



IDEAS | PEOPLE | TRUST

OCTOBER 2018

## OUR CULTURE STORY

# IT'S A REFLECTION OF OUR PEOPLE



## WHY SHOULD YOU READ OUR CULTURE STORY?

The world has been changing fast. Two years ago, could you have predicted that a reality TV star would be the US President? That England would be in the World Cup semi-finals? That emoji would be the fastest growing language in the world? That the UK would be nearing the deadline to leave the EU? That the UK audit market was on the verge of much-needed reform to improve quality and choice?

And BDO has been changing fast too. In those last two years, we've grown to 4,000 people in the UK and 74,000 people globally. We've had a new Managing Partner and Leadership Team, with a new strategy, vision and



core purpose. We have five generations in our workforce – with the next one soon to join. We've created a Shared Service Centre in Liverpool and introduced a number of bots across the firm to make our internal and repeatable processes more efficient. We're now a £464m firm, campaigning for the interests of entrepreneurially-minded, fast-growth and ambitious UK businesses. More people are applying to work for us than ever before.

For those reasons, it feels really important to BDO to capture the essence of our culture in one place. By reading this report – either every word or just the sections that mean most to you – we hope you'll get a sense of what it's like to work for, with or alongside BDO.

'Our Culture Story' is BDO's essence in one place. It's our "eau de BDO". Or BDEau...

## OUR CHAPTERS

- 03 FOREWORD FROM OUR MANAGING PARTNER
- 06 WHY WE NEED A UNIFYING CULTURE
- 09 OUR CORE PURPOSE
- 13 OUR VISION
- 15 OUR VALUES
- 23 WELLBEING
- 25 CITIZENSHIP
- 28 BE YOURSELF
- 38 HOW A UNIFYING CULTURE HELPS US
- 41 CULTURE AND BRAND

## A FOREWORD ABOUT FOUR THOUSAND PEOPLE



*Paul Eagland, Managing Partner, swimmer, mountain biker, passionate about walking practically everywhere and avid reader of business psychology and philosophy*

BDO UK

**16** Offices **275** Partners  
**17** **3,600** Staff

FOR THE **FOURTH YEAR RUNNING**  
**MORE 94%**  
CLIENTS  
WOULD RECOMMEND US  
THAN **ANY OTHER FIRM**<sup>1</sup>

**2017/2018 RESULTS:**  
REVENUES<sup>2</sup> **UP 8.5% TO £464m**

1. Independent research (Mid Market Monitor 2013-2018) by Meridian West shows that BDO, for the fourth year running, have the highest proportion of clients who would recommend their advisers among its peer group  
2. Gross Revenues



## A FOREWORD ABOUT FOUR THOUSAND PEOPLE



*Paul Eagland, Managing Partner, swimmer, mountain biker, passionate about walking practically everywhere and avid reader of business psychology and philosophy*

You'll know the often-used phrase: "Culture eats strategy for breakfast"<sup>1</sup>. But the latest thinking adds that "culture gets its appetite from purpose." I definitely think it's true. When we introduced our core purpose – 'Helping You Succeed' – two years ago, it unlocked something very powerful for our BDO culture.

We're a people-powered business. Our clients choose us because of our quality people who deliver great ideas to help our clients succeed: their knowledge, their skills, their technical abilities, their digital mindset, their independence, their objectivity, their exceptional service, their diverse characters. And BDO is made up of 4,000 individuals, who each bring something special and unique, and we want to celebrate every single one. Which means our culture isn't something we 'create' from the top – it's made up of every daily interaction between 4,000 people. Interactions underpinned by our core purpose.

Which is why culture is a core component of our business strategy. 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, are inspired and challenged, collaborative and successful.

Accountancy is often characterised as a profession that is solely about numbers. In my experience, our clients buy the skills our people have, which is why we continue to invest in our people as a priority. This year we promoted over a quarter of our people (1,115) in the UK, recruited 11 additional partners, promoted a further 14 to partner and welcomed 306 new trainees to the business.

As we've spoken to people in every team of our business, backed up by internal survey data, I've been so impressed at how proud people are of our culture. We have many great stories contained here to show what our Unifying Culture means to each of us. Yes, our financials are strong and give us great confidence as well as the ability to keep investing in our people and technology. But, as a purpose-led firm, our focus on Unifying Culture is crucial to us.

---

<sup>1</sup> Attributed to Sheila Teasdale



## A FOREWORD ABOUT FOUR THOUSAND PEOPLE



*Paul Eagland, Managing Partner, swimmer, mountain biker, passionate about walking practically everywhere and avid reader of business psychology and philosophy*

### PAUL'S FAVOURITE STORY

“This year, nearly 18,000 people have applied to work at BDO. That tells me people are seeing what a great position our firm is in and how well our core purpose and values chime with what people are looking for in their next career move. It's a culture they want to be part of and contribute to – and we're excited to learn from what they can bring to us.”



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.

## A CULTURE THAT UNIFIES



*Chris Grove, Head of Transaction Services, chair of BDO's U Board and very, very keen cyclist*

One thing is certain: we don't establish a culture by sitting in U Board meetings! Which is why we spent our first year of 'U' with three strategic aims:

- 1. Understand** the U Board oversees long-term strategic discussions about how to protect and celebrate what makes our culture special. Importantly, we've created a U Leaders community of 35 people across the UK to be 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.
- 2. Uncover** we're overseeing some important long-term debates. For example: what culture does the workforce of today really want? How is that culture going to evolve and adapt to the workforce of tomorrow? How will innovation or digital trends impact our business from a people and cultural perspective, what do we need to do to be ready for it – and embrace it? These are long-term topics, which we continue to explore with people across our BDO population.
- 3. Unity** we've been making connections between existing and new communities across BDO to share our stories. We meet regularly with our various network groups – individually and collectively such as BLEND (our LGBTQ+ network), BDO Inspire (our women's network), Islamic Network, Jewish Network and BAME Society to help us better understand barriers and opportunities.

This approach helped us to identify three initial priorities – which will naturally evolve as we develop as a business and respond to the changing world and workforce:

► **Wellbeing**    ► **Be Yourself**    ► **Citizenship**

We believe that by driving success in these three culturally-important areas, we will achieve our vision to be an independent, sustainably profitable and globally-focused firm, known for helping businesses and people succeed.

We encourage everyone to be themselves. At the end of the day it is about knowing you can be authentic and will be valued and respected for who you are. And that's important for people wanting to join BDO and stay with BDO.



## A CULTURE THAT UNIFIES



*Chris Grove, Head of Transaction Services, chair of BDO's U Board and very, very keen cyclist*

### CHRIS' FAVOURITE STORY

“One of our systems administrators came out as non-binary at BDO; they'd never felt they could do that before in any of their previous companies. When they volunteered to share their story internally, it was the most read interview on our intranet all year and they received more than 40 emails thanking them. What a brilliant demonstration of why our Unifying Culture is important.”



“Culture is the environment in which we grow: it's how we cultivate success.”

CHRIS GROVE

We have a Unifying Culture, where we are:

- Encouraged to be yourself
- Inspired and challenged
- Collaborative
- Successful.

By working together and using the entire resources of our firm we will help each other and our clients succeed.



