

# HOW WE ROLL



# HERE'S WHAT MAKES US, US

Culture. *noun* – the ideas, customs, and social behaviour of a particular people or society.

**WHAT IS OUR CULTURE?**

**WHAT'S DIFFERENT ABOUT IT COMPARED  
TO OTHER COMPANIES?**

**WHAT DO PEOPLE THINK OF IT?**

As we say hi to new faces and new clients, pick up new awards and continue to grow, these are questions we're always asking ourselves.

Yet, rather than our Marketing, People or Leadership team trying to summarise our culture, we asked everyone who works here if they'd be part of it too.

So, from new faces to leaders, from established professionals across audit, marketing, tax, finance and so on, here are our stories and impressions of our culture.

Here's what makes us, *us*.



## THE CP CULTURE BOOK

I joined the firm in 2004. It was very different back then! Partners' offices upstairs... everyone else downstairs. The Chairman had the biggest corner office... me, a 2x2 under the stairs. A tea lady made tea for the partners... no one else. I remember my first partner meeting, and one of my new 'more junior' colleagues being shot down by one of older guys. His crime? Speaking out. I kept my head down for the next few meetings!

A real hierarchy ran through the business. No one talked about culture back then, it just kinda happened. The business was strong but the culture was formal, silo and stuck in the past.

I was fortunate though that I joined at a time of real change. Enough of us wanted something different. We were young and wanted to make our dent in the world. We wanted to create a business where people dared to try new things. The sort of business that we would all want to work in.

14 years on, Cooper Parry is very different. The fastest growing firm of accountants in the UK, British Accountancy's 'Most Innovative Firm of the Year', the Sunday Times 12th Best Company to work for, award-winning 'googleseque' offices, widely held as the 'rebels' of our profession and famous for our culture. Our Culture is our brand.

We've experienced rapid growth. And as we continue to grow and hire new people, we need to ensure that they understand and become part of our culture. That is the purpose of this Culture Book... to provide a glimpse of what the Cooper Parry Culture is all about to prospective new hires, our strategic partners, our clients and anyone else who might be interested.

Of course, the CP culture means different things to different people, so we thought the best way for people to learn what it was all about was to hear from our people directly.

To me, the Cooper Parry culture is: competing hard to win – setting stretch goals – providing opportunities and challenges for people to do things they never imagined possible – frequent parties to celebrate victories, big or small – always fighting to raise the bar – taking big swings – open and honest and passionate debates – playing to our strengths – entrepreneurial and agile – childlike curiosity – a place where people get up every morning, searching for a better way – and of course... fun!

Our culture is contagious. It's something that you feel the second you walk through the door and sticks with you long after you leave. It would not be what it is today without the people, past and present. Our people are who we are, it's what makes us unique and something that changes every day. Great people is what has made it all work.

**ADE CHEATHAM, CEO**





Cooper Parry is like a volcano.

Every now and then we erupt – we change the norm, challenge the standard and shake things up.

When this comes, it's not easy; people have to adapt and change. We learn to evolve and re-shape our mindset.

And then, when the dust settles a real evolution starts.

A new land is created where life begins to flourish. Rocks gain minerals turning into gemstones. Flowers begin to bloom from the rich soil.

Through chaos and change comes something quite rare – purpose.

It's not easy working in an ever changing environment, but I wouldn't change it for the world. I'm proud to be a part of this journey and look forward to the next rupture.

Long live Cooper Parry.

**ORIANNE WIGHTMAN, PEOPLE TEAM**

# COOPER PARRY IS LIKE A VOLCANO. EVERY NOW AND THEN, WE ERUPT

# PHRASES LIKE 'HELLUVA' and 'SLIDE INTO OUR DMs'

One of the reasons our culture is great is because of what it means for how we sound – the language we use.

In most financial institutions, you'd be berated for using words or phrases like "helluva" and "slide into our DMs" (two words or phrases I've used recently – for very different audiences!).

But there's such an appetite here to stand out from our competitors. To sound different. To be noticed. To be understood.

And for our message to resonate amongst all our different audiences.

There are lots of businesses that don't consider how they sound as a way to differentiate themselves. But at CP it's another weapon in our arsenal. It's part of our culture.

**BERT PREECE, MARKETING**





For me the CP culture is all about trust, responsibility, ownership, fun and working together to achieve our goals.

As I walked up the stairs a year after first walking up them I recalled the way I was welcomed by my team and manager which just blew me away. My team are my pals, we look after each other, we care for each other, we're interested in the stuff we're all doing.

I worked in the manufacturing industry for 14 and a half years and the culture here at CP is the opposite end of the scale as I had experienced lack of trust, being dictated to and clocking in and out as my day to day norm which is radically different to my days here at CP.

The unity our culture brings to us whatever our role in CP is mind-blowing (in a very good way!).

**SELEENA CREEDON, MARKETING**

# WORKING TOGETHER TO ACHIEVE OUR GOALS







# DIFFERENT TO OTHER FIRMS

**From the moment I joined Cooper Parry, it felt different to other firms.**

**Everyone, particularly the partners, are all pulling in the same direction and there is a clear desire to get the best from everyone.**

**There is huge loyalty and energy which I find difficult to explain in words.**

**The Strategy is clear. The team are then given a huge amount of freedom and trust to go out and deliver that strategy, which is hugely empowering in my experience.**

**Cooper Parry people live and breathe 'In it together'. Not once have I felt alone when faced with a tricky client issue – everyone runs towards helping get to the right and best answer.**

**It's a fun, friendly and infectious place to work and a place where I've found the freedom to be me and not have to try to be somebody else!**

**KATIE WARRINGTON, AUDIT**







**The CP culture means everything. Disrupt, lead, make life count? Every day, and in everything we do.**

**Challenging, not accepting mediocrity and never settling.**

**Our culture means I have the courage to give my opinion, and the knowledge people are listening. The ability to be vulnerable about where I need support.**

**A family of bright, passionate people to learn from, rooting for each other. The freedom to “have a go”, try something new and be brave.**

**And the encouragement to be myself at all times.**

**We play hard... but we work hard too. If you need a break, a day off to regroup. That’s fine – own it, enjoy it, make it count.**

**I work with some big businesses... and they are not a patch on us when it comes to culture.**

**Our passion, our energy, and our PRIDE in everything we have here. We must be doing something right!**

**CAT KELLY, AUDIT**

**OUR PASSION  
OUR ENERGY  
OUR PRIDE**

You wouldn't recognise the business I joined in 1971. I wouldn't want to work there now.

When I started, knowledge was power. There was no internet, no ready access to information. Even simple stuff like knowing the Corporation Tax rate was captive knowledge. Having that knowledge kinda made those people superior to everyone else. The culture was all about keeping your importance by holding the knowledge to yourself. The culture was about keeping everyone else in their place by finding them doing things wrong and reminding them of their station. Partners were powerful and to be held in awe and were all called Mr something or other (there weren't any Mrs partners). Clients put on their best suit to visit us.

Things improved a little (but only because the world was getting lighter and brighter) until a bunch of us decided just post millennium that we didn't want a business like that and the industry didn't need to be like that. We set out on a huge and very painful period of change with the objective of turning a negative culture into a positive one. We tracked down every source of negativity, we fired people we'd worked with for years, we lost people who just couldn't cope with the change, we communicated like hell, we became real and down to earth, we accepted that there was nothing special about being in the profession – we were just in business like everyone else. We focused on having a great team looking after great clients.

