in the aftermath of coronavirus. By that time, we were already 18 months into a programme we called Adviser of the Future, in which circa 30 of our business leaders had partnered with the London Business School to research, forecast and recommend how BDO needed to adapt to what our clients, accountancy market, technology, people and culture would be like in five years' time. That we'd already spent time on the Adviser of the Future programme gave us a head start in our post-lockdown response.

**JON RANDALL**

Head of Transformation and obsessed with motorcycles that go really, really fast.

Our BDO vision is "to be an independent, sustainably-profitable and globally-focused firm, known for helping people and businesses succeed." That means our Core Purpose – helping you succeed – is not just for today; it's a critical part of our long-term vision and our own success too. That vision gives us all a consistent direction in which to head, something which has been both important and helpful during such a turbulent year as 2020.

And there will be more change to come. As we start to consider a world post-COVID, we acknowledge we are now seeing a new way to work. There's no doubt that 2020 will appear in every corporate timeline as a defining point of transformation.

Before coronavirus, 27% of BDO employees already worked flexibly, be that formally through flexible working arrangements or informally via agile working. Come March 2020, 100% of our BDO population were working remotely, with some people requiring more flexibility than ever before as they searched for ways to manage their personal lockdown situations.

Zoom forward to Autumn and Winter 2020 and we prepared to enter a new phase in BDO's history – as a 'hybrid' workforce that could adapt to a dynamic COVID-19 landscape of changing Government policies, with some people needing to use office space to work effectively and with most continuing to work from home for the foreseeable future. I suspect that, by the time you're reading this, we'll have needed to adapt again.

We recognise that there will be cultural implications of this new way to work. But we also know that BDO has successfully adapted to many changes in the last 80 years – and we have tapped into our deep-rooted entrepreneurial spirit to do so. BDO was borne out of entrepreneurs, and we work daily with entrepreneurially-spirited and ambitious businesses and individuals. That entrepreneurial spirit means that, even if we're on the right track, we'll know we can get run over if we just sit there and wait.

**STUART WALTERS**

Chief Information Officer and rugby aficionado.

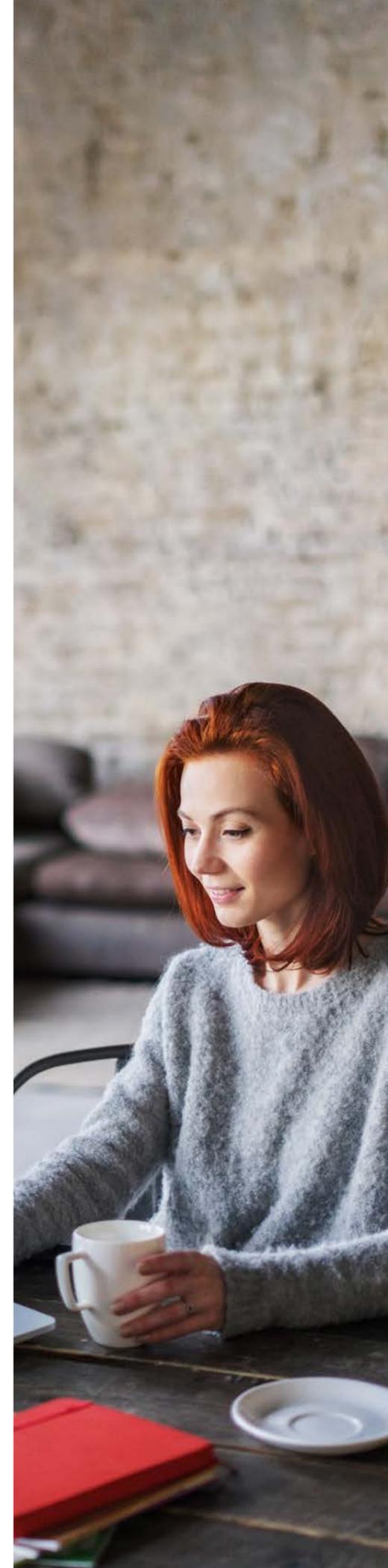
Technology will continue to reshape our lives over the coming years, whether digitalisation, advanced data analytics, cloud or automation, change will touch many aspects of life and business. It's also why topics such as cyber security and technology governance are now mainstream agenda items for the boards of UK businesses. Companies with a clear vision will see and deploy technology as an enabler to achieve success; those without a vision can become easily distracted by the latest 'new shiny toy' and invest in unsustainable or non-profitable areas.

