

Fit For Nuclear Q&A: IT4Automation

John French, managing director at IT4A, reveals how F4N helped the operational technology specialist become a better business.

Could you introduce your company?

Established in 1998, IT4A is a specialist operational technology (OT) network solutions company with 18 years' experience in critical network infrastructure. Based in Epsom, Surrey, IT4A offers a complete network solution, solving issues of poor reliability and obsolescence to new build and cyber security.

Why did you enter the F4N programme?

IT4A has been operating in the nuclear industry since 2014. We were able to bring over a decade of experience into solving the real-world challenges of network obsolescence within critical non-stop process control systems, ranging from product selection to design, implementation and commissioning. It was probably the quality of our project documentation that ultimately sealed the deal.

Since this first project's success, IT4A has become the preferred supplier of networks on site, and we have since completed a major site-wide digital security network supporting hundreds of cameras and related security systems.

Recognising that IT4A was found by the nuclear industry in this first case, it was clear that to replicate our success within the wider nuclear field we would need to invest in the quality

standards expected by the industry. The F4N programme provided the opportunity to do this. Our ambition is now to help the nuclear industry players build stronger, more resilient and highly secure OT and site-wide security networks.

What areas did the assessment identify for development?

IT4A had achieved ISO 9001 compliance prior to the F4N journey, and we felt generally confident in our systems. F4N expanded the culture of quality management from one or two individuals to the entire team.

The initial assessment identified opportunities to develop ideas into solutions, and the terms PDCA (plan-do-check-act) and CI (continuous improvement) are now part of everyday life. Having proven mechanisms to manage change effectively, that the team all understand, has been good.

How did you close the gaps in these areas?

The office has been transformed over our 18-month F4N journey. From the implementation of clear desk policies to 5S, I feel we are just a better company – so many gems of wisdom were passed down by the various trainers and assessors along the way.

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IT4A has adopted better visual management around the business and key performance indicators that measure each area of our processes and operations. We now monitor these regularly and cascade them down through team briefs. This has had an encouraging response from the workforce.

What benefits have you seen from F4N?

It is still early days for IT4A, but we are more confident in approaching potential nuclear customers. We have a greater understanding of the expectations of the industry and the standards that are required to compete in this sector.

There is much that can be done to connect F4N companies with those that have the need within nuclear organisations. As a specialist technology company, it is proving difficult for us to identify the right person within the nuclear organisations that have the quite specific needs we can service.

How do you see your business in the nuclear sector in five years' time?

I would hope to have secured two more key nuclear accounts and become established as their partner of choice for OT and any site-wide network infrastructure. I would hope to be providing cyber security and maintenance services to these organisations. In addition, I would hope to be along the road with one or two additional organisations.

F4N was entered with eyes wide open – irrespective of the opportunities that may come along, we have become a better business because of F4N and I am proud of the way the team came together to achieve this badge of merit. Our confidence as a team has grown, and this is helping our wider aspiration in critical network infrastructure projects.

www.it4automation.com

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Fit For Nuclear (F4N) helps UK manufacturers get ready to bid for work in the civil nuclear supply chain.



F4N is exclusively delivered by the Nuclear AMRC, and has been extensively developed and expanded to meet industry demand. The service lets UK manufacturers measure their operations against the standards required to supply the nuclear industry, and take the necessary steps to close any gaps.


Hundreds of companies have completed the online F4N assessment, with most receiving ongoing support and development from the F4N team of nuclear specialists and experienced industrial advisors.

Begin your F4N journey: namrc.co.uk/services/f4n



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