It's taken a long time to get to where we are – and we still have further to go. But wow look at what we've all built together. Everybody has and continues to play their part in helping us get better every...single... day. We should be immensely proud of what we are building.

The world has turned full circle since I started. Google and the internet provide easy access to knowledge and the power rests with people with personality – real people who speak plain English, who like and care about other people and have an innate intelligence that can shape knowledge for the benefit of clients. At least 90% of what I used to do for clients back in the 70's we now do for ourselves. We are stretched every day to add value and to be relevant to our clients.

What does it mean for me? Well apart from outright pride at what we've all achieved together its about being in a supportive environment. It is about proudly admitting that I don't know stuff but have colleagues who know more than I will ever know. It's about watching people grow and develop. It's about hearing clients saying how great we are. It's about feeling comfortable to show my vulnerability and fears and knowing I have colleagues who will care and support me. It's about realising that this is our business and we have choices about what it should look like. It's about respect and caring.

I sense you're getting bored now. I'll leave you the thought that a large regional business told me that our team who had worked on a project with them had implanted a little cell of our fantastic culture in their business and this was already changing the way they interacted with their people. How great is that?

We position ourselves in a wacky way, we are disruptors but don't let that disguise the fact that we are essentially nice, down to earth, empathetic, real and caring people who know how to relate to others.

We've all built this. It will get even better.

**JEREMY BOWLER, CHAIRMAN**

# LOOK AT WHAT WE HAVE BUILT TOGETHER



# IT'S A UNIQUE ENVIRONMENT AND CULTURE

What does Cooper Parry culture mean to me?

The culture at Cooper Parry was a big part of what made me make the decision to bring the whole app team into Cooper Parry (as well as the amazing opportunity for the whole team!).

With a strong drive to push personal growth and focusing on doing the absolute best at what you are great at. With a wealth of support to help you get there, make you feel comfortable and achieve the most you can.

The culture is all about being different, being flexible and making sure staff feel as supported and comfortable being themselves as possible, all of which helps drive performance. From the open plan office where you can be working next to your usual colleagues one day, or sitting next to a partner or director the next, the openness of the business and staff is one of the most inclusive of any business I have ever seen.

From the amazing offices, casual wear, flexible work hours and unlimited holiday, the benefits are huge and make you feel really appreciated. But for me it's the drive of the business and everyone in it, the way everyone is included in the culture, in the figures and results, the targets and goals going forward. The level of transparency and inclusion really is something vastly different from most big businesses.

It's a unique environment and culture that really makes you want to strive to do the best for the company and yourself, all whilst strategising global takeovers from a swing in the office in your shorts ;)

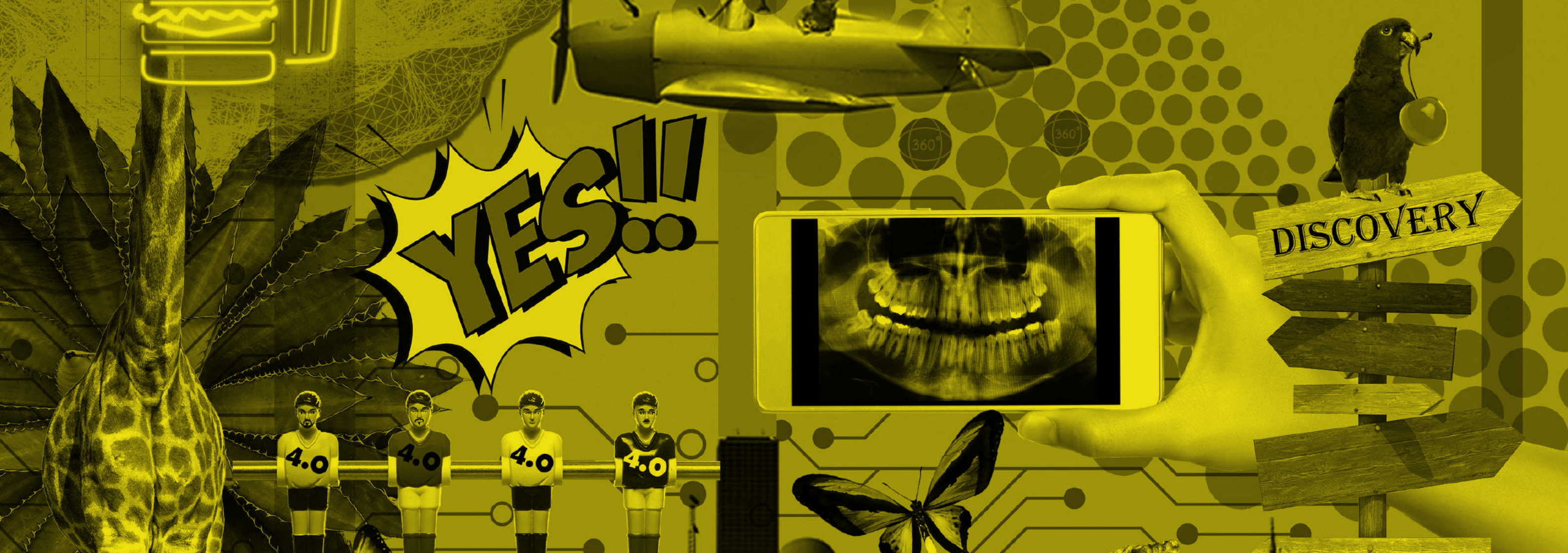
**MARK HOLLAND, IT**















BREXIT

M42  
Cooper Parry  
Park View





## 20 YEARS. THREE PERSPECTIVES

As a client, I loved the balance of conversational ‘get to know me’ chat and sharp, ‘to the point’ accounting advice. No question, we were of a like mind.

As CP’s agency, I have loved every step of the journey from ‘we don’t do grey’ to the colourful place we’re at now. If ever a business just picked up the brand ball and ran with it, this was the one.

Now, as one of the team, I get an insider’s view. People-centric, collaborative and wonderfully edgy.

That’s how we roll here. And I, for one, love it.

### STEVE NOSS, MARKETING

**Rather than regurgitate the culture as defined by our values, I wanted to share what the CP culture means to me personally, and how it makes me feel:**

- **Rewarded, trusted and empowered.**
- **The benefits we receive make me extremely proud of the place I work, which drives me to achieve more.**
- **The culture allows me the opportunity to work with some amazing people, who look at life with a positive outlook.**
- **Colleagues and management have my back.**

### JO GILES, FACILITIES

**When I left Sky View after my first interview, I knew that I’d finally found the right place for me, and that if I couldn’t work for Cooper Parry, nowhere else would ever be quite good enough.**

**The culture here is something that I’ve honestly never come across before, and from my very first day I’ve loved every minute. It’s not just about the cool offices, the opportunities for learning and development, the support we get for our mental and physical wellbeing, the social events.**

**It’s about the people, and the fact that when Cooper Parry say that the most important thing when they recruit is someone being the right fit, they really mean it.**

**I love that every single day I come to work, I get to spend time with amazing people who are really, really good at what they do and who work their socks off to deliver the absolute best to our clients.**

**And I’m really proud every day that I fit a company like Cooper Parry, and the kind of people who work and thrive here... I can’t imagine ever being anywhere else now.**

### REBECCA BATTERHAM, WEALTH

For me, it’s about being surrounded by passionate and ambitious people who work hard to deliver an exceptional service to clients in a personal way (clients always feedback that the team are ‘CP people’). We focus hard on supporting and developing those around us and knowing that we all look out for each other. And in doing all of this having some fun along the way.