## A CULTURE THAT UNIFIES



*Chris Grove, Head of Transaction Services, chair of BDO's U Board and very, very keen cyclist*

THE U BOARD STRATEGY WILL SHAPE, STRENGTHEN AND EMBED OUR INCLUSIVE CULTURE -  
FOR TODAY BUT ALSO TOMORROW

FOSTERING A UNIFYING CULTURE WHERE WE ARE ENOURAGED TO BE OURSELVES, ARE INSPIRED AND  
CHALLENGED, COLLABORATIVE AND SUCCESSFUL

### WELLBEING

'Successful and Collaborative'

### BE YOURSELF

'Diversity and Inclusion'

### CITIZENSHIP

'Challenged and Inspired'

Communication

Collaboration

Focus Groups

Gender Balance

Societal

Giving back



## IT STARTED WITH A PURPOSE

Underpinning everything that we do at BDO is our core purpose: **'helping you succeed'**.

Core purpose is a term often used in organisations these days. But what is it and why do we feel the need to have one? Put simply, an organisation's purpose is its 'heartbeat' or 'soul' – its most fundamental reason for being. Not to be confused with vision, strategy or services; purpose attracts, motivates and inspires.

Plus, empirical evidence shows that organisations that operate from a clear sense of purpose deliver enhanced market performance.

So two years ago, we set out to answer: why do we do what we do?

Our conclusion – at all grades, in all specialisms – was that we 'help people and businesses succeed.'

We want to...

### HELP EACH OTHER SUCCEED

**Lillian Battier-Jess, Audit Manager specialising in Natural Resources and Energy and lover of 'all things adrenaline'**

*"I am proud to work for a firm whose core values of honesty and integrity and mutual support and respect are not just words written on a piece of paper but values acted out by our people every day. BDO delivers Bold thinking, Diversity in both the people who work here and the clients we choose to work with and an Open culture where we are striving to be the best that we can possibly be."*

**Nikki Spencer, Global Outsourcing Manager in Reading and excited by spontaneous adventures**

*"I'm proud that we have an inclusive and empowering culture that encourages people to 'be themselves', work together and deliver exceptional client service – to be as successful as we can be."*

► [Click our photos for more information](#)

---

## IT STARTED WITH A PURPOSE

Underpinning everything that we do at BDO is our core purpose: **'helping you succeed'**.

**HELP BUSINESSES SUCCEED**

Core purpose is a term often used in organisations these days. But what is it and why do we feel the need to have one? Put simply, an organisation's purpose is its 'heartbeat' or 'soul' – its most fundamental reason for being. Not to be confused with vision, strategy or services; purpose attracts, motivates and inspires.

Plus, empirical evidence shows that organisations that operate from a clear sense of purpose deliver enhanced market performance.

So two years ago, we set out to answer: why do we do what we do?

Our conclusion – at all grades, in all specialisms – was that we 'help people and businesses succeed.'

We want to...

► [Click our photos for more information](#)

*Adam Spires, director, young father and advocate for cross-stream collaboration*

*"Our clients want experts with the confidence and experience to help them navigate new and unfamiliar territory, to provide practical and insightful joined-up advice and solutions – people who have an opinion and who want to help them succeed."*



# IT STARTED WITH A PURPOSE

Underpinning everything that we do at BDO is our core purpose: **'helping you succeed'**.

Core purpose is a term often used in organisations these days. But what is it and why do we feel the need to have one? Put simply, an organisation's purpose is its 'heartbeat' or 'soul' – its most fundamental reason for being. Not to be confused with vision, strategy or services; purpose attracts, motivates and inspires.

Plus, empirical evidence shows that organisations that operate from a clear sense of purpose deliver enhanced market performance.

So two years ago, we set out to answer: why do we do what we do?

Our conclusion – at all grades, in all specialisms – was that we 'help people and businesses succeed.'

We want to...

## HELP YOU SUCCEED

**Rob Worrall, HR Director, father to teenagers and lover of his garden office**

*"It's when you are encouraged to be yourself that you can truly achieve your full potential. From a people development perspective, we do this through having one single development framework to support career fulfilment – called Achieving My Potential – which is adopted by everyone in the firm."*

**Elizabeth Callaghan, Associate Tax Director in London and busy mum**

*"I now work one day at home and two days in the office. I can't say working part time is always easy as there are always deadlines to be met, but being organised and ensuring both my clients and team know which days I work has meant that I have now made it work for almost three years. There are busy times when I start working again after my children have gone to bed or swap my days around to ensure I meet agreed timetables, but to me it's about being flexible and making sure my role works for me and BDO."*

**Debbie Thomson, Head of HR Operations, part-time fitness instructor and brains behind BDO's wellbeing programme**

*"It is through our focus on wellbeing that our people can thrive. Balancing a challenging and inspiring career along with a healthy life alongside work. We achieve this by focusing on clear communication and easy access to all wellbeing services, such as our support helpline."*

► [Click our photos for more information](#)

## IT STARTED WITH A PURPOSE



*Jamie Austin, Head of Private Equity, rugby coach and Core Purpose super-fan*

### PERSONALISING PURPOSE

“I still remember the moment we ‘discovered’ our Core Purpose. We’d held 12 months of exploration with people across the business and externally with the market, and there it was in front of us. Zoom forward two years and I’m so excited to walk past, for example, our Natural Resources and Energy sector team with posters splashed on their walls quoting what ‘Helping You Succeed’ means to every single individual. It makes my grin even wider. And we’re only just scratching the surface! There’s so much more we can achieve as we keep rallying around our Core Purpose.”

HELPING YOU SUCCEED





## ... AND IT ENDS WITH OUR VISION



*Zoe Bailey, Director of Strategic Development,  
published academic and art lover*

Every story has to have an ending. And we're clear on where ours is heading, and therefore why we need a Unifying Culture to help us get there.

The purpose of our BUILD strategy is to provide the firm with a set of priorities, which everyone can identify with and reference their own activity and objectives to.

It is everyone's collective efforts that help us achieve our BDO vision of being *"an independent sustainably profitable and globally focussed business, known for helping people and businesses succeed."*

Let's break this down:

- ▶ **Independent:** to choose what we do and don't do; deeply linked to the autonomy that BDO people thrive on
- ▶ **Sustainably profitable:** to secure our on-going independence, to deliver reward and create a legacy for the future
- ▶ **Globally-focussed:** essential in today's world and a key ingredient to be leveraged in helping our people and our high-growth and entrepreneurially spirited clients fulfil their ambitions
- ▶ **Known for helping people and businesses succeed:** not just helping the individual BDO people to succeed but to be known for this by our people and our clients

Our vision defines the optimal desired future state for the firm 'what success looks like'. Everything we do is governed by our core purpose and supported by our behaviours – known at BDO as 'our values'. This ensures that our objectives and actions are delivered in the best way possible.



## ... AND IT ENDS WITH OUR VISION



*Zoe Bailey, Director of Strategic Development,  
published academic and art lover*

### ONE VISION, ONE EXAMPLE

Our Vision to be an independent, sustainably profitable and globally-focused firm highlights the need for investment. In the last 12 months, we have invested in a number of areas across our business.



***'to be an independent,  
sustainably profitable and  
globally focussed firm,  
known for helping people and  
businesses succeed'***



*Nigel Britton, Head of Shared  
Services Centre, ultra athlete  
and lover of long-term plans*

*"With our vision in mind, a key strategic move to keep us on our path of being 'sustainably profitable' has been the creation of a Shared Services Centre. And, given that BDO operates in 162 countries and*

*could have had its pick of locations, it's fantastic that we chose Liverpool in the UK as the base for our new 'Shared Services' facility in 2016.*

*"In our first 18 months, we created a 100-strong team, and have committed to recruiting 150 more by 2020. We support services across our 16 national offices by bringing many previously disparate but related roles under one roof. In a fast-growing part of the business that works with every single one of our UK offices, we need to ensure we have a strong culture that's consistent with the rest of the firm – and having the same Values, Core Purpose and Vision is important to ensure that happens."*

# VALUES

## THE VALUE OF VALUES



*Wendy Walton, Global Head of Private Client Services, U Board member, concert goer and wannabe runner*

I remember being part of the group who came up with our Values 17 years ago. To have had those Values truly embedded in our business for so long says a lot about our special culture. As our firm grows, we want to preserve and build on the strengths of our Unifying Culture and the characteristics that make us successful, different and an empowering place to work. Living by our Values will help us achieve our Unifying Culture and help us succeed.