Our digital products squad is a good example of different ways we were already working even before lockdown. It's a hybrid team made up of accountancy, IT and digital experts who work together on accelerated timescales to develop and test new products. Our UK team has also developed a global centre of excellence for Automation, skills which become more important as each month goes by. Not only is that an operational shift, but a cultural shift, in which a Growth Mindset of leaders and colleagues alike is imperative.

**KAREN DUFFIN**

Director of Transformation, interior design fan and kickboxer extraordinaire, added:

It has been said that we've gone through more change in the last six months than we would ordinarily do in ten years. And that transformation is set to continue. Our experience is that, if people really understand the 'why' behind the change, they will listen to, and want to be a part of, the 'how' and the 'what'. We can't tell a culture to change. It only gains traction through emotional connection and buy-in.



CHAPTER EIGHT

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE TO US

CAN'T KEEP OUR EYES OFF U:
HOW WE MONITOR OUR CULTURE

WITH SO MANY VARIABLES AT PLAY, MEASURING 'CULTURE' WITH A HARD METRIC ISN'T SOMETHING THAT WE THINK CAN BE DONE WITH CERTAINTY OR ACCURACY. THERE ISN'T ONE 'KILLER KPI'. HOWEVER, WE DO MEASURE CERTAIN BEHAVIOURS THAT WILL PROVIDE US WITH A TEMPERATURE CHECK ON HOW OUR CULTURE IS HELPING US SUCCEED; FOR EXAMPLE ENGAGEMENT LEVELS, HOW PROUD OUR PEOPLE ARE TO WORK AT BDO AND FEEDBACK FROM THE BUSINESSES WE WORK WITH.

THE ACADEMIC VIEW

We asked an external expert for their view on this challenging topic. **Professor Harminder Singh**, Lecturer of Change and Strategy at Warwick Business School, says:

"When a company looks to 'audit' its corporate culture, it wants to check two factors: the appropriateness of their cultural framework and that the behavioural rules and norms run right through the business. It's a challenge: culture is ambiguous. Subjective. Owned by everyone but singularly no-one, however understood by all as 'the way we do things around here'.

"What has been interesting this year is to see the resiliency of BDO's strategic framework (purpose, vision, values, and BUILD strategy). Despite people working from a distance to each other, communication remained strong; the essence of communication is the in-betweenness of words, which are filled with mutual-understanding of shared values.

"A strong culture can be transmitted through: encouraging two-way conversations and 'listening' more than pronouncements from the top; a collaborative approach to decision-making where each person is valued; and recognition that team-based effort is key to getting the work done.

"Culture is the way the values and associated mindsets are transmitted. This

is where stories are key, as they help to unify understanding of 'how we do things'. The stories make real the values that have clearly been set out in this report.

"Measuring culture is complex and sometimes subjective. However, the starting point are the Values and whether these are realised in the actual behaviour of the staff and the firm as a whole. A challenge to understanding culture is the problem of gathering data – often from a few sources. BDO is working to overcome this issue by seeking the direct observations of its staff from each part of the BDO structure, through surveys and also from the simple but powerful act of listening.

"The BDO aspiration is to establish a culture which values its staff and encourages the sharing of ideas as a source of growth and future services that will provide value to their clients, and for staff the motivation – and ultimately the satisfaction – of supporting colleagues and doing an exceptional job for its clients. BDO's next phase of cultural development – to respond to a changing environment – is already being considered.

"Much can be learned about an organisation's culture by examining its attitude towards governance, its relationships with clients or customers, what it reflects in its values, how it treats employees and how it reacts to negative events. And this report documents the achievements and future challenges."