Having worked for a previous National firm and perceptions of other firms, there is a very different ethos here as everyone is passionate about driving the firm forward to greater success and not solely focussed on personal ambitions. Our culture is very forward thinking, we moved away from being ‘shirt and tie’ accountants a number of years back, to being modern and relevant to both clients and potential team members and this as a constantly being challenged for the better.

### STEVE ELLIS, AUDIT

**WE ABSOLUTELY  
EMBRACE AND  
ENCOURAGE  
INDIVIDUALITY**

The CP 'culture' is about being able to be yourself and judged for what you can do, rather than how you look or how you sound. It all sounds pretty clichéd but that's essentially it and it's far more than the simple lip-service I've had elsewhere from other 'employers of choice'.

We absolutely embrace and encourage individuality, recognising that everyone has something different, unique and worthwhile to bring to the party. Strengths are lauded and enhanced, rather than perceived 'development points' being picked at. We'll find the squarest of square holes to put you in, rather than complaining your square peg doesn't do so well in the round hole, whilst continuing to try and push you into it!

At Partner level, I've described working here like a group of mates, who are all amazing at what they do, just wanting to come together and create something awesome both in terms of the work experience internally but also by genuinely pulling together for the greater good of the client service, without the usual egos and politics getting in the way (because we're mates!). The lack of a single KPI (like fees in your name) also helps remove the siloed behaviours that I've seen time and again elsewhere.

I love coming to work somewhere where I can be comfortable, wear a Foos t-shirt and look like 'a tattooed rockstar' (thanks Steve, you forgot 'ageing') rather than a 'normal' Tax Partner and yet still do amazing things for clients. Who knew, eh!

**CHRIS KNOTT, TAX**







**It's like a rushing  
Tide. Sweeping some by. Some die.  
The star-shaped fish stick.  
BERT PREECE, MARKETING**

**“Why would I work  
anywhere else?”  
STEVE WHITTLE, MARKETING**

The CP culture is very unique and nothing like I've ever experienced in work places before this one.

It's family, it's being in it together working towards one clear goal, it's about freedom and being trusted to do the right thing.

It's being excited for the day and week ahead, because you never know what could happen, it's about never having that 'Sunday night feeling'.

It's about being yourself and not trying to be something you're not because you are unique, there is no one quite like you.

**CHRISTIAN PEAT, AUDIT**

**Best kind of place to work, we work hard and play harder when possible. Quirky, innovative, booming, colourful, fun, so many adjectives to describe us, but 'Cooper Parry' is becoming its own definition. We're becoming famous for who we are and what we do. Limitless potential. Be the best.**

**MARC PATTERSON, WEALTH**

What the Cooper Parry Culture means to me

To most people here I am the previous generation – somebody who started work in the eighties, a very different world – no computers, internet or mobile phones in those days. Fax machines and photocopiers were the latest technology and everyone had shoulder pads in their oversized jackets.

My first day in the office was an interesting experience – I was shown the coffee machine so that I could get a round in, and that was pretty much the extent of my ‘on boarding’. Did I feel cared for? In truth no, not really, but to a large extent that’s just the way things were done in those days.

It certainly wasn’t all bad, I learnt quickly, developed a sense of resilience and self-reliance but most importantly was lucky to have worked with some very talented and forward-thinking people.

It also helped me figure out what I was really looking for in my career.

I wanted to be part of something I truly felt connected to and felt truly proud to be part of.

A business that was great at what it did, high profile and well connected, but one that cared about me – who I was, what I did and where I was going.

Roll forward more than 30 years and I’m still here today.

I’ve been part of a huge transition in our business and played my small part just like everybody else.

I don’t think I can adequately express just how much we have changed as a business.

We’re not perfect, no business is.

But I do know this.

I haven’t worked with any business, past or present, that cares more about its people than ours. Or one that wants to keep moving forward, developing us as individuals and the environment in which we work.

And very few businesses in my experience genuinely develop strong relationships with its clients in the way that we do.

I’m immensely proud to say I’m part of Cooper Parry – genuinely.

We all know that ‘Culture’ means different things to different people.

But to me it’s simple. As a business we care – about all of us, about our clients, about how we work together and about how we continually improve and get better.

Just what I was looking for all those years ago.

**ANDREW HONARMAND, AUDIT**

**AS A BUSINESS  
WE CARE  
ABOUT ALL OF US**









**CP is quite simply unlike any other company. At our heart is our culture and this is what separates us from other accountancy firms. And because we all share and believe in that same culture, “our DNA”, this is what brings all of us at CP together – a place where you truly feel like you are part of a big family.**

**STEPHANIE HIND, AUDIT**

For me, our culture screams out family. In fact, when I’m proudly talking to people outside of CP I call it my “2nd family”.

You feel looked after, loved and respected working here, and yes, there may be some squabbling at times but it’s soon forgotten.

Just like being part of a family our culture evokes happiness, kindness, trust, excitement, curiosity and celebration, everything you’d expect it to be.

Most of all you have a sense of belonging and I wouldn’t want to belong to any other family!

**MELANIE CAMPBELL, MARKETING**

It’s about embracing and making the most of everything in life, taking chances and making the most out of every opportunity, not just coasting through it. It’s about reinventing the phrase ‘work to live’. Why should you have to spend nearly 25% of your time every week in a job that is just that... ‘a job’.

**LAUREN HILLER, TAX**

**It means simply this: being myself. I’ve worked in a number of different businesses and in truth I’ve loved each one in different ways. They’ve all played a part in helping me develop and love life.**

**Cooper Parry’s culture is all about me never having to ‘get into character’ or pretend to be anything other than the creative, fun and often imperfectly formed human being that I am. And for that I honestly love being around here.**

**ANDY CHANDLER, AUDIT**

**Cooper Parry's culture has been quite eye opening for me.**

**I have never been in any organisation or met anyone that worked in an organisation with a similar stance on culture.**

**When I describe to friends and family what it's like to work at CP, I generally get an incredulous pair of eyes staring back at me.**

**Of course, the fancy offices, unlimited holidays and tech available to us is eye catching, but there is a lot more to it than this.**

**There is this genuine desire to share success, and the partners know when to give credit where it is due. People feel valued. I feel valued.**

**The fact that CP encourages a healthy work life balance, with the email curfew for instance, has also been a breath of fresh air.**

**But the most import part of the culture for me is the trust element. It's a two-way street where people trust that CP will look after them, and CP trusts people to work their hardest whilst managing their workload as they see fit.**

**Being able to work from home when I want and move my working hours to suit my life outside of work has been fantastic, especially as this happens with no questions asked, provided I deliver.**

**Some aspects of the perks, such as the unlimited holidays, sound like they should not work. But they do, because the culture nurtures mutual loyalty and respect.**

**JULIEN CHAMBON, IT**

The Cooper Parry Culture is incredibly special, the office space/design are like a breath of fresh air. You walk into this office and you cannot help but smile as everything around you is positive and bright which just eliminates any moods you maybe in.

