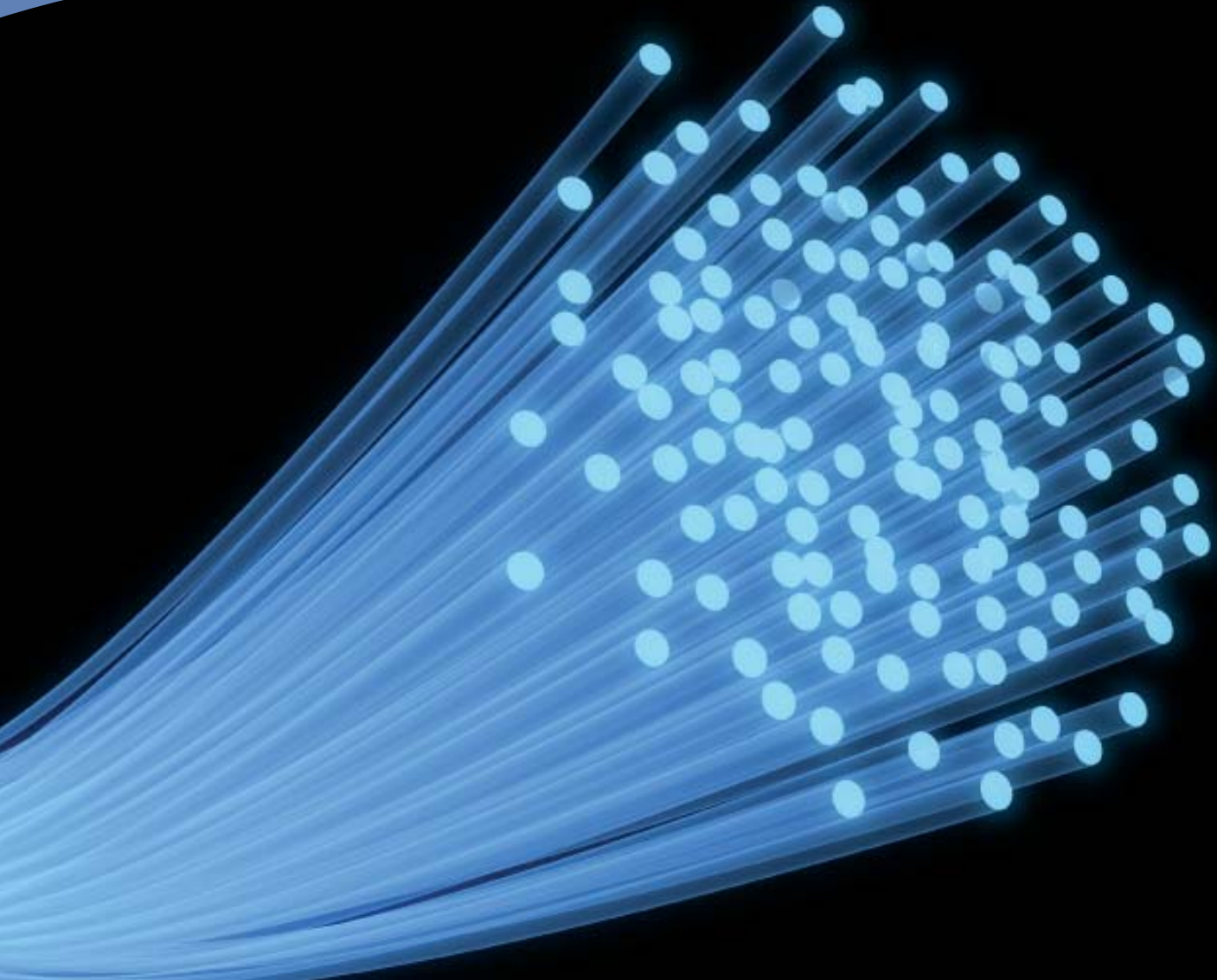


Case Study

Atkins PLC



The situation

Atkins, formerly known as WS Atkins, is a professional services organisation providing engineering, design, planning, project management and consulting services. It employs approximately 17,000 staff, based in 125 offices in 25 countries. Projects have been undertaken in more than 150 countries. Atkins is divided into seven business segments: Highways and Transportation, Rail, Design and Engineering Solutions, China, Middle East, Management and Project Services, Asset Management and Equity Investments.

Atkins approached Henley because it wanted to take the working relationship it enjoyed with its top 100 managers worldwide to another level. Atkins wanted to be able to have open, adult and constructive conversations with an honest exchange of views about current performance and future potential. The senior team felt that understanding exactly where their leaders saw their own futures and articulating how the organisation saw those leaders developing was critical in building a succession strategy that would deliver business goals.

The outcome of this dialogue was to be a clear understanding of the future career and personal development direction of each individual and a plan to deliver this. Overall, the programme would deliver an even greater level of engagement with the top 100 executives than the organisation had previously enjoyed.

HR Director: Group Talent Management, Brian Fitzgerald explains ‘We were looking to achieve stronger and deeper relationships with our key senior people and to mutually agree appropriate Personal Development Dialogue Plans in order to maximise their potential and their future contribution to the success of the business.’

The Development Dialogue Programme, as it became known, was sponsored by the CEO and his Executive Committee, owned by the individual executive and supported by highly skilled coaches. The outcome was a joint commitment between the organisation and the individual.

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The approach

A two-day workshop sat at the heart of the programme, as a focus for preparation for the dialogue itself. Before the workshop, each executive went through a detailed process of data gathering working to guidelines given by Henley. This included career history to date, current aspirations, psychometric and 360-degree feedback data. During the two-day workshop, there were self awareness raising and skills development sessions facilitated by the tutor and two one-to-one sessions with a personal coach.

The coaching sessions were designed to help the individual reflect in the moment about the issues being raised by the programme. All the coaches used on the programme were members of the Henley Register of Coaches, and met the high standards set by the Henley Certificate in Coaching. A Development Dialogue with the executive’s line manager followed within 6 - 8 weeks – the line managers all having been carefully briefed as part of the programme. The Personal Development Plan followed and additional coaching was provided as and when the need arose.

The results

The Development Dialogue programme has been very positively received by participants. They feel that there is a deeper understanding of them, their aspirations and their development needs. Additionally, they believe that when future internal opportunities occur they will be considered in a more informed way as a result of their 1:1 engagement with a management board member.

Brian Fitzgerald commented, ‘For the company, an in depth dialogue with top talent is now providing insights that didn’t previously exist on a consistent basis. This enhances knowledge of current capabilities and aids succession planning aligned with the company’s future strategy.’

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