THE INTERNAL AUDIT VIEW

Richard Weighell is a BDO partner, specialising in Internal Audit within the financial services sector. He has run many 'culture' audits for banks, asset managers and corporates. He believes:

"Culture can have an impact on the effectiveness of policies and behaviours, and is recognised as a key driver of conduct.

But culture is less tangible than traditional internal audit areas, and is more subjective. Culture is mainly driven from the top, whether consciously or unconsciously. Some companies will review their culture by looking at how they define, promote and evaluate their culture. Other companies will need to carry out a detailed gap analysis to bring its Stated, Measured and Actual cultures into alignment."

THE U BOARD VIEW

Chris Grove, Chair of our U Board, added:

"Many of us are accountants – so we like numbers. And we're ambitious – so we like numbers to aim for! But the 'softer' ways of monitoring culture are critical for us. We pay a lot of attention to BDO programmes such as our anonymous employee engagement survey – which we call our Listening Programme – our performance review discussions, our whistleblowing policies and our firm-wide feedback loop from our local U Leaders. Those measures hold most substance for us.

"As part of our long-term strategic journey, we have chosen a KPI of 'pride' to check we're on the right track: how proud do our people feel to work for BDO? Our employee engagement survey said that all our people feel proud of BDO 75% of the time. External experts tell us this is good – everyone is spending six hours of their working day, every day, feeling proud of the firm. We think 'pride' is a driver to do even greater things, as it unlocks confidence, engagement, loyalty and ambition."

A CULTURE WE'RE PROUD TO BE KNOWN FOR



JESSICA GOWAR

Our Director of Markets, Sales and Clients and a whisky-loving Canadian

You may have noticed BDO's strapline is IDEAS | PEOPLE | TRUST. Importantly for this Culture report, it has 'people' at the heart of it.

We launched that strapline after a year of extensive research and exploration with our people, leadership, clients and recruiters about how we capture everything that is special and authentic to working at, and with, BDO.