Some days are very busy and gets a bit stressful, but I can just get up and shut myself away in a breakout area/booth and concentrate on my work and this really does help. We also have hot desking policy in place and this is great as you can sit where ever you want or sit next to those you are working with on a job, and not having your own desk makes you feel free and not tied down to one space of the office.

Also, to mention the flexible working hours is fantastic as you can come in early and leave early or able to work around family life/responsibilities by working later, even with your studies you can get home at a decent time and hit those books as studying after 18:00 just doesn't work for me.

I have never worked for a company which offer anything like Cooper Parry do, the events, culture, flexibility, responsibility and an amazing office, you don't get this anywhere else. The dress code is brilliant, to be able to dress down every day is so much better, I am comfortable in jeans and T-Shirt and strange to say but I get more done than wearing a suit.

My family and friends just cannot get to grips with the Cooper Parry Culture and always pass comment "how do you get any work done?", and I tell them, to have this culture is amazing and something I would not want to lose so I work incredibly hard and push myself forward to success.

**LEE CONNOCK, SERVICE CHARGE**







The culture here at Cooper Parry really is unique and very special.

Having worked at a number of other firms and after being on my own personal journey for the last 2½ years following the Clement Keys merger, I can genuinely say that Cooper Parry allows me to be myself and play 100% to my strengths.

In the past, my client facing role was mixed with internal responsibilities, most of which I enjoyed but which distracted from what I am best at – working with clients. Giving up these responsibilities and focusing solely on servicing my clients has been liberating and allows me to spend more quality time with my clients, adding value and building strong relationships.

Culture runs deep here at CP. As a Partner group we are all aligned, supportive and pull in the same direction. I know that I can be my authentic self and that every achievement, every client win, every great piece of client feedback is recognised and celebrated.

Our culture allows us to empower our team – giving them the confidence to be themselves, stretch themselves and continually strive to find innovative solutions for our clients.

Our clients love it too! The charity and not-for-profit sector most definitely relate to our values. In fact, I pitched for a new client recently and spent the first ten minutes talking about our culture and mapping their values to our own values. They were blown away by our approach – genuinely disrupting and delivering something unique and exciting in the market place. And we won the work!

Our culture sets us firmly apart from the competition; it makes us strong, different, relevant and it's exciting to see just where we can take it!

**SIMON ATKINS, NOT FOR PROFIT**

# REALLY UNIQUE AND VERY SPECIAL

# CONTINUE TO DRIVE AND DEVELOP

The CP culture changed the person I was.

When I arrived 14 years ago, I had been classed in my psychometric tests as a “results led bastard”, which simply meant that the result was all that mattered to me, even if I left carnage behind me and totally wrecked the team dynamic. Coming 2nd last in the partner 360 feedback for my first two years really lead to some soul searching about the partner and leader I was and wanted to be.

When I realised I needed to change, my colleagues rallied round and helped me, and they have always been there every step of the way.

I care passionately about the people and firm we are and strive to be and every day I understand the responsibility I have as a senior member of the firm to live our values and make sure they matter and people believe in us and follow their dreams.

We have created a truly awesome place to work and we try to improve it every day. We accept that we cannot get it right every time but we support each other and go again, the team dynamic, energy and fun we have in this place has taken years to build and it is our responsibility to continue to drive and develop it and take everyone with us.

I absolutely love this place and simply could not imagine being anywhere else. The values we have created follow through into my personal life and my family are as invested in the place as I am. Not only does my son Chris also work here, my daughter Charlotte teaches the dance fit class and she and my wife Carol are the genius double act behind the most awesome cupcakes we get to eat on a regular basis.

Thank you CP for helping make me the person I am today and providing such a fantastic environment to work in every day.

**RICHARD JONES, AUDIT**









**DISRUPT**

**LEAD**

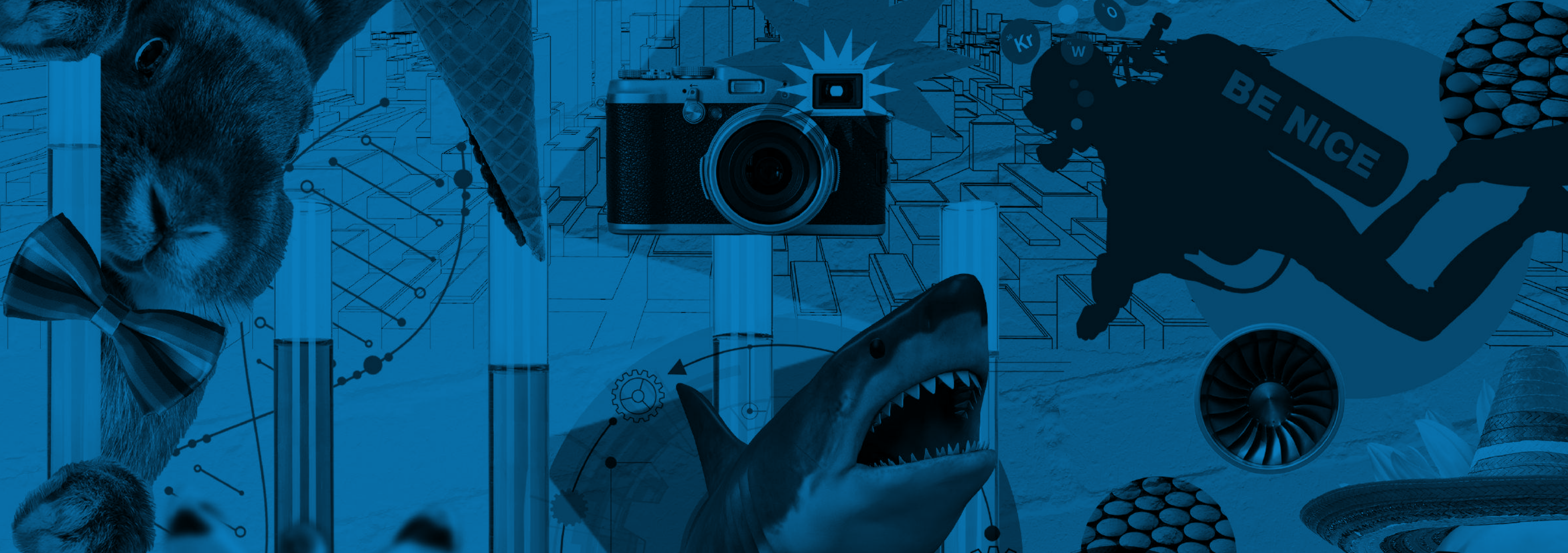
**MAKE LIFE COUNT**

**HOW WE LOOK**

**HOW WE SOUND**

**HOW WE ROLL**









MAKE LIFE COUNT





**“A workplace where I can interact with happy, passionate, engaged people, where everyone truly contributes and has the ability to say what they think. Our culture allows me to be myself, being someone who naturally likes to disrupt, lead and live life to the full – we don’t just state these things, this is our mantra and we absolutely live by them. No other accountancy business can get near us as it is our culture that sets us apart – we lead where others can only follow!”**

**PHILIP ROGERS, TAX**

Our firm to me means we can all be unique whilst all working towards the same goal – to be the best.

I love that the firm is full of individuals, all of whom respect each other and work hard, but have plenty of fun!

