

Atkins

Childcare and Bike4work schemes

The Client Issue

Atkins is one of the world's leading providers of engineering based consultancy services. The firm employs 10,300 staff, including specialist project managers, architects, planners, designers, engineers and surveyors across numerous sites worldwide. In 2007 and 2008 Atkins was included in the Sunday Times list of top 20 large companies to work for.

Atkins approached Grass Roots to design, implement and manage a childcare payment benefit scheme for their employees.

Grass Roots Solution

Grass Roots proposed the care-4 tax efficient benefits scheme - a unique electronic payment system by which working parents can enter into a 'salary sacrifice' arrangement and pay fees directly to their approved child carers' bank accounts. They qualify for National Insurance (NI) and income tax relief on the first £243 per month (£55 per week) paid to a Registered or Approved Carer in this way, yielding annual net savings of more than £1,000 to the individual employee, and a potential profit for the employer through the reduction in corporate NI. The programme was launched through HR briefings at key locations. This was followed by an information pack, designed and produced by Grass Roots, and sent to every employee's home address.

Results

Following the successful launch of care-4 in April 2005, Bike4work, a further tax efficient benefit through Grass Roots, was added to the offering.

Launched in 2006, Bike4work has proven to be an extremely popular option for Atkins employees.

Through Bike4work, Atkins has chosen to mix their bike provider for each separate scheme, utilising all three of Grass Roots suppliers - Halfords, Evans and Cyclescheme - for different election periods.

A comprehensive communications programme created by Grass Roots' in house design team helped to launch the scheme while taking the opportunity to communicate other reward and benefit products that were also available.

So far over 900 employees have joined Bike4work - nearly 9% of all eligible staff, which, when benchmarked against other similar schemes, is a remarkable take up rate.

Head of Reward at Atkins, Iain Willetts, has been delighted with the response:

"We are very proud of the range of benefits we offer our employees and continue to look for innovative ways of adding value. Care-4 has been very successful and well received by the many Atkins employees who have taken up this opportunity. In terms of broadening the offer, riding a bike to work is both healthy for the individual and for the environment. As a result of financing the scheme ourselves and choosing to pass on VAT savings to our employees, we were able to offer them a particularly attractive deal. I also feel that good communication just prior to the summer months had a positive impact on the take up."

bike4work

care4