

Employee Engagement (Assets Less than \$499M): Heartland Credit Union, Hutchinson, Kansas, for their Cultivating Culture – It's the Heartland Way. With the declaration "Culture is King!", the team at Heartland set about to define, promote, and celebrate its culture, which has come to be known as "it's the Heartland way". Employees, executives, and volunteers were all a part of an effort to explore what makes up Heartland's "special sauce". The team tasked itself with better defining HCU's mission, vision, and values. After brainstorming, writing, and rewriting, the mission, vision, and values were described on paper and were published in a booklet known as "the culture book". Each employee received a copy of the book, new employees receive a copy of the book during onboarding, "swag bags" were distributed to all team members, and culture is a topic of conversation in department meetings, employee newsletter, and elsewhere. Culture also remains a top priority in Heartland's new 5-year strategic plan. From investing in more employee development opportunities to supporting communities to just having fun, Heartland wants to shine for everyone it serves.