Compared to other businesses, we are not afraid to be bold and brave about what we do, this is truly unique too, explaining the why behind things which is often not transparent in businesses.

We are CP and we rock!

**ALI FOVARGUE, AUDIT**

- CP is a place where you can be your true self and not feel you need to put on a front
- Individuality is encouraged
- Rebellious, whilst still playing fair
- CP is a place where the thought impossible becomes possible
- Proud – CP is an extension of ourselves and part of us

There’s so much more I could say but I think this is 51 words (so already over the word count!).

**LOUISE ALLEN, TAX**

**The element of the CP culture that means the most to me is trust. Being a working mum with two small kids the fact that I am trusted to flex my day and work from home has such a positive impact on my life. I can be there to watch the all important egg and spoon races and school plays, but more importantly, it makes my every day much less stressful than it could be if I worked somewhere else. Work life balance is a big deal here and it’s not just talked about, it’s happening on a daily basis.**

**NICOLA CLEMOW, MARKETING**

Having joined the CP Family in May 2018 I was a little apprehensive having had such a long recruitment process of 8 weeks. I had 4 interviews on different occasions and met with 6 different people from within the business area that I was so (and still am!) keen to work within.

But it was all so worth the wait... when I received the news from The People Team, that Cooper Parry had seen potential within me and wanted to recruit me into their People Team!

My first day came with an issue, what was I going to wear?! Being so used to shirts, skirts and heels from a PA background I was unsure on what would be suitable. Playing it safe on went a skirt and heels with a 'nice top' ... This lasted a day. The following day on went the jeans and a new pair of trainers!

I come from a background that is very corporate and uniform, with 4 big grey walls with a 'bums on seats' approach to the accountancy world. When I first walked through the doors of the Sky View office for my first interview I didn't know where to look first!! The colours, the music, the friendly welcomes and general happy and vibrant atmosphere filled me with interest and curiosity! – It was beyond my imagination, and far from what I expected to walk in to!

The Cooper Parry culture is unique, animated and exciting with a variety of events happening weekly for employees and visitors/clients! Coming from such a 'grey' culture previously to somewhere that is so different in such a positive way, I find really motivating. The trust, the support and the relaxed atmosphere really does get the most out of all that work here. Everyone within every team is approachable, friendly and always willing to help in whatever way they can (even if it is pointing out the best flavours of cupcakes in the kitchen!).

I'm really excited to see the teams and the business expand in so many ways and be a part of the journey with Cooper Parry!

**ANONYMOUS**

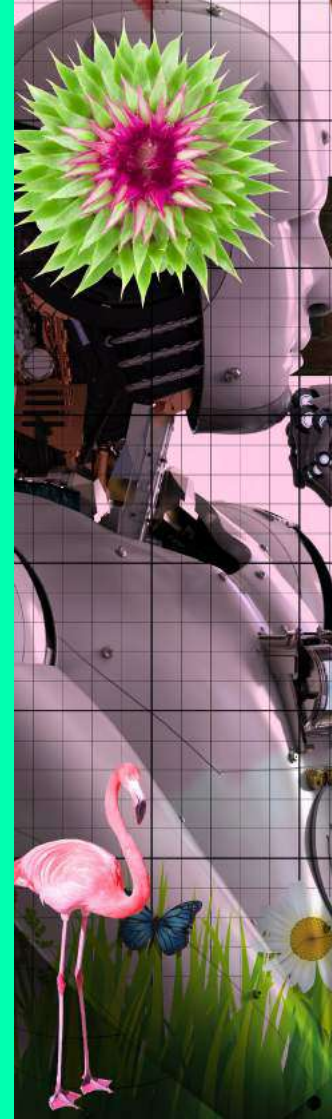
**The CP culture means I can be the mum and employee I want to be. So often as a working parent you feel like you're constantly compromising, or not able to be the employee or parent that you aspire to be as the two conflict. Our flexible working arrangements and unlimited holiday give me the flexibility to manage my day so I can make that all-important sports day or school show. As I value this so much I give more to my role at CP, you feel motivated to be the best you can be every day.**

**CLAIRE WORTH, CORPORATE FINANCE**

Culture is too often forgotten, but in my opinion culture is the invisible structure that carries a company and by looking at that culture you can tell a lot about the company's future success and for me that is why I wanted to be a part of Cooper Parry, I know we are destined to disrupt, lead and make life count.

CP's culture is the strength that drives the business to succeed, it is about stretch and challenge (with support) and being the best version of yourself (not just at work but at home as well). It is the empowerment of being trusted to work, when and where you see fit, to deliver you're "A" game every time. It is the motivation to do right by the team, clients, and the business in every decision you make.

**NATASHA CLARKE, AUDIT**







**We move fast. We all compete hard to win and have a heap of fun on the way – life's too short not to enjoy work. We're somewhere where you walk in the door with a spring in your step and a smile on your face**

**We're brave and take some tough decisions as we know we have to keep moving to stay ahead. We embrace change :-)** – we do it a lot and thrive on it.

**Culture is all about the people, and the people here make us who we are. We live and breathe the same values; we're all on the same page. If someone needs help, we rally around and support them. We're friends who hold each other accountable, drive each other forwards with an inner hunger to succeed. We're clear on what where we're going and what we want to achieve**

**We know our culture isn't for everyone – we're comfortable with that. You've got to be someone who embraces change, has an inner drive and enthusiasm for ripping up the rule book and winning!**

**Unlike most businesses what we put out there is not just shiny blurb which looks good, what we say is really what we do – whether that's our values or our vision, they're not just words, they're who we are.**

**SALLY SPENCER, TAX**

**THE PEOPLE HERE  
MAKE US  
WHO WE ARE**

# **WE'RE PROVOCATIVE** **WE CHALLENGE**

**We ROLL sideways...**

**We're here to SMASH everything out the park and be NO.1 in what we do, we just don't do it in the 'A' typical forward gambol!  
We're provocative, we challenge the normal ways of doing, being and creating!**

**Like many, I work bloody hard, and sometimes hard can feel like the impossible – but that's where the excitement, buzz and empowerment come from!**

**I'm constantly learning. I'm encouraged to learn about the business, the team or just finding stuff out about myself! What makes me tick, what pisses me off, what gives me the passion and drive... those questions can only be answered by one person, and that's me. I'm proud to say that our culture doesn't derive from being told 'what, who, and when' it drives from CP giving me the freedom and trust to go and find the answer on my own. We DISRUPT, we don't DICTATE!**

**Don't get me wrong, we're here to deliver, it can get tense and the pressure is on but nothing extraordinary came from being ordinary!**

**We believe in making the impossible, possible...**

**GEMMA EDWARDS, SERVICE CHARGE**











When I think of Cooper Parry, I think of a company that trusts its workforce, and a workforce who trusts its company.

It goes without saying that I love the culture here at Cooper Parry and everything we stand for, on a supplier visit recently, it was hugely reaffirmed to me.

We walked into their main office where all staff members, from sales to accounts, were dressed for 'business'. It was such a dated image. How can the staff think of new, fresh, forward thinking ideas when everything from décor to their IT seemed historic? The bosses were sat in individual glass fronted offices... and didn't even offer a wave.

On our way out, we saw a CLOCKING IN MACHINE... Set working hours (still rather commonplace) AND they are monitored to the minute.