Having had Values for so many years, they aren't just etched permanently on our office doors; they are fully integrated into our career review, reward and recognition processes. A section of our organisational framework called 'Achieving My Potential' is dedicated to Values – guiding how we operate while delivering our core and technical competencies. They are used to reflect our individual performance and personal development needs, and to assess, develop and provide feedback to others.

For many years, we reviewed our partners against our Values by asking for upwards feedback, specifically against each Value. This year, we piloted some facilitated feedback sessions in our North West offices, London Financial Services Audit team and the Corporate M&A team in London Tax. It was successful in encouraging a more transparent approach to seeking and receiving feedback so we'll be introducing it further across the firm next year.

We also use our Values to guide our recruitment. We ask questions that lead us to what the individual is passionate about and what motivates them. We know our Values are important to the candidate, as well as us; it's very difficult to work somewhere that doesn't have Values aligned with your own. Our Values are cited regularly by new joiners as to why they joined us and why they thought BDO was a great place to work.

And to win one of our Spotlight Awards, our internal recognition programme, the nominee has to show how they've demonstrated at least one of the Values in delivering their brilliant work. In the last 12 months, a huge 3,480 recognition awards were given to people as either an 'instant' award or a prestigious Quarterly Award.

Our Values help direct behaviour but also identify inappropriate behaviour. Using the Values, we can work with the person to help them reflect upon and change their behaviour. However, the Values have been so solid and embedded that I've only had to do this a handful of times in my 30+ years at BDO.

# VALUES

## THE VALUE OF VALUES



*Wendy Walton, Global Head of Private Client Services, U Board member, concert goer and wannabe runner*

We have four Values, which complement each other and all contribute to our success and to that of our clients. They act as a yardstick to measure our behaviours. We advocate:

### MUTUAL SUPPORT AND RESPECT

Value and support each other. Maintain a working environment where teamwork and relationships matters.

### HONESTY AND INTEGRITY

Be transparent, genuine and fair. Operate with the highest degree of personal and professional integrity.

### EMPOWERMENT AND PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

Work with confidence, flexibility and freedom. Understand that trust and responsibility go hand-in-hand.

### PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL CLIENT RELATIONSHIPS

Understand the person, as well as the business. Build relationships based on respect, trust and exceptional service.





# VALUES

## THE VALUE OF VALUES



*Wendy Walton, Global Head of Private Client Services, U Board member, concert goer and wannabe runner*

### WENDY'S FAVOURITE STORY

“An Assurance recruitment candidate had two job offers and said there was little between them. After having a conversation with one of our Directors about BDO's Values and how we truly 'live' them, the candidate snapped up our offer.”



# VALUES

## THE VALUE OF VALUES



*David Isherwood, Ethics Partner and devout Northerner. Participates on committees with many acronyms (WCCA EW, ICAEW, IFAC FOF, AE, GPPC, PRG...)*

### THE ONLY WAY IS ETHICS

This year, the spotlight has clearly focused on the quality of work from, and the role of, accountants in the UK. Our economy and capital markets rely on informative and accurate financial reporting; and independent audit plays a key role in that. High quality audit is of significant Public Interest and societal value, helping to underpin transparency and integrity in business as a whole.

It is clear that the audit market, in particular, is in need of reform to widen choice, ensuring that those outside the very largest firms can compete more effectively, guarding against conflict of interest, fostering innovation and enhancing audit quality. However, solutions that purely focus on improving competition, whilst ignoring either the regulation of the entire financial reporting ecosystem or the needs of users, will not fix the situation.

Every accounting and advisory firm needs to pay attention to quality, now more than ever. Through its Audit Quality Review (AQR) team, the Financial Reporting Council (FRC) rightly continues to challenge the profession to raise its standard.

### A MATTER OF CONDUCT

We are proud that 88% of our firm's audits reviewed in 2017/18 achieved the FRC's top ranking for quality, with none requiring significant improvements. In the wider context of the other firms, no one else has been able to match these results, and this is against a backdrop of high standards expected by the regulator increasing year on year.

For many years, audit firm size has been seen as a proxy for audit file quality. If ever that particular view held water, it certainly does not now. We recognise that we need to continue to make investments in our people and procedures in order to achieve and maintain the highest industry-wide standards.

This is why independence and ethics surround the way we behave in business and underpin our BDO Values. These rely on trust, respect, honesty and fairness, and impact all areas of BDO's business. Quite simply it's about 'doing the right things, right'.

# VALUES

## THE VALUE OF VALUES



*David Isherwood, Ethics Partner and devout Northerner. Participates on committees with many acronyms (WCCA EW, ICAEW, IFAC FOF, AE, GPPC, PRG...)*

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 4,000 people are 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 don't see that as an undue burden. The behaviours expected by the ICAEW are already embedded in the firm's values, our commitment to quality, our strategic framework and critically our culture.

### A MATTER OF CULTURE

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.

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. In particular, we were pleased in this year's 'culture' thematic review to see the FRC highlight our culture of analysing the root cause of any problems and fixing them early on. We were pleased to see the FRC highlighting that firms need a culture where achieving a high quality audit is valued and rewarded, and which emphasises the importance of 'doing the right thing' in the public interest – in helping society to succeed.

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 2018 Transparency Report.



## VALUES

### THE VALUE OF VALUES



*David Isherwood, Ethics Partner and devout Northerner. Participates on committees with many acronyms (WCCA EW, ICAEW, IFAC FOF, AE, GPPC, PRG...)*

### QUALITY MATTERS



*Rob Frost, a Director in our Technical Standards Group, cat lover and disco dancer*

*"Our team produces an internal magazine called 'Quality Matters', through which we can draw attention to a variety of topics pertaining to matters of audit quality. It covers the latest issues in the world of audit and methodology, financial reporting and ethics, real-life experiences and lessons to share as well as containing stories of what we're doing in the firm to keep enhancing the quality of our work through training and knowledge-sharing. Our readership is reassuringly high, which tells me that partners and staff know they need to stay up-to-date with the latest developments, without question."*





# HOW CAN YOU MEASURE OR MONITOR CULTURE

## THE VALUE OF VALUES

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 our clients.



