



Empowering business operations with a massive IT transformation

AtkinsRéalis partners with Quest to supercharge collaboration and productivity.



Employees: **38,000**

Industry: **Professional services**

Website: atkinsrealis.com

An ambitious goal: transforming two parts into one whole

AtkinsRéalis is a world-class engineering services and nuclear organization that connects people, data and technology to transform the world's infrastructure and energy systems. With 38,000 employees in 400 offices around the world, the company has played a pivotal role in a wide range of projects, from the Dubai Opera to the world's first carbon-neutral waste treatment plant to many bridges, highways and hospitals.

The company's roots date back to 1911, and the ensuing century brought a great deal of change, including many mergers and acquisitions. A key development came in 1991, when engineering giants SNC and Lavalin merged to form SNC-Lavalin Group. Additional major M&A deals followed, including the acquisition of WS Atkins in 2017.

Challenges

When two large engineering companies merged in 2017, they retained their separate IT environments. A few years later, leadership chose to unite the two divisions under a new brand, AtkinsRéalis. As part of the One Workspace initiative, the IT team needed to consolidate the IT ecosystems to improve collaboration, productivity and business agility.

Solution

Every vendor responding to the project RFP proposed using Quest solutions. But AtkinsRéalis was looking for more: an experienced and reliable partner. The Quest professional services organization had the experience and commitment needed to complement the AtkinsRéalis team's knowledge of its business and IT environment. By working together as one team, they were able to deliver on the One Workspace vision in just 24 months.

Results or Benefits

- Consolidated two large Active Directory domains by migrating 14,000 identities and 10,000 devices
- Enhanced cybersecurity by reducing the attack surface across multiple dimensions
- Enabled employee productivity, collaboration and mobility
- Improved business agility and IT efficiency

In 2023, the company became AtkinsRéalis. However, this change was far more than a simple rebranding — it was a reinvention of the company as a unified entity. “After the 2017 merger, the SNC-Lavalin and Atkins parts of the business were run essentially as two companies, with limited connection and IT integration,” explains Sylvain Cloutier, vice president of service delivery at AtkinsRéalis. “For example, we had two separate email domains, and people from one side of the business were seen as guests in the other, which meant they were not able to effectively share information and collaborate.”

Then, 2019 saw a change in leadership at the company. “Our new CEO established a new mandate: Create a unified entity where everybody can work together as a single company and culture,” says Cloutier. “This vision for the new AtkinsRéalis brand marked the beginning of our One Workspace program — and our journey with Quest.”

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*Sylvain Cloutier
Vice President of Service Delivery
AtkinsRéalis*

A complex set of technical challenges

A core goal of One Workspace was to unify the two separate IT environments. “The first step was to standardize the technology and the experience for everyone,” notes Cloutier. “Using all the same

systems and applications was essential to enabling collaboration between all employees, whether they are located in Saudi Arabia or Quebec City. In addition, it would facilitate the mobility of our people as they both travel geographically and move from project to project.”

This goal yielded a complex set of technical requirements across four areas:

- **Active Directory (AD) consolidation** — Move all users and devices from the SNC Lavalin (SNCL) domain to the Atkins domain.
- **Public folder migration** — Migrate SNCL public folders to SharePoint Online or shared mailboxes.
- **Tenant consolidation** — Migrate SNCL Microsoft 365 services to the Atkins M365 tenant.
- **SharePoint Online migration** — Migrate SNCL SharePoint Online to the Atkins tenant.

An equally important set of human challenges

The AtkinsRéalis team recognized that these technical changes necessarily involved a host of human challenges as well. “As part of the IT consolidation projects, we needed to instill new ways of working,” says Richard Stephens, IT modern workplace director at AtkinsRéalis. “Our users had not necessarily been exposed to applications like Teams, OneDrive and SharePoint. Therefore, we needed to educate them about how to use those workloads effectively. For instance, we needed to explain that instead of emailing spreadsheets back and forth, they can share them in OneDrive.”

AtkinsRéalis was well prepared to address this challenge. “Whenever we undertake a big project that will impact employees, we work hard to help them understand the changes that are coming and learn the new things they need to know,” explains Dalia Potrus, training coordinator at AtkinsRéalis. “In the case of the One Workspace project, we built the Champions Network, a group of people who would help their colleagues effectively adopt the applications that the business was standardizing upon.”

A unified team to create a unified workforce

To bring the One Workspace vision to reality, the team at AtkinsRéalis began by working with a different vendor. However, they were not comfortable with the vendor's proposed strategy: a big-bang migration. While flipping a switch and moving everything over the space of one weekend is certainly simple, it is impractical for a project of any significant size. Moreover, it can be highly risky.