I left feeling sad. And with the assumption that the staff who worked there were unhappy too. Perhaps they love their job as much as I do, but it was just too hard to imagine that they are as proud of their company as me!

**CHARLOTTE CLIFFORD, IT**

**Cooper Parry is unique in the professional service industry. It is the only true alternative to the stereotypical rigid, grey and outdated competition.**

**After one week of joining, I remember talking to one of the partners about their role in reviewing an audit that we had just finished. He did not want to micro manage and re-review everything that I had already looked at, which had been the norm in other accountancy practices I had worked in, but he wanted a discussion and a review of the key documentation. I sheepishly asked whether the partner wanted to look at certain working papers and was told – ‘we are both qualified accountants with several years’ experience of auditing. If you say it is reasonable and, can evidence that in discussion, then I can only agree. We are equals’.**

**That in a microcosm, summaries Cooper Parry. Trust and responsibility are instilled into each member of the team to allow them to grow, take ownership and make the most of their talents in their role. This is encapsulated by the unlimited holiday, the flexible working and the way in which the team and the management support each other rather than dictate through linear reporting lines. If the job gets done to the right standard for the right deadline, the path in which we take to get there is our own.**

**However. the aspect that is most important to me is that Cooper Parry provides the platform and the relevant tools that allows any person to become the best version of themselves that they can be. Fitness, nutrition, life coaching, networking and epic social events are all part and parcel of life at CP. This has taken me from an angry cynical pretender on the day that I joined to a fun loving, hardworking father looking for promotion 12 months later. The transformation in my personal life has been nothing short of miraculous.**

**Lastly, the final homage to Cooper Parry is simply that I am recognised as an individual. This is so rare and would appear an impossible task for such a large firm. CP's focus on individuality allows me to flourish in a role suited to my strengths and talents and allows me to enjoy more of what I love – delivering that A\* quality audit to clients!**

**JAMES TAYLOR, AUDIT**



# INTERESTING EXCITING AND REWARDING

Culture's a broad word and probably means many things to many people. It makes me think of art, music, dance... those things that speak to your soul and stir your emotions. And I guess that's what CP does. It allows me to be the very best version of myself, by giving me the freedom and encouragement to explore my potential, dream those huge dreams and achieve them in my own way.

CP culture is about expressing who we are and giving our clients the best experience by being passionate about what we do. Like a dancer in a show, or a painting in an art gallery, it's demonstrating our commitment to what we care about, and making others care about it too. Making them feel that passion.

You'll often hear me say how working here doesn't feel like work. It's interesting, exciting and rewarding and I love coming into the office every day. I don't come here, just so I can earn money to live my life when I walk out the doors... I live an awesome life while I'm here too.

We have ambition and conscientiousness in common, but are supported to play to our individual strengths day to day. The focus on wellbeing, having fun and being generous is so unique and being treated that way, just makes me want to work harder.

CP is amazing, you know I love it here and you'll drag me out kicking and screaming, but others don't have the same experience. Despite our promise of transparency, some of the more negative situations seem like they're 'brushed under the carpet'. It's fine to focus on the positive but admitting to and learning from our mistakes is bigger and braver than pretending everything's rosy all the time.

**JENNA MICHOU, WEALTH**





The thing I like most about the CP culture is that it is absolutely real.

My previous firm used to talk all the time about its people and its values but it never actually demonstrated anything that showed that they were important. At first I was sceptical about the things I was hearing at CP but having been here for some time now I know that the firm and its people live and breathe its values, it took me a while to get it but now I do I can't ever imagine working for a firm that doesn't believe in its values like CP does. I met some partners from my old firm recently and they were cynical about what we do and it just reminded me how demotivating and negative some of the more traditional accountancy firms can be. I am proud to work here and be part of something which is so different in the accountancy profession.

It's really exciting to see what we can achieve next.

**SARAH DURRANT, NOT FOR PROFIT**

**Working for an organisation where everything seems too good to be true is a new one for me! It's almost as if I find myself waiting for the day I dread coming to work... and yet that day never comes! Where working in a quirky office is more desirable than "throwing a sickie" and where much of the time, I can't quite believe I get paid to work for leaders who are so forward thinking. The CP culture is so unique that sadly many professionals will never have the pleasure of experiencing it – not me though, I'm living it every day and loving every minute!**

**Where glass ceilings and salary brackets don't restrict me, at CP I am free to professionally develop at my own pace. I work hard, set myself big goals and know that the sky really is the limit in terms of what I will be encouraged to achieve. Promotion windows don't exist, so I am empowered to drive my own future – which naturally makes me hungry to be the best!**

**Managers tapping on their imaginary watch when you arrive two minutes 'late' in the morning is the status quo at many traditional organisations – not here though. The CP culture gives me the freedom to work flexibly, which as a working Mum is priceless. If I get caught up during the nursery drop off or have a crisis morning with my unpredictable two-nager before work, I know that my hard work and dedication is what really matters to our leaders. Here at CP, we don't get caught up in those details – we put the hours in, we graft, and as a result our outstanding work and unique contributions are recognised and rewarded.**

**Giving employees the opportunity to innovate, do meaningful work, and be on a winning team is in my opinion the successful formula that creates the innovative buzz-culture that is so infectious at CP. Money can't buy that!**

**KERRIE MORRIS, FACILITIES**



# ENCOURAGES YOU TO FOCUS ON STRENGTHS

**The Cooper Parry way has changed my life. Seriously.**

**The freedom and trust that you get as standard here has meant that I can have the work/home life balance that many companies promise, but very few deliver.**

**For me, the opportunity to do what I'm good at is what keeps me coming into the office day after day. I don't know any other company that actively encourages you to focus on strengths rather than improve on weaknesses.**

**Not good at something? No worries, someone else will be amazing at it. Really enjoy something specific, perfect, we'd rather people do what they are good at and enjoy 80% of the time.**

**I had my reservations at the beginning. I worried about how to manage a team that is entitled to unlimited holiday, or how to make sure people working from home were doing what they should be doing, but once you get your head around the culture we have, you realise that the people we have working with us are just as focused on the end goals.**

**SAMANTHA HALL, SERVICE CHARGE**











At CP I can be myself – that doesn't sound very profound but it is not until I've been here a few weeks that I am realising how liberating that actually is! Finding a company where the purpose and values align with your own personal values feels great.

This is the only company I know that genuinely puts its people at the very heart of what it does, some other businesses say the same, but they don't really live by it. From what I've seen so far, CP does.

I hadn't realised how much I had to adapt to the culture and the corporate politics of my previous company, how much of my energy was wasted in doing that and just how straining that can feel over time. I had to constantly 'watch my back'... 'play the game', and try to motivate the people around me despite the company culture. It is different here!