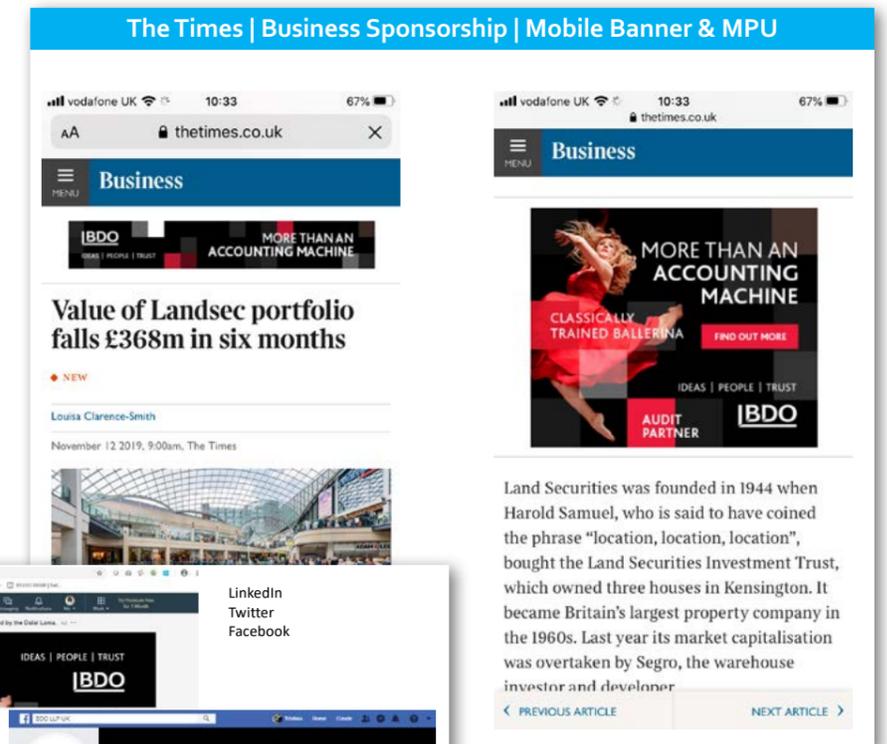
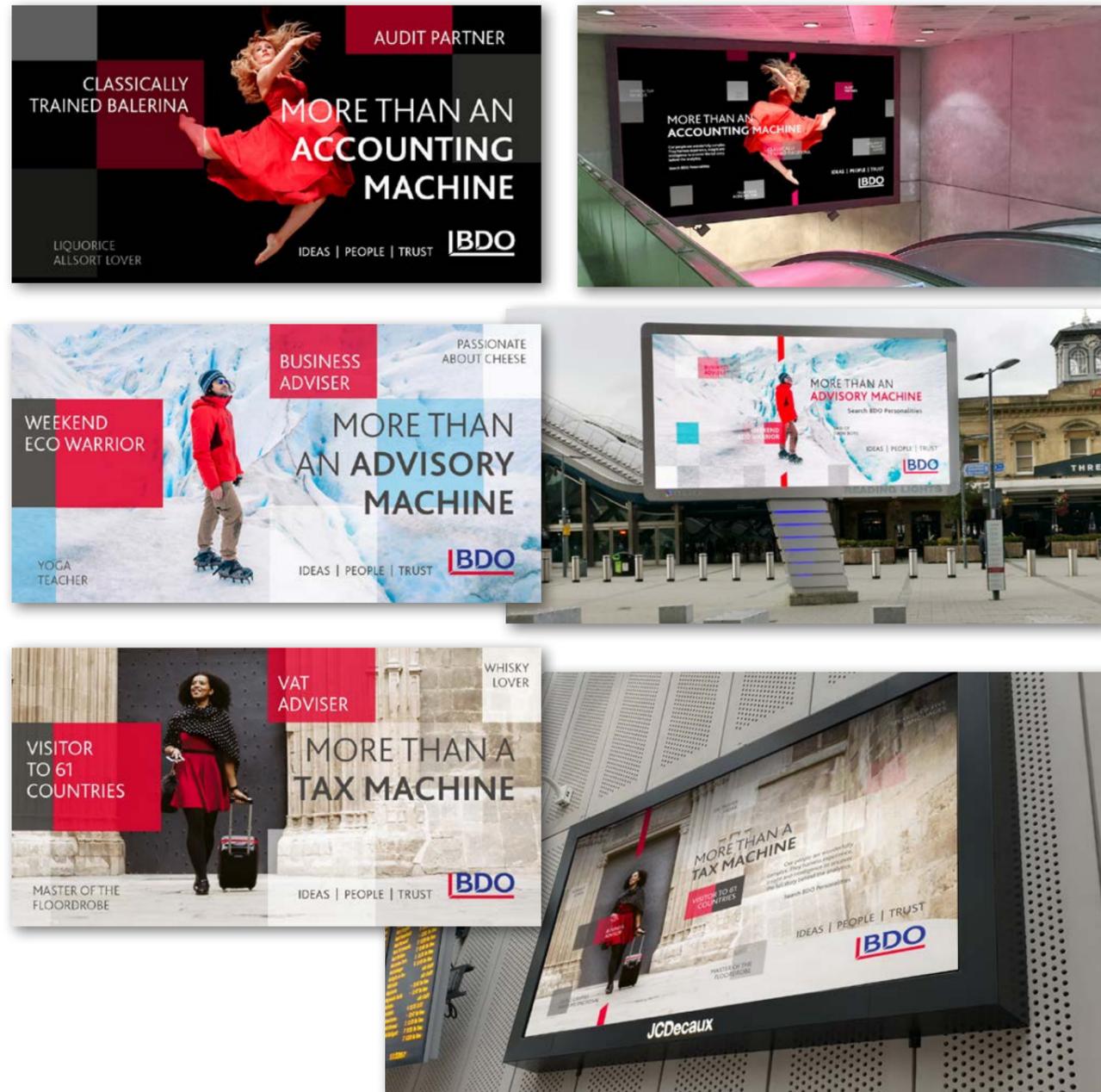
All the research pointed conclusively at a brand positioning of 'quality people delivering great results'. That's what we think we offer... and that's what our clients told us we do offer. Phew. This means our brand is authentic to the experience people

have with us – whether they work for BDO or are clients of BDO. And we aspire to keep doing more of it, and even better.

