

# Amaro: Putting its people first

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*Micky Ewart, Managing Director at Amaro, talks about the importance of a fantastic team culture and staff welfare.*

Every Thursday afternoon without fail Amaro workers take part in a Safety Stand-Down – providing the opportunity to talk openly and honestly about everything from close calls through to mental health.

It's exactly this kind of initiative that has helped this forward-thinking business create an environment in which staff are truly engaged, feeling valued, listened to and, most importantly, safe.

"We are one team, we learn from our mistakes as a team and we develop together as a team, listening to each other's ideas," said Micky Ewart, Managing Director at Amaro.

"Every good business knows that it's the people that make a company successful which is why the priority for me is the health, happiness and wellbeing of the team.

"That is all part of my aim to make sure Amaro is a brilliant place to work and brilliant to work with, listening to, engaging with and encouraging our workers."

The Safety Stand-Down isn't just a tick box exercise. Staff feel confident enough to talk openly about all aspects of work, health and safety.

"We also hold a Control Room meeting on Tuesdays to allow for conversations across the business, with the last item for discussion the numerous 'one per cent improvements' that have been made across the business," said Micky.

"Often, those one per cent improvements are the most important things to people. When you come into a business in a management role, too many people think that you can simply write down your processes and all of the firm's problems will be solved. From my perspective, however, it's actually listening that matters the most.

"Our Control Room meetings let us provide support and development opportunities, helping to change the way our people think. This changes behaviours and drives positive action which, in turn, drives results."



### **Transforming the business as a team**

With such an emphasis on staff it should come as no surprise that the business has been transformed with Micky at its helm. Since joining as Operations Director in October 2018 – becoming Managing Director in October 2019 – the business has grown from 10 employees to over 45. In that same period, turnover has risen from a loss-making £2.5 million to a profit-making £5 million, Micky expecting this to increase this

year to £6 million.

He said: "From a profitability and turnover point of view the business is doing really well. In the past year we've made significant investments in new tools, equipment, vans and training. We've also recently opened up a second fantastic facility in Stevenage."

As well as recently marking his third year at Amaro, Micky has also just reached his 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary in the rail industry – which started in 1991 with his first ever shift working for British Rail as a Signalling Technician.

"It's been a fantastic 30 years and a great journey from an S&T technician to Managing Director, albeit with a few jobs in between," said Micky, who in that time has worked for the likes of Balfour Beatty and Network Rail; been involved with more than 500 projects, and managed and mentored more than 2,000 people.

"I think starting as a Signalling Trainee Technician and working my way up through all the grades/job roles to where I am today has given me a great insight into what people need at the various levels and throughout all the various roles.

"For me having a boss who actually cared about me stands out the most. A boss who gave me training, development, listened to my ideas, implemented them, trusted me, showed me respect and really cared about my health and wellbeing is what I remember to this day. And that's exactly why, from day one, I've tried to instil that into the culture here at Amaro."

### **Inspiring the next generation**

The efforts go beyond just the current staff, with Micky and the rest of the team passionate about inspiring the next generation of workers and making sure those that enter the industry want to stay.

As part of its recruitment strategy, Amaro is providing opportunities for people to join the company as apprentices, working with training provider PM Training and Assessing Ltd. The company also works with Train 2 Train to identify the apprentices and engineers of the future.

"When I look back on 30 years in rail, I realise just how lucky I was to join this incredible industry, spending seven years on the tools, taking 22 years to get to director level, then another seven years to get to MD," he said.

"I've done it the right way and all of that hands-on experience is useful when it comes to running this business and building the team we have at Amaro.

"It's important to me that, as directors and managers, we're regularly on site with the frontline teams mucking in and seeing first-hand the work taking place. When you've renewed sets of points on Newcastle's King Edward Bridge on a Saturday night in Winter, with the wind blowing rain and sleet in your face, you really get a feel for the challenges your team face!"



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*Photo credit: Amaro*