**ABI BOWN, MARKETING**

# PURPOSE AND VALUES ALIGN WITH YOUR OWN









**I'm about to return to work after spending the last year looking after my little boy. There's part of me that is obviously apprehensive about coming back to work after such a long time off and knowing how different I feel as a person to a year ago. However, I know that all of this apprehension would be much much more of an issue if it wasn't for the culture at Cooper Parry.**

**The flexibility that the culture offers for everyone (not just parents) is incomparable to other companies. For my return to work, we've been able to make the days and hours work for me and CP without millions of forms and hours of meeting. The culture of being open and honest means that we've talked about a plan B that we're happy with if it's not working as well as it could. The CP ambition is exciting and I'm looking forward to being properly part of the team again.**

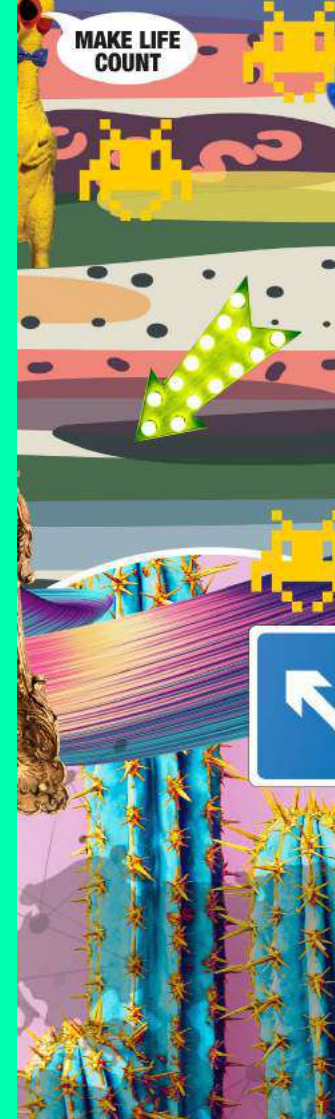
**It's also important to me to work for an organisation that isn't just out to win for themselves and the amount of charity and community work we do at CP is phenomenal. I am raising money for the NSPCC this year and CP have been brilliant in their support for this, alongside all of the community and charity work they are doing on a bigger scale.**

**If like me, you've come from a large organisation then it does take a little while to adjust. Like everything there are pluses and minuses and so It would be remiss of me to say that everything is perfect – but then if it were perfect, where would the opportunity to shape and be part of something brilliant come from?**

**EMILY ALLEN, PEOPLE TEAM**

When I came to CP I'd heard lots of good things but I wondered if it was too good to be true. Could such a place really exist? Well for me it did! What do I love about CP? Pretty much almost all of it. I love that wherever you sit in the organisation you can have an idea and give it a try. I love it even more that if it's something that doesn't work out we can just admit that and move on and try something else. Everyone is ever so friendly, welcoming and supportive of helping you realise your dreams. For me that was a big shift from where I'd been previously, that organisation, which I trained in and had loved very much, moved in a direction of blaming everyone else, looking down on you depending on your role and were no longer kind. Spreadsheets and arrogance ruled. Here is different. Of course, there's still a fair few spreadsheets but they aren't the only way and if your style is more to bobble along being as nice and chatty to everyone as you can that's completely okay.

**CALLY BAMFORD, TAX**







We are one family. We don't do hierarchy. We're all in it together. We enjoy spending time together – our colleagues are our friends. This makes the days fly by like nowhere I have ever worked before.

**We treat everyone as adults. We trust people to make the right decision for both themselves, their team and the business.**

We want to be the best at what we do so we work really hard, set ambitious targets and expect a lot from our people – there is no room for coasting. But we invest a huge amount in making sure people are consistently supported and when they deliver that this is rewarded. We celebrate each other's success – We don't point score and we certainly don't need to watch our backs. We respect each other's differences and understand that we all bring something different to the table.

## SAM SAXTON, TAX

**WE DON'T DO  
HEIRARCHY  
WE'RE ALL IN IT  
TOGETHER**

**Culture is at the heart of everything we do. Of that I'm sure. Get the culture right and everything else will follow. And for me, it works.**

**It's hard to sum up but we're known for our culture, and for good reason. Only this week I was at a lunch and I was asked about our culture by three people I'd never met before. People are fascinated by our culture. It's scarcely believable to some but it's true and it's working. And I love that. I love that people, strangers, know our firm and know it's so culture focussed.**

**We're a trusted, privileged, well supported, equal bunch of folks who perform at the highest level.**

**I'm trusted to work when and where suits me best, trusted to wear what I like and trusted to get the job done. I'm supported with development and supported to be healthier with exercise classes (let's just gloss over the fact I might not take full advantage of these much to my wife's despair) and wellbeing one on ones. I'm equal, helped hugely by our offices and agile working; walk in our office and you can't pick the senior people out. They don't hide in offices, they are there to talk with, get an opinion from or guidance. And we're expected to perform. You're supported to be your best but those that are not good enough go, and I like that. It sounds harsh but I've worked at places where people are carried. Behaviour is infectious and before you know it you have a culture of just doing enough. It doesn't happen here and as a result I spend the day working with dedicated, hardworking people that inspire me to be better.**

**In short, if you put the effort in at Cooper Parry, you'll get it back tenfold.**

**MARTIN LANDER, MARKETING**

Our Values do exactly what they say on the tin, Play All In – we all hear about “work hard, play hard” cultures, but often the balance is wrong. Well not at CP – we have the fun as well as the stimulating challenges of work, with great clients and people to work alongside and with.

We're keen to celebrate success and there is definitely a feeling of everyone matters, whether it's exam passes, charitable events or simply looking after our own teams.

There is a strong culture of constant improvement, innovation and challenging us all to be better.

Finally, we have a very open culture, where no question is taboo, data is available and open to all, and people are happy to share, including some very brave people who have recently shared their mental health experiences – some very moving experiences indeed.

**ANONYMOUS**











**Trust and freedom define the culture at Cooper Parry. But they only work hand in hand. You have the freedom to work how best works for you. That includes the hours, the location (office, home, coffee shop) and even the desk, pod, treadmill, or breakout room at the office. They can change every day to work around your life.**

**The result is you are happier at work because the job now works around your life and not your life around your work. The happier you is now working smarter and not harder. This trust put in you is now paying dividends for the employer as you're more engaged at work, more productive in the hours you are choosing to be there, and all around a happier person. So is everyone else too – you're in a happy place physically and mentally.**

**Your clients are happier dealing with the better you. Your employers are happy they have happy repeat customers. Your family are happier hearing and seeing how happy you are. And seeing everyone happy makes you a happy person.**

**A Happy Employee**

**JIM KIMBERLEY, IT**

# TRUST AND FREEDOM



# FORWARD THINKING AND TREND SETTING

I've only worked in one other firm before CP which was a traditional old school independent financial advisers. People there generally came to do a standard 9-5 shift and there was often no one in the office before 8.45am or after 5.05pm. Good staff were not retained and the owners were very set in their ways, and didn't embrace change. Growth was incredibly slow and a lot of people didn't stay there for more than 18 months and you'd question the ambition of those that did.

The culture at CP in my opinion couldn't be more different. I come to work because I love what I do. I'm surrounded by like-minded high performing people who really care about the work they do and the service they deliver to our clients. The culture at CP has helped me grow and be the best I can be. Whether that's being trusted to work from home and manage my own holidays or being given the freedom to pursue projects in line with my strengths.

The culture comes from the top and it's really important all managers, HODs etc. embrace and champion the new ideas, which they do. If the managers live the values and the culture and lead by example, the rest will follow.

CP is a forward thinking and trending setting organisation and whilst we might be a small player compared to the big 4, they're very much entrenched and traditional whilst we're a nimble and innovative organisation. I can't wait to take over the world and will always be grateful that I've been allowed to be part of this journey.

A heartfelt thanks to CP for everything it has done for me, my wife, and my life.