Instead, AtkinsRéalis preferred a gradual migration in which groups of users and data would be moved in carefully orchestrated waves. Accordingly, they began looking for a third-party partner to help them with their massive transformation. They quickly noticed a commonality amongst the responses to their RFP: Everyone proposed to use Quest tooling for the project.

As a result, the choice came down to the quality of the partnership, rather than the functionality of the toolset. "We were not buying tools; we were buying knowledge," Cloutier says. "The people from Quest were highly engaged, supportive and knowledgeable, and they had already performed a massive number of large migrations like ours. We saw that they would be able to support us from day one through the entire project: migration, security, management and professional services."

The secret sauce: Agility, communication and best-in-class solutions

The combined team from AtkinsRéalis and Quest embraced an agile approach. "Instead of trying to establish a complete roadmap for the migration up front, we built the road in front of us as we were driving," explains Cloutier. "We took an approach of trust in which we would make our best decisions and if they didn't work, we'd step back and realign. The executives and the employees were supportive because they saw positive results quickly, with noticeable steps in the transformation being completed."

In particular, the team was able to embrace the company's name change and immediately present a unified face to the world. "Over the course of a weekend, we rebranded the primary SMTP address

of 37,000 accounts, along with tens of thousands of devices and hundreds of corporate applications," recalls Stephens. "Without the partnership with Quest, that target would've been impossible to achieve."

As for the Active Directory migration, 14,000 identities were migrated in 97 waves, while 10,000 PCs were moved across 50 waves, all in the space of 24 months. "Because of prior acquisitions and other factors, our Active Directory environments were quite complex," Stephens notes. "The Quest tooling was extremely helpful because it automated the migrations and eliminated the need to manually enumerate, rationalize and create accounts."

The true measure of success: happy users

Moreover, the Quest professional services team made the experience seamless for users. "They made sure that we were creating accounts in the right location and that we didn't have any email clashes or similar issues," Stephens says. "They ensured that the accounts were licensed from day one so they could be hydrated with all the data, and they even performed vital close-out tasks like reclaiming licenses."

We were truly one team: The Quest people have the knowledge and tooling to do the migrations, and our people have the knowledge of the business and the environments. Through any challenge, Quest was accountable and wanted to be part of the solution. By working together, we were able to achieve the transformation that AtkinsRéalis needed.

Sylvain Cloutier
Vice President of Service Delivery
AtkinsRéalis

“Plus, the partnership with Quest helped us minimize the tasks that the users had to perform,” adds Potrus. “Thanks to the Quest tools and expertise, everything was packaged, prepared and copied over, so the users needed to do just a few simple steps to complete the migration for themselves.”

Clear and timely communication was crucial to the success of the project. “We tied into about 15 different sources of data and surfaced that information up through a single reporting dashboard, which our teams used to develop our migration waves,” adds Stephens. “Dalia and her team kept everyone information through emails and calendar invites. They also set up Teams calls with SMEs that anyone join if they were experiencing any issues.”

Enhanced cybersecurity and business opportunity through AD modernization

Through the transformation project with Quest, AtkinsRéalis was able to achieve a core goal of strengthening cybersecurity across multiple dimensions. “First of all, we significantly reduced the number of local administrator accounts on endpoints, closing a key avenue for threat actors,” says Stephens. “We also changed our remote access tools, moving from a traditional VPN solution to a much more secure option: a cloud-based Zero Trust network access service. And we changed the underlying technologies for patch delivery and management, further reducing our attack surface area.”

More broadly, the successful IT modernization effort has provided AtkinsRéalis with a solid foundation for seizing opportunities and growing the business. “The project was a phenomenal enabler,” Stephens notes. “Without it, our IT department would have been supporting two separate computing environments with very different maturity levels, and trying to evolve both of them would have been an administrative nightmare. We wouldn’t have been able to deliver it with the teams that we’ve got. For instance, we can now roll out a single Windows 11 configuration across one domain instead of two, using one management platform.”

In short: One team created One Workspace.

In the end, AtkinsRéalis credits the unified team with the success of the project. “We were truly one team: The Quest people have the knowledge and tooling to do the migrations, and our people have the knowledge of the business and the environments,” says Cloutier. “Through any challenge, Quest was accountable and wanted to be part of the solution. By working together, we were able to achieve the transformation that AtkinsRéalis needed.”

“I have to say thumbs up to everybody in the team,” adds Stephens. “Their commitment was phenomenal, and the time they put in was invaluable. Even after our Quest account manager could have moved on, he stayed with us, joining weekly calls to ensure that everything was continuing to go well. In fact, Quest executives even got involved at times, jumping on calls when we were having an issue. Quest’s support and expertise made all the difference.”

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