

Corporate Responsibility Review

Continued

Safety leadership

Atkins remains strongly committed to key improvements in health and safety beyond those required by law. During the year our chief executive became chair of the Construction Industry Council (CIC), following his position as chair of the Health and Safety Committee, and we continued to work with industry through national forums such as the Strategic Health and Safety Forum, CIC Health and Safety Committee, Consultants Health and Safety Forum and BuildSafe UAE.

The Rail business had a serious near-miss when four employees could have been hit by a train. These employees now feature in a powerful short film which has been produced to explain the severity of the incident. This film has been adopted as a training tool by other rail organisations such as Network Rail and was recognised in the HSBC Rail Business Awards for Safety and Security Excellence.

The Highways and Transportation business has set an industry standard for designing out risks in projects by using an approach that is based on the simple concept of traffic lights: Red, Amber and Green (RAG). Originally used on the design for Heathrow Terminal 5, the RAG approach was developed for use in projects for the Highways Agency, and has since been adopted as the industry standard by companies such as Arup, Halcrow and Mott MacDonald.

We continued to improve safety leadership within Atkins. Our Board directors at the year-end have undertaken the Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) test. During the year, senior management have attended the Atkins Director Safety Tour training course and the Safety Leadership programme in the Rail business was expanded to include our supply chain. We also undertook a safety, health and environment survey in the UK for the first time, to which over 6,500 staff responded. This has helped us to identify Atkins' strengths and weaknesses, providing valuable input to our 2009 improvement plan.

Our work

We take pride in the quality of products and services that we provide to our clients. All our businesses are certified to ISO 9001:2000 and are expected to satisfy the requirements of the revised standard for quality management systems, ISO 9001:2008, during 2009, following Atkins China's lead in achieving approval.

There has been significant focus through a key business forum to rationalise the content of management systems and to harmonise practice to review client feedback management, supply chain management and management system controls. Our Asset Management segment has continued to develop its Quantum process for engaging and reviewing supplier performance. The tool now measures performance against 10 metrics including environmental responsibility, health and safety management and operational excellence. All of the businesses have been able to identify improvement opportunities and introduce efficiencies where possible, such as by sharing how they manage the capture of client feedback, and this work continues.

We also continue to develop the skills required to create, implement and maintain effective management systems, by investing in the development of our quality, safety and environment (QSE) managers with the introduction of lean thinking practices. Self-assessment against the criteria of the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) Business Excellence Model has also been piloted by our Middle East business. The Group continues to maintain a comprehensive programme of assurance for its management systems, pursuing a consistent approach to systems certification globally.

Our people

We continue to work to be an employer of choice and to provide an environment in which our people can flourish and succeed. We engaged more colleagues in information about our vision, mission and strategy through new internal communication channels and our Viewpoint survey showed an increase in employee engagement for the third consecutive year. We invested £20m in training and increased our ranking to 10th position in the Sunday Times Best Big Companies to Work For. We made good progress on diversity through initiatives and through our collaboration with clients and national organisations.

For more detailed information see the Human Resources Review.