

# Most people-focused CEO of the year

## Winner

# Craig Donaldson, Metro Bank

The Metro Bank story, like many others, starts in a pub. Craig Donaldson, CEO, and his colleagues sat around a table and discussed the values they wanted their bank to have, writing ideas on the backs of beer mats. From its very first moments company culture was of paramount importance to the firm.

This meeting resulted in the bank's AMAZE values, and these continue to play a central role in the organisation today. They run through each and every staff member: new colleagues learn the values as soon as they join, they are sung out at colleague events, and existing employees (no matter where they sit in the bank) get reviewed based on them twice a year. Donaldson says that the firm's culture is its undeniable difference. It ensures that everyone does the right thing and that the bank's people grow in the right manner. "I know that we are nothing without our people, and our people, together with the environment that we create and the way we work, is our culture," says Donaldson.

A big part of Metro Bank's culture is having no 'stupid bank rules', which means binning anything that gets in the way of staff providing great service and customers receiving the best banking experience. Over the past year not only did it become the first bank to allow both customers and colleagues to choose gender-neutral titles and prefixes, but it also enabled mortgage customers to rent their properties through Airbnb, and similar sites, without prior approval – stupid bank rules that the team were proud to eliminate.

As the store network and number of colleagues have grown so has Donaldson's use of Yammer (the internal social media network). He checks it around half a dozen times a day to listen to feedback, hear suggestions, and to praise colleagues who are going above and beyond. He has posted



thousands of times. This gives him the opportunity to make sure his finger is on the pulse, and another channel to be contacted by.

For Donaldson leadership is about empowering people to be the best they can be; no more and no less. He wants people to be happy, bring all of themselves to work, reach their full potential and be proud of what they achieve.

The judges praised how Donaldson clearly is not just talk – he walks the walk too.

The effectiveness of this approach is especially apparent when it comes to employee engagement. Almost all (97%) staff report that they understand how their business unit contributes to the overall success of the bank, 94% say it is a good place to work, and 87% believe there are opportunities for promotions available.

The importance of culture shines through in Donaldson's own behaviour and leadership. He is the human face of banking to his colleagues and to his customers, and is a real role model to the whole Metro Bank team.

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### Shortlisted

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**Adrian Bettridge, managing partner, Baringa Partners**

**Anna Blackburn, CEO, Beaverbrooks**

**Mike Brown, chief executive, Bromsgrove District Housing Trust**

**Simon Grosse, CEO and co-founder, Foundation SP**

**Steve Ingham, CEO, PageGroup**

**Ian Lonergan, CEO, Charter Court Financial Services Group**

**Ed Reeves, director and co-founder, Moneypenny**

**Gary Scutt, CEO, 4Com**

**Colin Temple, managing director, Schuh**

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