### 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."*

*"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 is the Values and whether these are realised in the actual behaviour of the staff and the*

*firm as a whole. A key problem 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. I had the opportunity to read this report in an earlier form and I believe it accurately reflects the culture of BDO that I have witnessed."*

# HOW CAN YOU MEASURE OR MONITOR CULTURE

## THE VALUE OF VALUES

### 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? In our first year, our employee engagement survey said that all our people feel proud of BDO 73% 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."*



# UNIFYING CULTURE PRIORITY

## WELLBEING

We want to create a positive working environment and way of working, 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 each more effective at our job if we're feeling refreshed after a holiday, are feeling energised by a lunchtime walk, run or yoga, don't spend all afternoon worrying whether we'll be

*"I value and cherish the role of Wellbeing Champion because our wellbeing is the biggest factor in allowing BDO to do what we do. BDO's values of empowerment and personal responsibility, and mutual support and respect, are testament to this. People perform best when they are at their physical and emotional best and this is something I strongly believe in, but more importantly, BDO clearly believes in. Our wellbeing strategy is led and supported by the senior leadership team and this is felt on the ground in our regional offices. In East Anglia, we have received a great response, including colleagues sharing personal stories and tips for improving our wellbeing, taking part in local exercise challenges, arranging talks from external providers to discuss our health in the workplace and starting to embed Mind's 5 Ways of Wellbeing in our culture."*

**JOEL SWIFT, AUDIT TRAINEE**

Champions across the firm and have 32 passionate volunteers who share ideas and stories about how to improve our mental resilience and physical health in the workplace. And we launched firm-wide resilience training – called Performance Under Pressure – to further support people

home by our child's bedtime, or simply know we're supported in trying to find more headspace in a world that moves at a rapid pace with 'information overload'.

We launched a new Wellbeing programme across BDO this year using the '5 Ways of Wellbeing'<sup>2</sup> as our framework. We recruited a network of Wellbeing

our people to navigate through the fast-paced world around them.

We've shown our support for Mental Health Awareness Week, with many of our people sharing their personal connections with mental health challenges, and proudly wore the Green Ribbons to support the #EndTheStigma campaign.

This is a journey and are proud to share our story so far.

*"Having a workforce that is happy and is able to freely articulate problems that they are facing is key to the success of any organisation. Simple things such as wishing people good morning or making time to have a chat can have immense effects on people's wellbeing. It is not about grand gestures. It is about small actions that everyone is able to do."*

**ROSS LARKIN, INTERNAL AUDIT SENIOR**

*"I became a Wellbeing Champion to be part of the firm's wellbeing initiative. It is important to work in a place that cares about wellbeing, as most of us spend most of our time at work. It is refreshing that health particularly mental health are now topics for conversation and we are actively and collectively supporting such issues."*

**WENDY BOND, SENIOR PA, LONDON TAX GROUP**



<sup>2</sup>Research and developed by the New Economics Foundation





## UNIFYING CULTURE PRIORITY

### CITIZENSHIP

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.

And we also make a difference by giving back to communities and causes that can benefit from our skills, time and passion. This activity keeps us inspired, engaged and energised, individually and collectively – and very proud of our culture. Helping not just each other or our clients but also helping society succeed.

We have corporate social responsibility (CSR) champions in every business unit. Their role is to communicate our national programmes, stimulate local ideas and initiatives and determine what's going to work best for their group. It's not a 'one size fits all' approach. Our approach is deliberately open and gives our people the opportunity to shape CSR activities

to suit their interests and motivations. It recognises that we're not all the same. There are things we need to do as a firm to maximise our positive impact on the world around us, but if we enable our people to make a difference at the same time, our impact will be far greater.

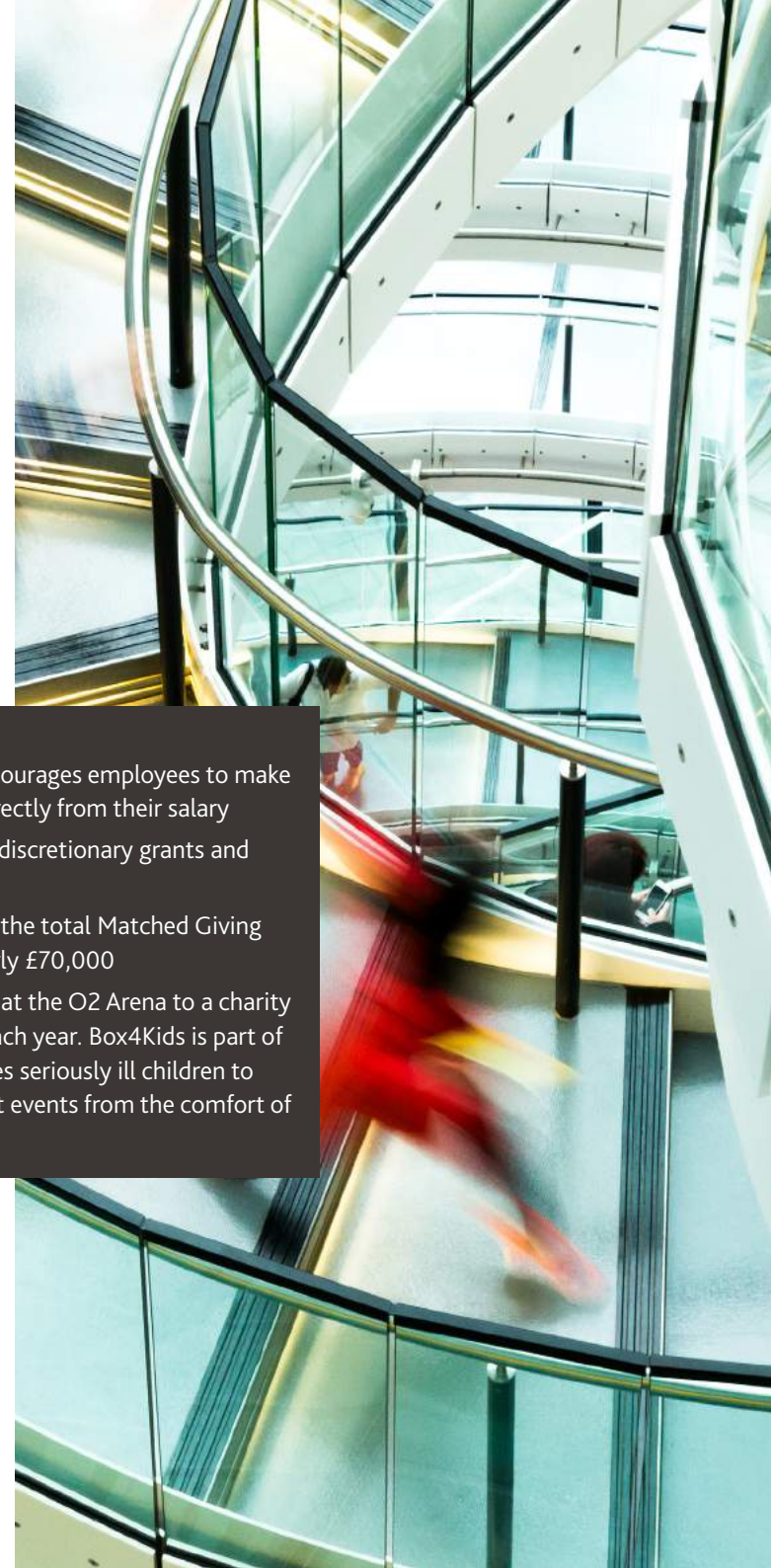
Volunteering and fundraising is extremely important – to individuals at BDO and to the hundreds of communities we continue to support.

As a purpose-led firm, we need to do more than just take days out to do good deeds. We aspire to leave a legacy, which is about creating a future BDO for our people, stakeholders and society as a whole. We offer our people ten CSR days a year to enable this.

But we need a culture that supports so much more than that. Our Citizenship priority provides us with a 'check and balance' that we're being a good corporate citizen and about our overall contribution to society.

#### MONEY MATTERS

- ▶ We enable Payroll giving that encourages employees to make tax-free donations to charities directly from their salary
- ▶ The BDO Charitable Trust makes discretionary grants and matched donations
- ▶ In the financial year to July 2018, the total Matched Giving contribution from BDO was nearly £70,000
- ▶ BDO provides our Corporate Box at the O2 Arena to a charity called Box4Kids for two events each year. Box4Kids is part of the Barrie Wells Trust and invites seriously ill children to enjoy sporting and entertainment events from the comfort of executive boxes.



