

# What makes a positive organisational culture?

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*In this guest writer article, Elaine Kenny, HSQE and compliance manager at [Amaro](#), explains the importance of organisational culture.*

**A positive organisational culture doesn't just encourage employees to pull together, driving the business forward - it also ensures that they feel happy, fulfilled and supported at work.**

It's something we're passionate about here at [Amaro](#), where our strong, forward-looking culture is powering business growth. The numbers speak for themselves; in 2022, we employed 15 new team members, completed over 40 rail projects, and saw our annual turnover increase by 20 per cent.

But what makes for a positive culture – the kind that will help employees to grow and thrive? Carefully defined values, the right benefits, training opportunities, and policies founded on trust are all key.

## **Meaningful core values**

A business's culture is underpinned by its values, which help employees to understand how they should operate and what they're striving for.

That's why, led by managing director Micky Ewart (who is closely involved in the day-to-day running of the company), Amaro has defined its own core values; it is agile, motivated, accountable, respectful and open.

These principles inform the business's approach to both its customers and employees, ensuring that they feel valued, empowered and heard.

And it's not enough to define organisational values – they must be embedded throughout a business. At Amaro, we ensure that every process and policy reflects our five guiding principles.

### **The right working practices**

These values have shaped working practices at Amaro. Indeed, we believe every team member should be free to work in the way that best suits them, and are committed to inclusivity.

That's why we've introduced flexible working – and today, employees are trusted to manage their own workloads and even to choose their own hours where appropriate. Homeworking has also been rolled out across the business.

This flexible, inclusive approach doesn't just help staff to maintain a healthy work-life balance – it means that wherever an individual is based and whatever their needs, they're able to realise their full potential. What's more, our open-door policy ensures that employees feel able to raise concerns, which are always listened to and addressed.

### **Safety and wellbeing**

Whether you're based at home, in the office or on-site, the rail industry can be fast-paced and challenging. The Rail Safety and Standards Board stresses that rail staff must be “**supported in their wellbeing, allowing them to thrive at work**” – and a positive organisational culture is one with employee welfare at its heart.

At Amaro, staff have access to several trained mental health first aiders, and can arrange appointments with medical and mental health professionals via their free AXA health insurance. An individual's home and work lives are inextricably linked, and this insurance covers, not just employees, but their family members too.

We also recognise the importance of strong working relationships, and strive to foster an inclusive, family environment. Team building days and social events give employees the opportunity to come together, share best practice and build lasting friendships, ensuring that they don't feel isolated at home or on-site.

And, in the rail industry, safety should always be a priority. It's at the heart of Amaro's culture, and MD Micky holds weekly safety stand-downs, during which employees receive important briefings and updates. The business also has a strict '12-hour door-to-door' fatigue management policy.

Staff will learn more about these issues at Amaro's next team-building event – a health and wellbeing day to mark the opening of its new Maidstone office. Featuring talks from health and safety professionals, this annual event will also see staff undergo health checks, review PPE and enjoy a healthy breakfast and

lunch.

Ultimately, prioritising staff wellbeing is good for business; with access to the right support and resources, employees are happier, healthier and more productive – something many businesses fail to recognise.

### **Investing in employees**

And it's not just about wellbeing; a 2021 survey by CIPD stated that individuals increasingly “[see personal growth as an essential part of meaningful work and careers.](#)”

Organisations should be willing to invest in their employees, providing learning and development opportunities that will enable them to progress. It's something we feel strongly about at Amaro, where team members are encouraged to seek professional qualifications and further training.

I joined the business as a compliance officer, and was promoted to HSQE and compliance manager after undertaking relevant training. My colleague, head of commercial Sarah Townley, recently completed a Women in Transport leadership programme, while planner and signalling apprentice Rachael Lyas is excelling in her challenging and varied role.

Investing in its employees has been key to Amaro's success, helping it to build a competent and highly motivated team. The business now plans to take on six new apprentices, reaffirming its commitment to learning and development.

### **Employee engagement**

And organisations must ensure that they listen to their employees, as well as investing in them. MD Micky recognises that every member of the Amaro team has a valuable contribution to make, and encourages individuals to share their ideas via the firm's 'you said, we did' programme.

This initiative sees employees make suggestions about everything from working practices to processes and equipment, with their ideas reviewed and often implemented by the management team on a weekly basis. It's been hugely successful, guaranteeing that Amaro's workforce feels heard, leading to new efficiencies, and improving workplace safety. We've recently switched to carbon-neutral PPE at the suggestion of one employee, for example.

Ultimately, the right organisational culture ensures that employees enjoy, and are rewarded for, their work – a priority for Amaro, whose experienced and dedicated team are its most important asset.

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