



My light bulb moment: Banking boss Anne Boden reveals what led her to become a banker

- Anne Boden, 58, lives in London and is CEO of Starling Bank, which she founded
- She was born in Swansea and despite her success didn't intend to be a banker
- She says she may be one of the only bank CEOs to serve behind a branch counter

By [JILL STARLEY-GRAINGER FOR THE DAILY MAIL](#)

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*Anne Boden, 58, is CEO of Starling Bank, which she founded in 2017. She lives in **London**.*

I didn't set out to be a banker. I was born in Swansea, where I did a degree in computer science.

When I graduated, I applied for jobs in that field but my mum told me to apply for one job in a bank, as a safe option.

I joined Lloyds Bank in London in 1981. I may be one of the only bank CEOs who has ever served behind the counter in a branch.



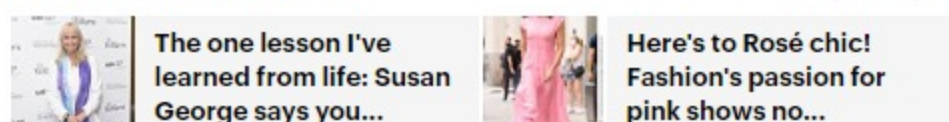
Anne Boden, 58, is CEO of Starling Bank, which she founded in 2017, but says she didn't intend to be a banker

After working my way up, in 2012 I was asked to help turn around Allied Irish Bank, which had been bailed out by the EU. I used strategies I'd learned in fintech (financial technology), but after a year, I decided to go around the world to find out what other banks were doing.

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I went into branches everywhere from Australia to America, and they all said: 'We want to move all of our transactions to mobile, but we don't have any money for the technology right now because we've refurbished the branches. But now we have this lovely sofa!' As I looked at yet another one of these sofas that nobody was sitting on, I had my lightbulb moment.

Many people do everything on mobiles now, from shopping to listening to music, and there's no reason banks should be any different. That's when I quit my job — at the age of 54 — to set up a new kind of bank.

When developing the concept for Starling, we asked people what they wanted from a bank. They didn't like paying fees to use their debit card abroad, so we eliminated them.

They didn't want to pay penalties for going into their overdraft, so we don't charge them.

They were concerned about security, so we made it app-only because apps are much more secure than websites.

We launched in May 2017 and now have 200,000 accounts and 220 staff, and have won two prestigious awards — Best British Bank and Best Current Account Provider.

I'm a steelworker and shop assistant's daughter from Swansea, and now a fintech entrepreneur who started a bank in my 50s. Women have to work twice as hard to be valued the same as men, but I believe most women can do a lot more than they think they can.

[starlingbank.com](#)