# UNIFYING CULTURE PRIORITY

## CITIZENSHIP

### TEN WAYS WE'VE SPENT OUR TEN DAYS

1. As part of the National Citizens Service and working with the Salford Foundation, over 20 members of our North West team delivered training courses to more than 16 to 17 year old students over a period of ten days. During the five-week programme, we had more than 1,000 students into our office learning about making business decisions and budgeting as they prepare to pitch for funding to deliver a community project
  2. Our Midlands **BDODrive** Solutions team is involved with HRH Duke of Yorks's Pitch@Palace programme, supporting enterprise and entrepreneurial activity. We have been able to add value to the project by acting as mentors for new and innovative businesses and giving ongoing support to participants in their business ventures
  3. In partnership with the Social Mobility Foundation, we developed and facilitated the BDO Build a Business Challenge. This programme gives students first-hand insights into the world of business from a team of young BDO professionals and encourages social mobility. The students learn business theory and then apply their knowledge in a practical business challenge
  4. Members of our Transaction Services team have been Young Enterprise business mentors for the past two years. The charity runs a programme for students to enhance their CVs and develop their skills by starting a company and 'learning by doing'
  5. One of our Audit Directors, Andrew Gandell, took part in the Marathon des Sables — a 250km self-sufficient race over 6 days across the Sahara to raise money for Age UK
  6. To show unity across offices, Business Restructuring team from Reading, Bristol, Birmingham and Nottingham took part in the Barclays 13 mile walk through the Malvern Hills to raise funds for Winston's Wish
  7. One of our teams in Manchester worked with the Salford Foundation to mentor year 8 and 9 students at Harrop Fold School in Worlsey and Buile Hill School in Salford. During six sessions, we helped students with confidence, team building, organisation and planning
  8. Our Islamic Network ran its second sponsored fast challenge during Ramadan this year. More than 100 people worked together to take part across the UK and raise funds for WaterAid – including receiving an award from JustGiving confirmed they were in the top five per cent of active pages in May. The Islamic Network supported their colleagues through their sponsored fast, including internal blog posts throughout the day and personal gift bags for all who carried on until the end of the day!
  9. Members of our Bristol team volunteered at The Genesis Trust in Bath, sorting and delivering donated furniture and food bank goods.
  10. Members of our U Board – the executive team who oversees our Unifying Culture discussions – took time out to volunteer for mental health charity, MIND, as it launched its inaugural London Landmarks Half Marathon
-

# UNIFYING CULTURE PRIORITY

## CITIZENSHIP



### DOWN TO EARTH

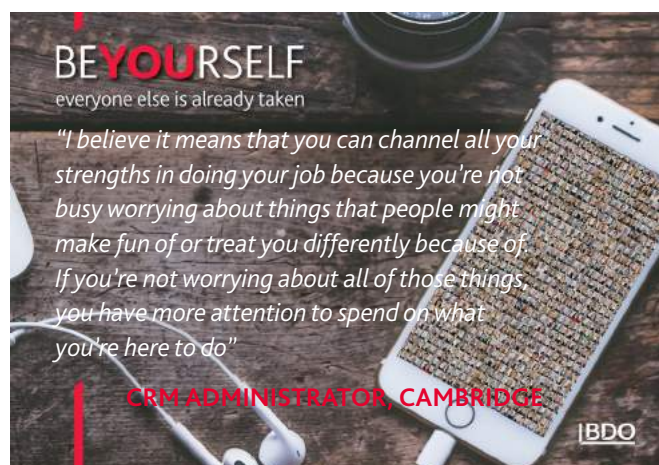
As we consider the world around us and BDO's role within it as a (we hope!) good corporate citizen, we also acknowledge our relationship with the environment:

- ▶ We are reducing and minimising our impact on the environment. We've been tracking our environmental impact through our Carbon Footprint Reports for six years, ensuring our commitments go beyond what is required for compliance. Last year:
  - Our emissions intensity per full time employee fell by 7%
  - Business travel emissions increased by 10%, principally due to an 8% increase in headcount
  - Business travel accounts for the majority of our emissions (73%), with flights remaining the single largest emissions source at 61% of total emissions
  - Electricity emissions were substantially reduced following improved data quality and coverage, reduced consumption and the continued decarbonisation of the UK grid, which led to a 19% reduction in the conversion factor for electricity
- ▶ Working with Carbon Smart, we have increased our Carbon Footprint Reporting so we see the data and can make decisions quarterly rather than annually
  - This has resulted in a reduction of estimations being required to determine buildings emissions and the ability to link all emissions sources to individual offices
  - The proportion of unreported emissions is reducing. However, on general waste, we are still partially estimating emissions using historic data. We are working to improve waste data quality and coverage in the year ahead
- ▶ We have best-practice environmental systems and are recognised as managing our environmental responsibilities in a systematic manner that contributes to the environmental pillar of sustainability, which is why we have been reaccredited with the ISO14001:2015 certificate
- ▶ We will shortly be removing disposable plastic cups from all our offices, replacing them with a BDO-branded water bottle for hot and cold drinks for every member of staff



# UNIFYING CULTURE PRIORITY

## BE YOURSELF



In late 2017, we asked people to summarise why they thought the BDO culture was special, and a huge number of people replied "because you can be yourself."

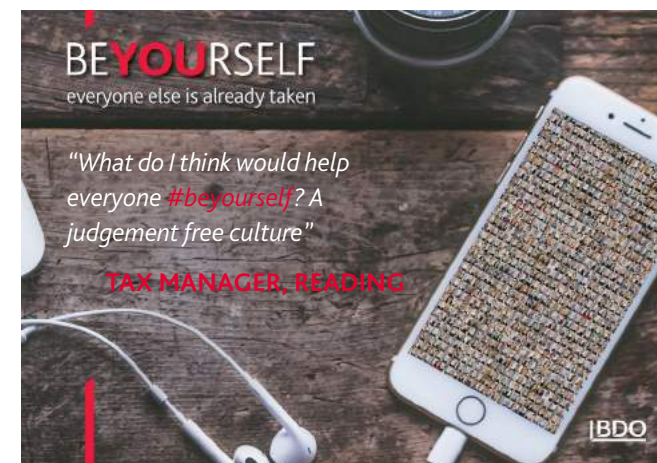
According to Harvard Business Review, 61% of the global workforce 'cover up' some part of their identity. If we were to transpose that to BDO, that's 2,440 people potentially spending effort in pretending to be 'someone else' rather than giving 100% of their true selves.

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, 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.





# UNIFYING CULTURE PRIORITY

## BE YOURSELF



### BEING OURSELVES

In summer 2018, we launched our internal 'Be Yourself' campaign. Our first step was simply to ask our people what 'Be Yourself' meant to them – we wanted to know!

In our first month, we had people across every single grade sharing their 'Be Yourself' quote on our All Company feed on Yammer every single day.

In our second month, we were proactively approached by people wanting to share their positive and very personal stories about how they could be themselves in BDO via news stories on our intranet or videos on our internal video channel dedicated to cultural topics, called U Tube. These stories included:

- ▶ How it feels to come out as non-binary at BDO
- ▶ Why someone felt they could come out as gay at BDO when they couldn't at their previous firm
- ▶ How a female auditor – who was made partner while on maternity leave – balances partnership and parenthood

- ▶ How someone managed shared parental leave at the same time as going through the partner promotion process – and how BDO supported him by flexing the timing to allow him to concentrate on his time as a new dad while still achieving partnership
- ▶ How mentoring via BDO's 30% Club membership had supported people in their career development
- ▶ How to find the right role with the right flexible working on returning from parental leave.