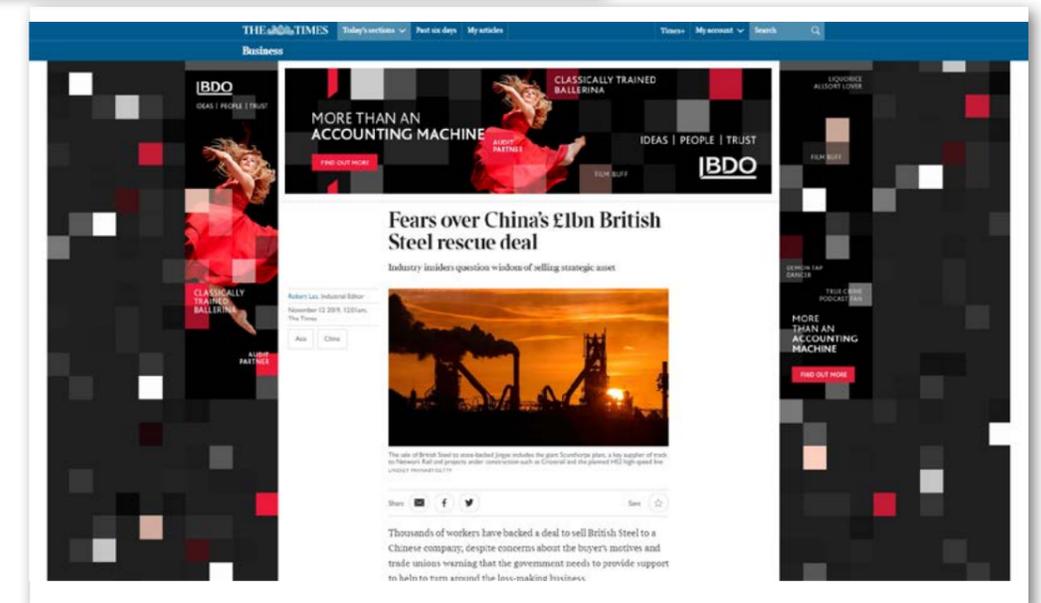
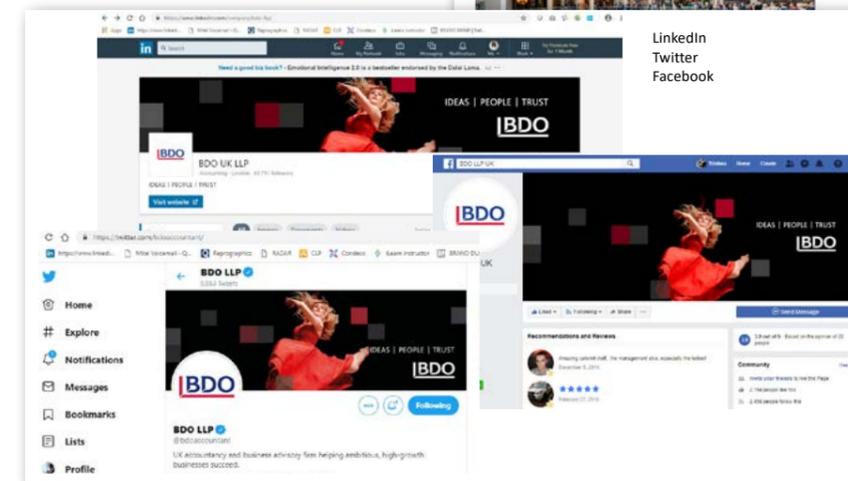
More frequently now, I hear the phrase 'culture is brand and brand is culture'. It's exciting that 'culture' and 'brand' are seen as the new 'power couple' in town. We know that our people are our best marketing tool. It's our 350 quality partners who earn the trust from clients and the market by delivering great results. And it's our 5,500 quality people who come up with great ideas to solve new problems to keep the UK's economic engine running. As we advise entrepreneurially-spirited businesses and individuals through the coronavirus pandemic – and with audit market reform and Brexit still around the corner – it's a pivotal time for BDO. We're ready for it – and we've got the ideas, the people and the trust to deliver.



