



Fit For Nuclear Q&A: Portobello-RMF Engineering

Managing director Graham Avill explains how Portobello-RMF used F4N to prepare for new opportunities in new build and decommissioning.

Could you introduce your company?

Portobello Fabrications was originally established in Sheffield in 1933, and was amalgamated with RMF Engineering in 2009 to create Portobello-RMF Engineering Ltd.

Portobello-RMF is one of the UK's leading fabricators of process plant specialising in the design and manufacture of pressure vessels, columns, tanks, shell and tube heat exchangers, and high integrity fabrications for petrochemical, speciality chemical, nuclear, power generation, water and related process industries.

Materials of construction include carbon and alloy steels, all grades of stainless steel, duplex, nickel alloys, titanium, zirconium and tantalum along with a range of clad steels.

Why did you enter the F4N programme?

The company entered the F4N program early in 2016 in response to the anticipated demand for high quality fabricated products required for the nuclear new build and decommissioning projects in the UK. We have had experience in nuclear work in the late 70s and early 80s, and more recently in the last few years with work for Sellafield's Evaporator D project and for Westinghouse.

Our objective was to prepare the company for the requirements of the nuclear industry and to seek development of our own internal systems and procedures, which would have a positive impact in all areas of our business.

What areas did the assessment identify for development?

The initial assessment identified the strategy, leadership and process areas as key things to focus on. I don't believe that we were surprised by the assessment, but it did focus our minds on changing things that we do informally, and leading us to change these activities to a more formal and documented approach.

How did you close the gaps in these areas?

Many of the changes were management related, such as developing a mission statement and long-term business strategy, disaster recovery plans, etc.

However, the adoption of some aspects of 5S have led to increased efficiency in some areas, and the adoption of a team leader approach to work on the shopfloor has led to more active involvement of shopfloor personnel and ownership of the work that they are producing.



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What benefits have you seen from F4N?

As the granting of F4N has only just occurred, the benefits thus far have been limited to improvement in the way we now operate.

Where do you see the opportunities in nuclear?

We see potential opportunities in decommissioning and new build nuclear projects, and have been actively promoting our company for the past two years in these areas.

Although it is extremely difficult to access some of the clients currently operating in the nuclear industry, we are hoping that having gained F4N this will change.

How do you see your business developing in nuclear?

I would hope that within the next five years, the percentage of work from nuclear will have significantly increased and we are recognised as one of the key suppliers to this industry.

www.pfl-rmf.co.uk
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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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