Our 'Be Yourself' approach will help us to:

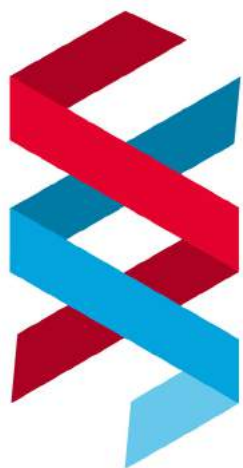
- ▶ Realise individual and collective aspirations
- ▶ Be successful through bringing your 'full self' to work
- ▶ Have a voice and ensure our opinions count
- ▶ Create a sense of 'Belonging' where we can be genuinely authentic.

In our last internal engagement survey, our people told us they feel like they can be themselves 74% of the time at BDO.



# UNIFYING CULTURE PRIORITY

BE YOURSELF



**BDO  
DNA**

**OUR DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION SURVEY**  
TO HELP US CELEBRATE OUR UNIQUENESS  
AND STRENGTHEN OUR LINKS

## OUR BDO POPULATION

Our culture at BDO is made-up of every daily interaction between 4,000 individuals. This year, we wanted to find out far more about those individuals – who are they, what makes

them tick, where should we celebrate or challenge more on certain areas of diversity and inclusion, and how can we make better business decisions for our BDO population.

So – during National Inclusion Week 2018 - we ran our first Inclusion Survey to help us find out more. This allowed us to make decisions that are informed by the facts of today to ensure we're focusing our efforts on the right areas (actual rather than assumed challenges) and having an impact that creates measurable and sustainable progress.

As this Unifying Culture report looks at the financial year ending 29 June 2018, we haven't included the full results here but will do so in next year's report. However, we are able to give a sneak peek of what we've started to learn about our BDO population.

**Nearly 60% of people completed our first Inclusion Survey**

### GENDER BALANCE:

**FEMALE: 47.12%**

**MALE: 51.96%**

**PREFER TO DESCRIBE: 0.21%**

**PREFER NOT TO SAY: 0.63%**

### SEXUAL ORIENTATION PROFILE:

**HETEROSEXUAL: 94.8%**

**LGB: 2.9%**

**PREFER TO DESCRIBE: 0.1%**

**PREFER NOT TO SAY: 2.1%**

**BAME PROFILE: 17.6%**

**PROPORTION WHO ARE WORKING PARENTS: 28.4%**

**PROPORTION WHO ARE CARERS: 3.8%**

# UNIFYING CULTURE PRIORITY

## BE YOURSELF

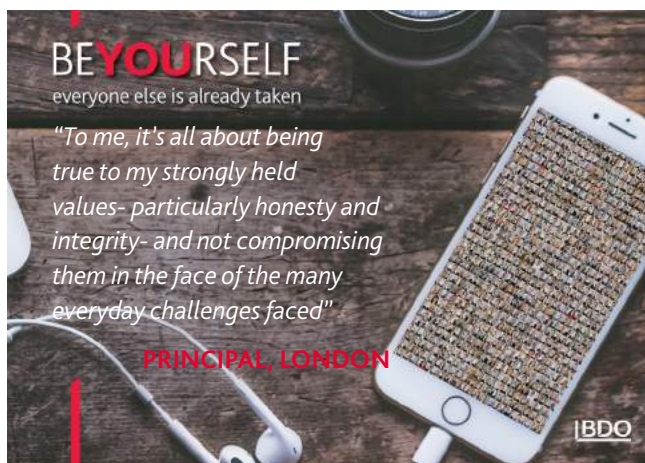
### OUR FIRST INCLUSION SURVEY



*Teresa Payne, our Head of People and devoted servant to many cats*

*"The honesty with which our people shared their personal stories is proof in itself that people feel they can be themselves at BDO. The data allowed people to see that – even though they're unique –*

*there are people very much like them across the firm, who they might not see day to day. And insights from the data will now allow us to make better business decisions, as well as celebrate both our diversity and our inclusiveness. We've still got so much more to do but people are telling me that our 'Be Yourself' strategy and our open and honest communications are on the right track."*





# UNIFYING CULTURE PRIORITY

## BE YOURSELF

Our 'Be Yourself' strategy incorporates a number of different inclusion agendas. In this 'Our Culture Story', we highlight four: gender balance, social mobility, the role of our Diversity and Inclusion networks and a spotlight on our Millennials:



### BE INSPIRED ON GENDER BALANCE



*Wendy Walton, Global Head of Private Client Services, Leadership Team member and experiencing an 'empty nest' for the first time at home*

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 217 years

to close the economic gender gap globally (source World Economic Forum). 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.

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, irrespective of gender, race or religion etc.

It's been a busy 12 months, where we've:

- ▶ Increased the number of female partners, now at 16%. Our wider management is 25% female and our entire BDO UK population is 47% female
- ▶ Improved our Gender Pay Gap, now at 17.7% mean and in line with industry averages
- ▶ Seen more female partners than male partners in our Bristol office – and subsequent positive impact on recruitment in other grades in the South West
- ▶ Started the next cohort of senior women taking part in the 30% Club's mentoring programme. Our former Senior

Partner, Mark Bomer, was a founding Chairman of the Professional Services arm of the 30% Club. In the past four years, more than 70 of our senior women have taken part

- ▶ Refreshed our firm-wide mentoring programme and have started to publicise success stories

- ▶ Discussed gender balance and our Gender Pay Gap data directly with each Leader across the firm
- ▶ Overhauled our Early In Careers advertising to ensure it is accessible to any gender and implemented 'inclusive recruitment' training for people running interviews

Congratulations to one of our Directors, Helen Humphries, who was named 'Woman of the Year: Rising Star' at the CityWealth Power Women Awards 2018!



# UNIFYING CULTURE PRIORITY

## BE YOURSELF

- ▶ Requested that our recruitment agencies and headhunters work with us to look at how we can comply with the Davies report recommendations of having 30% of shortlists comprised of women
- ▶ Extended our Business in the Community Gender Equality membership and signed up to the Lord Mayor's Power of Diversity Series
- ▶ Supported the first Diverse City fundraising dinner, organised by Dame Helena Morrissey
- ▶ And revised and promoted all our 'Life Event' policies.

We know we're already doing a lot of the right things – it just takes time to achieve sustainable change. 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.

### OUR GENDER PAY GAP ANALYSIS

We have been working to make senior roles more attractive to women – and our ratios improve each year. However, we want – and need – to do more. Gender diversity – in fact all diversity – creates a stronger, sustainable and valuable business, so we need to keep working at creating an environment, which is desirable for all our people. The key message for us is that it's not about a gap, it's about a balance.

Our BE INSPIRED graphic helps us to focus on some of the associated challenges. And we're starting to see a shift in the right direction. In the last 12 months, the difference in mean hourly rate of pay has decreased and is now at 17.7%. The difference in median hourly rate of pay has also decreased and is now at 18.9%. These are in line with industry averages – and we'll keep working at bringing them down. [Click here](#) to see our detailed Gender Pay Gap reports for both employees and Equity Partners.