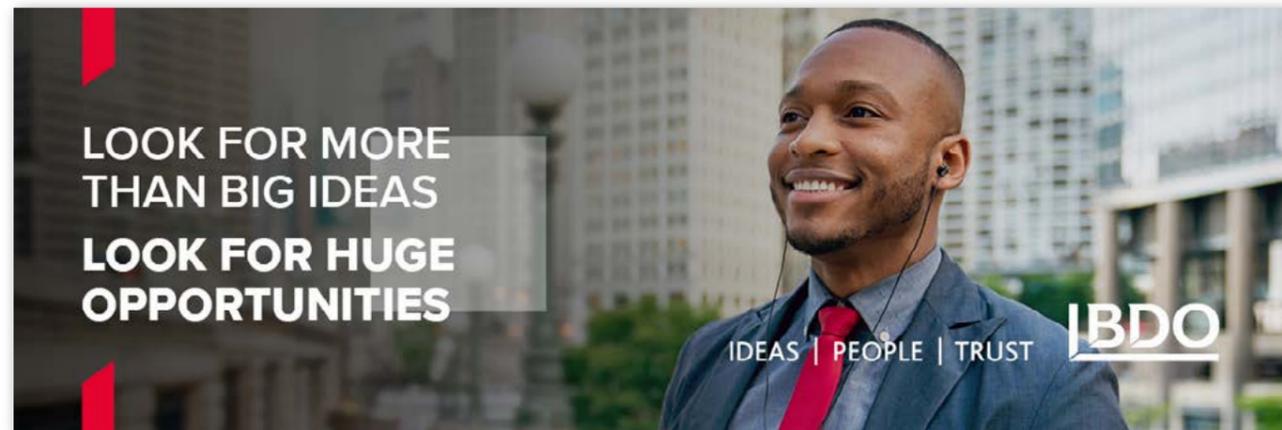
CHAPTER EIGHT ARTICULATING OUR CULTURE TO OUR MARKETS



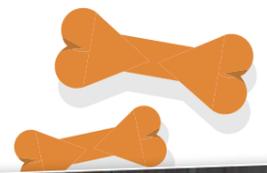
Land Securities was founded in 1944 when Harold Samuel, who is said to have coined the phrase "location, location, location", bought the Land Securities Investment Trust, which owned three houses in Kensington. It became Britain's largest property company in the 1960s. Last year its market capitalisation was overtaken by Segro, the warehouse investor and developer



