

# Top 20

**Best Big Companies to Work For**  
The Sunday Times, 2009

# Top 100

**Graduate Employers**  
The Times, 2008

## Overview

Atkins succeeds to the extent that we are able to attract and retain the most talented professionals in their respective fields and provide an environment in which they are able to apply their skills and experience in addressing our clients' varied needs. This means that being an employer of choice is a prerequisite in what remains a competitive environment for the best staff. We are proud of our record in meeting this challenge but recognise it requires a continual focus.

We measure our performance in various ways, partly by the breadth and depth of the skills and capabilities of our people but also by tracking a number of metrics which are integral to our management of the business. These include retention, employee engagement and the composition of our workforce. We also take careful account of the views of our staff expressed via internal and external surveys, with the latter resulting in a number of awards.

## Headcount

Headcount growth in the first half continued the trend of recent years with strong growth in most parts of the organisation, followed by action in the second half to adjust our resources to reflect the changed economic environment.

In the eight months from April to November 2008 headcount, including agency staff, increased by 8% to a peak of over 18,600. From November 2008 to March 2009 there was then a reduction of circa 600 staff (3.2%) reducing headcount to 18,017. Once allowance is made for staff under notice then the underlying headcount reduces to circa 17,400. These reductions were mainly in the UK and Middle East building design businesses and in Faithful+Gould.

Every effort has been and continues to be made to redeploy staff and, whilst a significant number of colleagues have left the business as a result of restructuring, many others have been redeployed successfully to other parts of the business where we continue to see growth in demand for skilled staff. We are recruiting to fill specialist roles across the Group, notably in nuclear, oil and gas, power and aerospace.

We had 300 graduate trainees joining in the year and, although we have reduced our target to 150 for the year ahead, we remain committed to those on our graduate programme. For the fourth year in succession we were awarded the Most Popular Graduate Recruiter in the Construction and Civil Engineering category at the Target National Graduate Awards. This award is based on feedback gathered through an online campus survey of 90,000 undergraduates over a four-month period ending in January 2009 (the largest of its kind in the UK).

## Retention

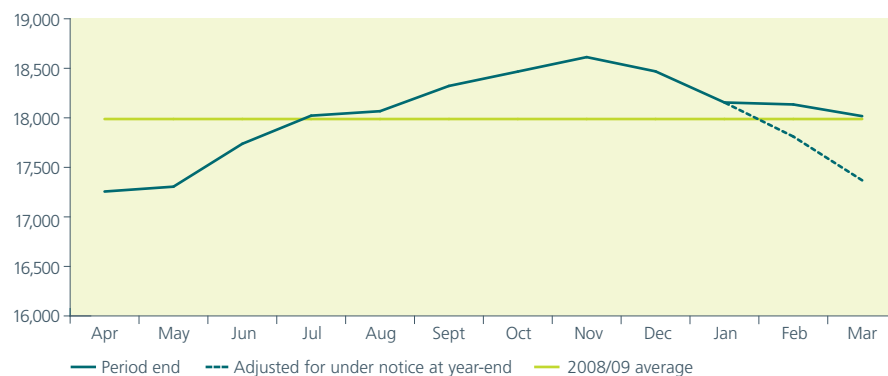
Staff turnover improved markedly throughout the year with overall staff turnover reducing from 15.4% to 11.4%. Turnover by region was as follows:

	2009	2008
UK	10.0%	15.0%
Middle East	14.7%	15.0%
China	17.9%	26.1%
Europe	8.9%	10.9%
USA	10.2%	14.2%

We also monitor the stability index (i.e. the number of staff with more than a year's service at the end of the financial year as a percentage of the headcount at the beginning of the financial year) for the Group as a whole and for each major business. Our performance in this measure of the retention of experienced staff compares very well with most large professional services businesses with an index of 84.3% for the Group as a whole (2008: 82.2%). The indices for the individual regions were as follows: UK 87.2% (2008: 81.9%), Middle East 76.9% (2008: 83.3%), China 75.3% (2008: 71.2%), Europe 87.4% (2008: 91.7%) and USA 81.5% (2008: 88.7%).

We continued to monitor feedback from staff who left Atkins in the year. Encouragingly, over 80% would recommend Atkins as a place to work and would consider working with us again at some point in their career.

## Monthly headcount



# Human Resources Review

## Our people

Continued

### Employee engagement

During the year, we continued to invest in and develop two-way internal communications channels to enable us to share information to inspire, motivate and engage Atkins staff around the world and to receive their feedback. In particular, we hosted a conference for 500 live delegates and 9,000 online delegates to explain our vision to be the world's best infrastructure consultancy and to reinforce our strategy of Identity+Excellence. We have also launched a new intranet news centre which has enabled us to deliver better quality information to staff in a more timely, appealing and accessible multi-media format. Penetration statistics show that significantly more people are receiving information about Atkins than in previous years. Staff therefore have a greater understanding of our vision, strategy, performance, values in action and Group achievements than in previous years, which contributes to our objectives of motivating and retaining staff.

Most significantly, we measure employee engagement across the Group via our annual Viewpoint survey, an online survey open to all staff in the Group. This was completed by 77% of staff and showed an improvement in the employee engagement index for the third consecutive year. An employee engagement index of 75 represents excellent performance. Furthermore, our performance in each of

the 10 principal criteria is now well above the benchmark for the organisations which use this survey. Our performance improved for each of the 10 factors and for 29 of the 30 detailed questions.

We were delighted to maintain our position in the UK's Sunday Times Top 20 Best Big Companies award with an improved ranking of 10th. This was particularly pleasing since 2,500 of our UK staff were invited to take part in this anonymous survey, which is important in allowing us to compare our performance against other leading employers in our sector and more widely.

### Investment in people

The skills and capabilities of our people are key to our success. A high priority is placed on learning and development with an annual investment in training of over £20m during the year. More than 8,000 delegates attended Group programmes (an increase of 10% on the year before).

Our portfolio of programmes was enhanced to ensure that they addressed the key issues of Carbon Critical Design and diversity. New and updated programmes were introduced including, for example, a course on the leadership of virtual and remote teams in recognition of the fact that many projects now span geographic as well as internal organisational boundaries.

We have improved our graduate development programme, responding to the results of a review undertaken one year ago. The review highlighted many examples of exemplary practice, but also some areas where we needed to do better, particularly in ensuring the consistency of our delivery against the 'promise' that we make to new graduate trainees. This is particularly important given both the size of our graduate trainee population, which now exceeds 1,000 staff, and their importance to our future.

We have reviewed the training arrangements for all graduate trainees in conjunction with our staff and the major professional institutions, and have taken action to strengthen these where necessary. We have set up internal forums to bring together both graduate trainees and those responsible for their development to ensure that good practice is shared and high standards are maintained. We have also received accreditation for an Atkins Further Learning Programme by the Joint Board of Moderators to aid the progress of graduates with bachelor degrees to chartered status.

During the year we also created 11 technical networks to encourage excellence and professional development in the areas of: tall buildings; geotechnical engineering; carbon critical buildings; commercial due diligence; masterplanning; strategic and policy planning; structural engineering; tunnelling; bridge engineering; internal project management; and geospatial and integrated digital solutions. Each network is chaired by one of Atkins' most experienced professionals in each of the disciplines.

### Employee engagement index