## BE YOURSELF: GENDER BALANCE

B	BELIEF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Be Yourself – there should be no barriers to advancement and achieving your potential</li> <li>▶ There are role models – it can be done</li> </ul>
E	EDUCATE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Open, regular and inspiring communications</li> </ul>
I	INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ 'Be Yourself' training</li> <li>▶ Tone at the top</li> </ul>
N	NETWORK & COMMUNITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Internal networks: BDO Inspire (our gender balance network); North West Inclusion; North West Gender Group</li> <li>▶ External memberships: Lord Mayor's Power of Diversity Series, Business in the Community Gender Equality, SWIFT, 30% Club, Women Working In International Development Group</li> </ul>
S	SUPPORT & SPONSORSHIP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Support through mentoring: partners, firm-wide, 30% club</li> <li>▶ Support through counselling managers</li> <li>▶ Sponsorship programme for future partners</li> </ul>
P	POLICIES & PROGRAMMES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Revision of our 'Life Event' policies</li> <li>▶ New Wellbeing programme</li> <li>▶ Regular promotion of success stories</li> </ul>
I	INVESTIGATE, INNOVATE & INSIGHT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Investigate if new external initiatives are right for our people: Women in Finance charter, 'women in the workplace' awards</li> <li>▶ Greater insights into our people (Inclusion Survey)</li> <li>▶ Our firm-wide Adviser of the Future programme</li> <li>▶ Horizon scanning</li> </ul>
R	RECRUITMENT & RETENTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Regular analysis of our recruitment, application, interview and induction process to keep removing any potential bias, including Inclusive recruitment guidance</li> <li>▶ School outreach within social mobility programme</li> <li>▶ Retention of our people via support, sponsorship and career development planning</li> </ul>
E	EXCITE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Introduce 'champions of change' to work with female partners</li> <li>▶ Inspiring stories with a link to our 'Be Yourself' priority</li> <li>▶ Leverage network of champions and U Leaders. Let's make progress together!</li> </ul>
D	DEVELOPMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ A clear development plan linked to our 'Achieving My Potential' framework</li> </ul>

# UNIFYING CULTURE PRIORITY

## BE YOURSELF

### 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
- ▶ Were the first major accountancy firm to offer the higher apprenticeship in audit
- ▶ Expanded our long-established school leaver programme. Both our graduate and school leaver 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 in a range of mentoring and internships with organisations specifically targeting inner city schools and students from disadvantaged backgrounds
- ▶ Ran our first BDO National Apprenticeship Service broadcast this year, which more than 80 schools streamed to their A level students
- ▶ Launched a Summer School for A level students, which helps to bridge the gap between students who have previously had access to work experience and those who haven't
- ▶ Introduced 'Insight Days' to allow school pupils from a variety of state schools and colleges to spend time at our offices across the country, helping to familiarise themselves with professional environments, recruitment processes and the accountancy industry
- ▶ Support our trainees through their exams, including study time, and our excellent results speak for themselves – regularly up to 10% above the national average.

We're delighted to have just welcomed 90 new apprentices into this year's new cohort of BDO trainees – our highest ever.



# UNIFYING CULTURE PRIORITY

## BE YOURSELF

### ACCESS ALL AREAS

*Teresa Payne, BDO's Head of People, says*

*"The accountancy profession is such a significant employer in the UK that it's only right that, in addition to our own noteworthy efforts, we combine as a profession to challenge ourselves to tackle social mobility. The clients we work for don't come in one mould, so why should their accountants and business advisers? Failure to unlock the potential of today's younger generation could hinder our economy for generations to come."*

*Melissa Dube, Audit Trainee and fashion and fitness fanatic, adds*

*"It's brilliant to see BDO, and the industry, searching out fresh and diverse talent to arrive through our doors."*

*"I still remember my 'lightbulb moment': I could earn a salary at the same time as getting an internationally-recognised qualification but not build up the debts associated with being at university? Why on earth would I not join a school leaver programme?!"*

*"I'm often asked what the hardest part of being a school leaver is and my response is always the same: the jump from being a dependent sixth former to being a responsible adult in the workplace. Gone are the days of lie-ins and six-week summers! But in their place comes the prospect of a bright and promising future. Plus, from day one at BDO, I've been able to count on an extensive network of support, including mentors, partners, my personal counselling manager and a student qualification manager who supports me through my professional exams."*

*"For a few more years, I know that I will be developing skills and working towards a qualification that will open up so many doors for me. And, when I look at it like that, I realise that starting work as a school leaver was a smart investment."*





# UNIFYING CULTURE PRIORITY

## BE YOURSELF

### A NETWORK OF NETWORKS

Well-represented groups with strong and prominent role models are important throughout BDO.

We embrace individuality along with collaborative working. We believe that 'difference' is what makes us great and what strengthens our team, which is why we foster an inclusive culture at BDO, which encourages people to be themselves.

We have a number of network groups run by our people who celebrate with each other. In the last 12 months, our networks have:

- ▶ Supported each other's activity, including hosting a joint 'lunch and learn' with the Chairs of each network to share their stories, aims and challenges together
- ▶ Run a sponsored fast challenge during Ramadan
- ▶ Hosted the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales' LGBT event "Trans and the Accountancy profession"

- ▶ Helped us to celebrate being a partner of National Inclusion Week and a member of the Government's Multicultural Professional Networks forum
- ▶ Shared tips and ideas on how to #PressForProgress on International Women's Day
- ▶ Produced a report into what the 350 Millennials working in our London Audit Group want out of their working lives, and how BDO could respond.





# UNIFYING CULTURE PRIORITY

## BE YOURSELF

### MISSION: MILLENNIALS

Our London Audit Group has extensively researched what the 350 Millennials in their group are thinking and feeling about working at BDO. We asked for their views, motivations and preferences to better inform our strategy. We looked at 11 areas: technology, career progression, feedback, recognition, salary, work-life balance, social relationships, corporate social responsibility, transparency and communications, autonomy and variety, and training and development.

The recommendations are now being considered by London Audit Group locally and by the relevant Boards centrally. These include:

- ▶ Continue our focus on growing our innovation culture to drive efficiency
- ▶ An individual approach to career development, including greater clarity over progression and greater empowerment

- ▶ Encourage a continuous feedback culture where employees are given timely and constructive feedback on a regular basis
- ▶ Ensure more consistency when recognising people for their achievements
- ▶ Open and transparent communications about everything
- ▶ Look to increase opportunities for flexible working
- ▶ Don't underestimate the importance of social relationships at work and CSR agendas, and their positive impact on wellbeing

Our thanks to Katerina Dayantis and Helen Pericleous at BDO for researching and writing the report, and our Head of London Audit Group, Tony Perkins, for sponsoring the activity.



*Chris Grove, U Board Chair, adds*

*"We recognise that we now have five generations represented in our workforce and have been engaging in a number of discussions about what that means for our strategy, and how we should operate and behave as a business. Most people actually*

*want the same thing regardless of age: good quality feedback, recognition and career progression; but the nuances vary in the different groups."*



# A UNIFYING CULTURE WHERE WE CAN...

## WORK TOGETHER

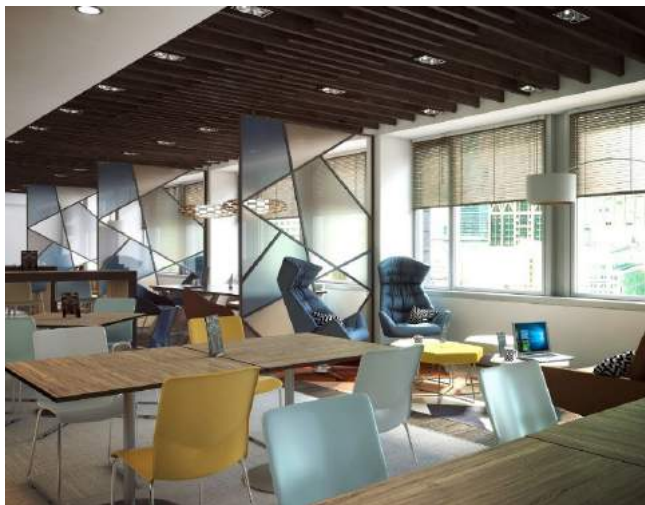
One of our ambitions is that a Unifying Culture helps us to work better as a collective team. Sharing and applying knowledge and ideas remains one of the most powerful things an organisation can do. It provides competitive advantage, and we need everyone to feel able to play their part.