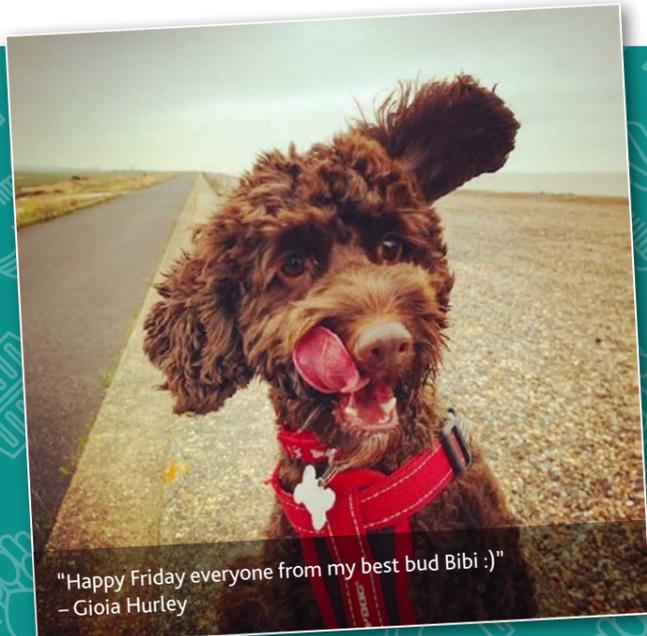
CHAPTER EIGHT ARTICULATING OUR CULTURE TO OUR RECRUITS



CHAPTER EIGHT SOME OF OUR 2020 COLLEAGUES



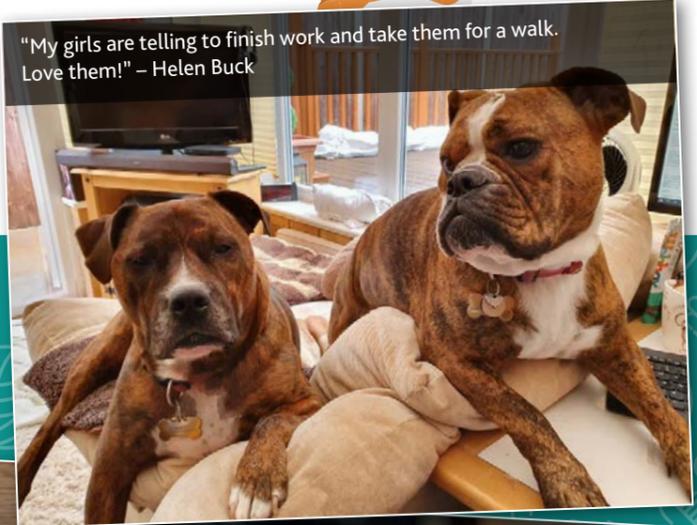
"Barney the golden retriever has taken to the sea to beat the heat and has now mastered the paddleboard. When not on his board he often like a long swim followed by a snooze on the beach." – Dan Francis



"Happy Friday everyone from my best bud Bibi :)"
– Gioia Hurley



"Couple of finches to brighten up the house during lockdown." – Riza Unal



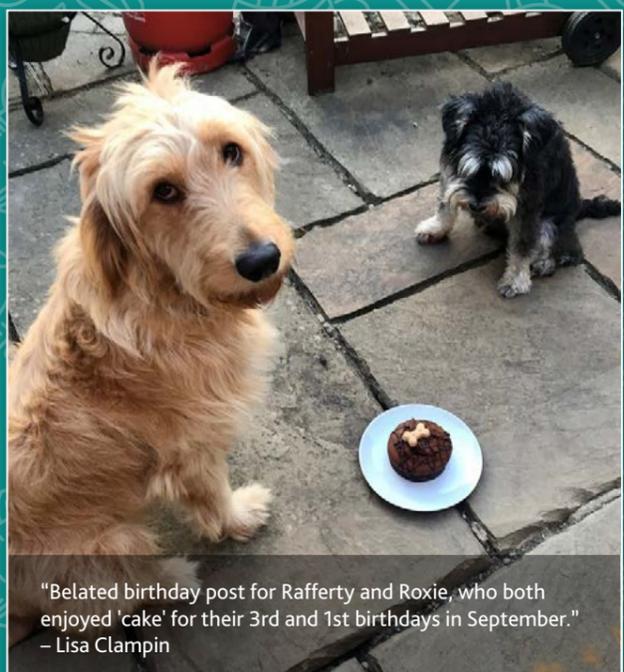
"My girls are telling to finish work and take them for a walk. Love them!" – Helen Buck



Rugby fan. Posted by Natasha Espinosa



"Hamish was not too impressed to have his bi-monthly bath yesterday. He felt better after he got treats." – Charlotte Dymond



"Belated birthday post for Rafferty and Roxie, who both enjoyed 'cake' for their 3rd and 1st birthdays in September." – Lisa Clampin

"I've recently started volunteering at a rabbit shelter. I haven't seen a lot of bunny content here so I thought I'd share a shot of my new friend!" – Gregory Han



"Happy 1st Birthday to my spoilt doggo, Millie!" – Jessica Jayes

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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