**PHIL MICHOU, WEALTH**





The culture at CP for me starts with our values and behaviours, what we believe in and how we treat people we work with.

Our culture should shape our business.

It's about being treated like adults, unlimited holidays, no 9-5. Being given the trust to take ownership of what you're responsible for and empowered to make decisions, without being told how to do it!

I don't know any company that encourages you to disrupt, be brave, dream big. We work hard, play hard and we're in it together. Everyone plays a part in owning our awesome culture. We don't forget that having a life is just as important. And we mean it!

This is what sets us apart.

For me, the test is how I feel when I walk into the office every morning – motivated, happy, it's not just a job. That's how I know we've got the culture right.

**DAVID HOLMES, WEALTH**

Before CP, leading by example meant that I was the first in the office and the last to leave, looking back this was narrow minded and restricted employees from being their best and in turn getting the best from them. Leading by example at CP means using the flexibility that's strongly embedded in our culture, whether that's working from home, taking time out of the day for family stuff or having a 15 minutes nap in a sleep pod!

CP's approach to the world of work sets us apart, as a business we don't conform, we're encouraged to dream big and take risks. Doing things how we've always done them is easy and somewhat boring, it doesn't lead the way and we want to do just that.

Having a goal and the freedom to achieve it in whichever way we please promotes creative thinking and empowers us to be a better version of ourselves.

A lot of companies talk the talk about their culture, that's easy, the hard bit is 'making it' and importantly 'keeping it' a reality, it has to be driven from the top and takes time and continual energy, this is what set's CP apart.

**PAUL HAYES, IT**



# PURPOSE AND VALUES ALIGN WITH YOUR OWN

"Cooper Parry culture for me is summed up in two words. **CONSTANT CHANGE**. We're always evolving and morphing into something new, nearly always it's something better and on that odd occasion when it's not we reflect and learn from it for the next time.

I've been here now for nearly three years and in that relatively short space of time CP has moved so much, we've had and embraced hundreds of changes across the business, in every team in both offices.

We're always focused on improving everything; from individual performance, our staff wellbeing, to our client service, we are always looking to stretch ourselves, so we can hit that rock, increase the how's it going score or the client advocacy score and when we find ways to improve, we make that change.

We're trying to change the face of the world, the stigma that people have towards accountancy, it drives us to disrupt the status quo and lead the charge to make change happen. We don't like standing still, we never have – I don't think there are many other companies who are so driven by change and improvement.

Cooper Parry is change, all the time, constantly – it's awesome and I love that about us.

The changes at CP have impacted on me personally as well, just over FY18 my role changed a number of times, as what was required from the finance team changed what was expected and needed from me also changed and it's helped me loads to get experience and knowledge that I would have had no hope of getting at another company in such a short space of time."

**BEN MILLAR, FINANCE**





I wasn't unhappy. I wasn't really looking for another job. The best opportunities normally find you. I had a big corporate job. I had an overall team of 50 people. I wore a sharp suit and tie (to be fair I wore it well!) and I was working towards the nonsense American title of SVP. I could say I was in the Senior Leadership Team. But I never really made decisions that weren't approved by many others. And I had an unhealthy ability to deal with and even contribute to the corporate politics. That isn't the person I want to be. Life is too short for that.

I was looking for a change much more than I realised at the time. And then one day the phone rang. My bonkers friend Ali "blah, blah, blah, Jimbo, blah, blah, CFO, blah, blah, come and meet Ade, blah, blah, Ciao, Caio, mwah".

So I came in to meet Ade. I was in the sharp suit and he was in a shellsuit (Paul Smith one). You would look at us and think we were miles apart. We weren't. We connected immediately. He scribbled. I talked. I scribbled. He talked. We saw the World the same way. I really liked what I heard about the business. Genuine ambition. High growth. Changing an industry from within. Being the best. Having fun along the way. Above all, making life count. I wasn't making life count and before long I knew I wanted in.

Roll forward two years from that conversation. Is it real? Smoke and mirrors? Just good PR? Not for a minute. It's better than I expected. I love it. Some days I'm still adjusting. The corporate animal wants to hang around sometimes. But I can make a difference now. We measure outputs. Really. I can work in a way that gets the best out of me. I can make decisions now. I don't get them all right. I get quite a few wrong. But I can make decisions. There's been a lot of hard yards – in and out of the office – and the days aren't always a breeze. That would be naive. But I now work in a business that wants to lead from the front. To make a difference. To keep course correcting until we get it right. To admit our bad decisions and change them. Not to die in a ditch for why they were right. Or blame someone. Or distract. Genuinely we don't have politics. We pull together. We win together. Cooper Parry has changed my thinking on work. It's changed my thinking on life. The hard work is worth it today and for the future. I'm looking forward to what we will achieve. I'm looking forward to playing my part.

One simple text message made the absolute difference for me within my first 6 months. It told me everything I needed to know. I'd had a bad day. I mean a REALLY bad day. Giant cock up. Not good at all a few months in. It would have been a very lonely place in the corporate world. I went home licking my wounds, and I got this text out of the blue from one of my partners (who I won't name):

"Just wanted to say not to let today get you down, it's hardly the end of the world, just a bit of noise.  
You're a great guy and one of us through and through.  
Have a beer tonight, tomorrow will be a good day!  
Cheers"

Instantly a weight was lifted. This is how it should be. I hadn't done it on purpose. I'd put my hands up already. But he didn't need to send this. Most people in most organisations wouldn't. But that's not how CP works. We do the right thing and we win together. It confirmed in 45 words what I already knew. I was in the right place. This place was going to be home.

**JAMES PARNELL, FINANCE**

# WE DO THE RIGHT THING AND WE WIN TOGETHER



**WE'RE CLEAR ON  
THE CULTURE  
WE WANT TO CREATE**

**Wow! What a journey...**

**I've been with CP for two and a half years now and it's incredible to look back at how much has happened, how much has changed and how much we have grown as a business, just in that small amount of time.**

**I was attracted to CP because it felt different, there was the strong sense of purpose in every single person I met in the run up to my decision to join, I say decision – it was a no brainer really. I haven't been disappointed, it's been everything I hoped it would be and more.**

**The drive to create a world where people thrive, where people have the opportunity to bring the best version of themselves every day, where they are encouraged and supported to figure out what they are really, really good at and then helped to spend most of their time doing that thing or those things they love and excel at – that’s what I live for, that’s my purpose and that’s why CP is my home, because our culture is my culture too.**

**We move at an incredible pace, we trial (sometimes with error), we test, we play, we experiment, we take chances, because we want to continually build on what we already have – we know that what makes us great today, won't necessarily make us great tomorrow and so in a world that's moving fast, we have to move fast too – and we love that. It's not for everyone, we get that.**

**We make tough calls, when we know that's the right thing to do, even though we don't always find it easy. We accept that we can't move forward without change.**

**There are so many businesses that just let culture happen, they don't define what it means to them, they don't shape it, own it and make it live. That's the difference here – we are clear on the culture we want to create, we align everything we do to support our culture. But ultimately it is our people that are our culture, it is our people that make CP the place I choose to be, that's what makes me proud, that's what gets me out of bed in the morning.**

**APRIL BEMBRIDGE, CHIEF PEOPLE OFFICER**



LEAD

POW!

Enter

DISRUPT

COOPER PARRY

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