



Case Study - Atkins

Atkins provides professional, technologically-based consultancy and support services. Atkins is the largest engineering consultancy in the UK, the largest multi-disciplinary consultancy in Europe and the 4th largest design firm in the world.

With around 14,000 staff, Atkins is the largest UK employer of technical staff and fourth largest employer of civil and structural staff in the world (NCE Consultants File 2005). Atkins is also the largest multi-disciplinary consultant in Europe by staff employed (SFCEA 2003). Of these, 11,200 are based in the UK, 850 in the Far East, 780 in the Middle East, 610 in continental Europe and 450 in North America. Over 80% of Atkins' staff are professionally or technically qualified. Atkins has twice secured a place in the UK's Top 10 Best Big Companies to Work For as compiled by the Sunday Times – in 2005 and 2006.

Atkins' has ambitious growth targets set for the short and long term. Recruiting and retaining the best people is key to their growth strategy. Atkins is aiming to be the employer of choice in their key target sectors and use their market strength position to attract and retain the best people.

The leadership team at Atkins recognise that effective internal communications would be a critical factor enabling them to achieve their growth targets. HarknessKennett were approached to conduct some investigative research to understand how internal

communication at Atkins was perceived and to make initial recommendations for change. In particular the research set out to find out how internal communication was currently supporting the achievement of business goals at Atkins, as well as understanding managers and employees perceptions of communication. Through a series of one to one interviews, telephone interviews and focus groups HarknessKennett were able to provide recommendations on how to enhance internal communications at Atkins.

An additional benchmarking study was also conducted, providing the Atkins team with strong insights into how comparable businesses structure their communication support and the challenges they face.

With the arrival of a new Communications Director imminent, and armed with the findings of the research, the Marketing & Communications team were able to begin planning the revitalisation of internal communications at Atkins.

"The team at HarknessKennett produced an excellent body of work and provided us with some real intelligence that we can take action with. Their research has produced some new insights as well as confirming our perceptions, and has provided us with tangible evidence for our future requirements."

Alun Griffiths
Group Human Resources Director
Atkins