We need the right 'tone from the top':

- ▶ 90% of our people say our partners always or often display a positive attitude
- ▶ 89% of our people say that our partners always or often demonstrate empowerment and personal responsibility

And it can't be just in the UK:

- ▶ We now work with every single one of our 162 BDO firms across the world on live client projects



Over the last year, we've remodelled our London HQ at 55 Baker Street to create a workplace that better reflects our collaborative culture and digital mindset. This has involved more areas for informal meetings and collaborative working, dedicated team zones and improved technology such as extensive Wi-Fi and SurfaceHub technology in meeting rooms. We've overhauled our staff café – still called Fibonacci's – and it's buzzing from 8am to 5pm with people working together in the new booths. The change – which we've internally been calling our '55 Live' project – has kickstarted greater agile working, and has been matched with similar projects in other offices, including Reading and Birmingham.



*Andy Butterworth, our Chief Operating Officer, says*

*"I don't need a desk just so I can hang my jacket on a chair first thing in the morning and come back to collect it when I've finished my meetings later that day. 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. That was the principle behind our new Baker Street spaces. And the 'agile working' mindset is one we continue to promote."*

# A UNIFYING CULTURE WHERE WE CAN...

## BE SUCCESSFUL

Each of us has our own definition of success. We want to help our people define and achieve theirs. In doing so, each of us will ultimately contribute to the overall success of the firm.

Last year, we gave approximately 3,480 awards to our people to thank them for going the extra mile. These awards can be anything from a £75 instant award to a quarterly award of up to £2,500 for individuals and up to £5,000 for teams.



Each year, we host an annual awards dinner, which recognises the 'best of the best' quarterly award winners. This year's 'Managing Partner Award' was handed to an Assistant Manager in our Technology Risk Assurance team.



*Andrew Downing said*

*"Advances in areas such as analytics, drones, artificial intelligence, cyber, automation, robotics or even block-chain are set to completely change the way firms operate over the next few years. Automation is augmenting the capabilities*

*we already have, which helps us to work smarter.*

*"Over the past year, I helped to create a training framework for the new intake of technology risk graduates and school leavers. This builds on the existing courses, which give a foundation in audit, so they have both the basics and the specialist skillsets required when working within technology risk assurance. We'd also worked on a jargon buster to equip financial auditors with the knowledge to understand ever-changing technology jargon so they are better placed to help their clients succeed. I was shocked and delighted that my work was recognised by the Managing Partner at our annual awards evening."*

At BDO, we have one very clear framework to guide our personal career development. Called 'Achieving My Potential' (AMP), it gives us a set of criteria that underpins our journey through our lifetime at BDO. This year, we've trained 1,000 of our Counselling Managers on the AMP framework.

The AMP framework applies to all employees, in all areas of the firm. It clearly sets out what we need to do and how we need to do it; and our core purpose helps us understand why we do it. This means we can all achieve our potential at BDO and become the best we can be. It gives us a fairer, more transparent and consistent way of attracting, developing, growing, rewarding and engaging our people. Importantly, it means we have the right people, in the right roles, at the right time for personal and firm-wide success.





## A UNIFYING CULTURE WHERE WE CAN...

### BE INSPIRED AND CHALLENGED

Your personal career plans at BDO are designed to inspire and challenge at all stages of your career. We expect you to shape your career according to your strengths, skills and personality.

We also introduced a new Career Pathways programme. A Career Pathway is an organised and structured approach to career planning and development. There are a number of different routes for career progression and everyone's journey will be unique, as 'success' is different for each individual. Through a number of different activities, it seeks to develop all employees throughout their career lifecycle, as well as identify and support high potential performers within the business. The world is moving at a fast pace, and we all need to keep up with the latest trends and changes in our own areas of work, as well as further developing our general skills and competencies.

We hire quality people to deliver great results. Being challenged and inspired in the work each of us do is vital to a healthy and fulfilling career. We recognise this and encourage working beyond our immediate BDO goals, considering wider societal dilemmas and problems, and motivate our people to give back to the wider community in which we work.



*Andrea Hunt, Global Outsourcing Partner in Bristol, Core Purpose Champion, keen skier and wildlife enthusiast*

*"We truly care about our people, helping everyone to be themselves and to have the flexibility and encouragement to add value in ways that matter to them the most. Our clients see this commitment and enthusiasm and enjoy working with a motivated team who want to provide a high quality service and help them to develop their business and be successful."*

# 96%

OF OUR PEOPLE SAY THEY ARE  
COMMITTED TO DELIVERING  
EXCEPTIONAL CLIENT SERVICE





## IDEAS | PEOPLE | TRUST



*Jessica Gowar, our Director of Markets, Sales and Clients and a whisky-loving Canadian*

You may have noticed that we've launched a new strapline! And we're very excited about it. And, importantly for this culture report, it has 'people' at the heart of it.

This follows a year of extensive research and exploration with our people, leadership, clients and recruiters about how we 'bottle up' 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. That's probably why, for the third year running, more clients would recommend us than any other major firm. 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 250 quality partners who earn the trust from clients and the market by delivering great results. And it's our 4,000 quality people who come up with great ideas to solve new problems to keep the UK's economic engine running. With audit market reform and Brexit 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.



IDEAS | PEOPLE | TRUST



Characterful reports with headlines that focus on putting IDEAS in people's heads

Content built around creative thinking, conceptual planning, innovation, brainstorming and forward-looking opinion forming.



IDEAS | PEOPLE | TRUST





IDEAS | PEOPLE | TRUST





## FOR MORE INFORMATION:

### PAUL EAGLAND

+44 (0) 20 7893 2435  
paul.eagland@bdo.co.uk

The proposals contained in this document are made by BDO LLP and are in all respects subject to the negotiation, agreement and signing of a specific contract. This document contains information that is commercially sensitive to BDO LLP, which is being disclosed to you in confidence to facilitate your consideration of whether or not to engage BDO LLP. It is not to be disclosed to any third party without the written consent of BDO LLP, or without consulting BDO LLP if public freedom of information legislation applies and might compel disclosure. Any client names and statistics quoted in this document include clients of BDO LLP and may include clients of the international BDO network of independent member firms.

BDO LLP, a UK limited liability partnership registered in England and Wales under number OC305127, is a member of BDO International Limited, a UK company limited by guarantee, and forms part of the international BDO network of independent member firms. A list of members' names is open to inspection at our registered office, 55 Baker Street, London W1U 7EU. BDO LLP is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority to conduct investment business.

BDO is the brand name of the BDO network and for each of the BDO member firms. BDO Northern Ireland, a partnership formed in and under the laws of Northern Ireland, is licensed to operate within the international BDO network of independent member firms.

Copyright © October 2018 BDO LLP. All rights reserved. Published in the UK.

[www.bdo.co.uk](http://www.bdo.co.uk)