



McEvoy Engineering benchmarks performance with F4N

Scottish fabrication specialist McEvoy Engineering, an experienced supplier to operating nuclear power stations and the decommissioning market, entered the Fit For Nuclear programme to benchmark its capabilities and win new work.

The family-run business is based in Stevenston, Ayrshire, a few miles down the coast from the gas-cooled reactors of Hunterston B and the older Magnox stations which shut down in 1990.

McEvoy Engineering started supplying the Hunterston sites in 1991, soon after the company's creation. It now supplies other nuclear sites including Heysham, Hinkley Point, Sellafield and Torness, providing high-integrity steel and pipework fabrication and integrated engineering solutions to site owners and contractors. Recent projects include a series of steel modules to allow controlled access to a reactor, and an aluminium platform for accessing waste flasks at Sellafield.

The firm also serves customers in a host of other demanding industries including oil and gas, renewables and defence.

"All of our clients are in highly regulated sectors, but for the past 28 years between 40 and 60 per cent of our annual turnover year-on-year has been from the nuclear sector," says Alison McEvoy, financial and business development director. **"We've worked very hard to tailor our service to meet the demands of that sector and deliver the high levels of quality, safety and competence that are expected."**

While networking to secure further opportunities at Sellafield and for EDF's new build at Hinkley Point C, the firm's managers realised that many of the companies they were competing with were carrying the Fit For Nuclear badge.

"To my mind, it was a recognised benchmark and carried a lot of brand equity. Given you are consistently trying to come up with factors to persuade a buyer that you're credible, to me the F4N brand cut to the chase and very much speaks to your credibility," McEvoy says.

When the team started their own F4N journey, their experience in the sector meant that the firm rated highly in the initial assessment. The biggest opportunities for improvement were in strategic leadership, particularly around communications with the 33-strong workforce to allow everyone to better understand their own role in contributing to the firm's development.

"In a family-run SME with managers who were first and foremost engineers at heart, having that external independent viewpoint and guidance to assist with the change of mindset was very useful," McEvoy says. **"There was a deep-seated belief that culture change wasn't possible. With guidance,**



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our managers came to realise that any initial resistance to change can be overcome and that it is worth the effort to persist with efforts to engage more with the wider workforce."

The company appointed change agents to lead workshop activity, and created a few simple channels for two-way communication including weekly production meetings and quarterly operational meetings where everyone can air suggestions about making improvements. Face-to-face meetings were complemented by an all-staff WhatsApp group to share news and updates, plus visual displays throughout the factory to emphasise the company's vision and continuous improvement plan.

"If you're consistent enough with your message and communicate openly with people on a regular basis – and that should be a two-way relationship – you realise that people do appreciate it," says McEvoy.

McEvoy Engineering was granted Fit For Nuclear in June 2018, and is now pursuing new opportunities in new build as well as building on its experience in operations and decommissioning.

"As a Scottish company the nuclear sector is very important to us," McEvoy says. "We have worked hard to develop our strategic capability to suit the critical success factors for working in the nuclear sector, and we continue to promote our value proposition and track record in nuclear to expand our client base in the sector. We are currently doing work for Sellafield and Magnox in decommissioning, EDF in power generation and we strive to ensure that the key players in the nuclear new build sector are aware of our extensive nuclear sector experience. In five years, we hope to be supplying the

new build nuclear programme with the same success as we currently supply decommissioning and power generating sites UK-wide."

The journey has also benefited to McEvoy Engineering's work in other demanding sectors, she notes: "The F4N programme is not just about nuclear – it's a process and business excellence model. It became very clear that it was a vehicle for closing out any gaps in all the good stuff we were doing, and it's very transferable to other sectors we work in."

www.mcevoyengineering.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
Fit For Nuclear

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.

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