

Challenges, Changes and the Creation of Coat – FM Founder Reflects on 16 Years in Business

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When Adam Atkins co-founded a facilities management company back in 2010, he felt strongly about utilising his knowledge and experience of the sector to provide a first-class direct labour offering.

The industry – and the wider world – has fundamentally shifted since, especially given the onset of AI-enabled technology. And yet, Adam and his team have not only adapted to these changes, but he has also added a further four companies to his portfolio, bringing them all together under the umbrella of [Coat Facilities Group](#).

Here he discusses the accomplishments and challenges of that 16-year journey and what the future holds for Coat.

Q. What were the aims of Diamond Facilities Support (*one of the five divisions within the Coat Facilities Group and the first company they set up*) and have these shifted over the time you've been in business?

“While the scale of our operations, and particular our use of technology, has advanced hugely since launching 2010, I believe we've stayed true to our vision. Ultimately, we wanted to prioritise direct labour rather than relying heavily on subcontracting –currently almost 95% of our work is undertaken in-house across all five divisions, so we have definitely achieved that aim.

“We also set out to be innovative and ensure we were always leading the way rather than following FM trends – in fact, we first developed our own web portal management system in 2011, and we have since launched our own field force management system and CAFM too. Our approach has kept operations

organised and streamlined, ensuring simplicity and peace of mind both for our expanding teams and for our clients too."

Q. What have been some of the key highlights over the past 16 years?

"Securing our first large-scale national contract, with LA Fitness in 2011, was an early success – and directly helped us win PureGym as a client at a time when they were up-and-coming in the fitness industry. We recently re-signed a contract with them, and it's excellent to see how both of our businesses have grown in the last 15 years!

"Five years after launch, we began making in-roads into the care sector with HFT as our first major client – and by 2018, we began taking more drainage, fire safety and cleaning services in-house. This saw the creation of Jet Through, Sanctuary Fire & Security and Nationwide Property Clean – and five years later, we created Nationwide Roofing Repairs to complete the group."

Q. Presumably there have been some challenges too?

"Absolutely – there have been the well-known national and international challenges which affected all industries including FM. Not least the Covid pandemic, which was of course an incredibly tough time – but we were able to remain operational and navigate through, regaining stability and beginning to concentrate again on growth through 2021 and into 2022.

"Naturally, there have also been times when we have been challenged through the loss of a contract or an unsuccessful tender – but I hope we have taken something positive from those situations by reflecting and learning from our experiences. In 2018, following the sale of PureGym to an American venture capitalist company, our partnership with them ceased for five years – but this made it all the more rewarding when they returned to us in 2023!"

Q. Coat was acquired by Tendra Technical Services in late 2025, what benefits has that had and how has it impacted the company?

"In terms of the day to day running of Coat, very little has changed – myself and co-founder Helen Cooper are still there making all the every-day decisions alongside our management teams across the five divisions. However, the acquisition – aside from enabling us to access additional funds to keep growing the business – has also given us the opportunity to link in with the other companies acquired by Tendra at the same time. All of us operate within the wider built environment industry, each within our own area of specialism, but sharing knowledge and best practice is of course going to be beneficial for everyone moving forward."

Q. What is next for Coat and for the FM industry?

"Sustainability is an issue no one can get away from – and rightly so. We have a formal ESG strategy in place and are working towards ambitious goals, including an IT roadmap to drive further innovation and efficiency. We will no doubt be adding further service lines to our offering, extending the breadth of FM support we offer clients. And we're also working on doubling our turnover, and growing staff numbers beyond the 170 currently employed by Coat or its divisions.

"Across the industry, we are seeing more advanced technology become commonplace within buildings,

and within maintenance services – meaning upskilling teams and ensuring continuous learning is available has become even more crucial.

“It really is an exciting time to be part of the FM industry, being able to play our part in shaping how the built environment is maintained going forward, being among the first to implement new technologies, and supporting our clients to achieve their aims across their estate – as well as empowering our people to learn new skills, take on new tasks, and develop their careers.

“The last 16 years has certainly been a journey, and I’m looking forward to seeing what the next 16 have in store for Coat!”