



Fit For Nuclear Q&A: MSCM

Oil & gas supplier MSCM is receiving new nuclear enquiries after being granted F4N. Sales engineer John Charnley-Fisher talks through the company's journey.

Could you introduce your company?

Established in 1999, MSCM is a totally independent privately-funded limited company based in High Wycombe, offering a complete integrated service to the energy industry worldwide.

The directors and staff have a wealth of experience within the energy industry, having held key roles in companies serving this market very successfully for a considerable number of years.

We design and manufacture offshore subsea hydraulic distribution equipment used to control subsea production systems, and as such our customers rely on us to supply dependable products that will withstand the harsh deepwater environments for decades without fault.

Why did you enter the F4N programme?

We saw the F4N process as a means of improving the way we run our business. With no prior experience in the nuclear industry, our initial perspective was purely oil & gas oriented. It wasn't until learning more about the requirements and standards expected to supply the nuclear industry that we realised that our core competences positioned us to capably provide the nuclear industry with quality, reliable products.

Becoming a part of the nuclear supply chain will allow us to enhance our growth prospects, diversify, and improve our resilience to natural fluctuations in the oil & gas industry.

What areas did the assessment identify for development?

We wouldn't say there were any major surprises, but it did allow us to take a step back and thoroughly evaluate our company from an outside perspective. Some previously undiagnosed shortfalls became apparent, particularly in relation to our processes and overall business strategy.

As an example, new product development, a core component of our business, had no formal process behind it. This resulted in a lack of cohesion between the design engineering team and inconsistencies on how new products were being developed.

Generally, we discovered that many of our processes had informal elements. The appropriate steps were being performed, but insufficient record-keeping meant time was being lost.

How did you address these gaps?

We started with a complete systematic review of the strategy and business model, involving the entire management team. Now, we undertake a comprehensive strategic review every six months to ensure that our business model is accurate, the KPIs being measured are appropriate, and the direction the company is going is the right one.

Procedural improvements were discussed and implemented throughout the business. In new product development, we introduced a technical readiness level (TRL) gated process. For our manufactured products, this ranges from one (an

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initial concept) to seven (the product has been subsea for three years). This gated process has now been extended beyond this, even to the introduction of new processes.

We also applied the 5S lean manufacturing principle. Beginning as a vague nice-to-have, the further we got with applying 5S, the more we saw its value. All processes have a bottleneck, and what 5S promotes is the continuous identification and elimination of these bottlenecks, resulting in progressive efficiency improvements. We have seen marked reductions in lead times of individual activities, and our throughput has improved substantially.

Along with the implementation of ISO14001, these initiatives have allowed us to close the gaps. We have been able to make drastic improvements to the way we operate.

What benefits have you seen from F4N?

Shortly after our F4N status was granted, we received an enquiry for work in the nuclear sector. This opportunity at such an early stage solidified our confidence in the benefits that the programme delivers.

The nuclear industry holds quality, safety, and reliability in the highest regard, and we are certain that our existing customers in oil & gas will see our F4N certification as concrete evidence of the excellence of our business and products.

Where do you see the opportunities in nuclear?

The nuclear industry is based on close professional relationships, so we are investing a lot of time visiting and displaying at nuclear-related exhibitions and conferences.

We are reaching out to our existing network, in which various members are or have been involved with the nuclear industry.

This focus on networking will allow us to discover what difficulties our prospective customers may be having. This will

provide us with insight on how we can best offer viable solutions to the problems faced in such a major industry.

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

Our vision is that the time we are investing now in finding leads and improving our process and manufacturing capabilities will result in MSCM having penetrated the nuclear industry and generating sales intake.

We envision that the nuclear side of the business will be an area of active growth – however, it is still a big question as to what the nature of that work will be.

We are confident and excited for what the future will hold for MSCM's involvement in the nuclear industry.

mscmltd.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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