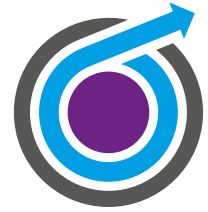


Case study

F4N
Fit For Nuclear



NUCLEAR AMRC
ADVANCED MANUFACTURING RESEARCH CENTRE



Graham Hart gets fit for international growth

Process engineering specialist Graham Hart is targeting further international growth after completing the Fit For Nuclear programme.

Graham Hart (Process Technology) Ltd specialises in the design and manufacture of high integrity heat transfer and pressure equipment for energy, petrochemical, process and other industries. Founded in 1973, the Bradford-based firm currently employs around 40 people with a turnover of £3 million.

Managing director Chris Hart started the F4N programme in July 2012, after learning about the programme at an AMRC Forum event.

"We had a vision of what we wanted to do," Hart recalls. "We were very much open to improvement, but we lacked understanding and experience in the key areas of nuclear assessment."

The initial F4N review identified a number of areas for development, starting with strategic management. F4N allowed the management team to put a framework around its vision, Hart notes. **"We knew what we wanted to do, we knew all the building blocks that had to go into place, but it was the ability to put it in a framework and say where are we and where do we need to go, and which element do we need to push forwards on first,"** he says.

The company formed a new development team to take a detailed look at the business from sales through to delivery, and identify where they could achieve the greatest gains.

"The development team represents every department and function within our business. This combined knowledge and experience assisted us greatly in building up our value stream map and the resultant future stream map," says technical director Charles Byrne. **"This bright and clear vision for potential growth was clear for all to see – but we knew we could only achieve it with the assistance and intervention of the F4N team and their training partners."**

The company continued to push performance in its own facility, with training in lean practice for all staff, and a new graphical system for factory planning and resource allocation. This in-house tailor-made software delivers real-time data for project tracking, and helped the company increase on-time in-full ratings to 100 per cent.

As well as leadership training for the management team, the company introduced a rigorous system of shopfloor training and work instructions based around nuclear industry SQEP principles.





“We had to readjust ourselves as a company, but that’s been a really good thing – it’s paid big rewards overall, not just in the nuclear sector.”

“We’ve completely changed the manner in which we approach manufacture of our high integrity equipment for all of our customers,” Byrne says. “A combination of in-house and external training has allowed us to visualise different ways of maximising shop capacity and reducing lead times in manufacture. This has produced a more solid foundation for forecasting reduced lead times for new orders.”

Having determined where Graham Hart’s strengths and values lay, the team looked at its suppliers. “We had to increase our existing supply chain to meet with companies who understood and valued the nuclear standards we are all expected to adhere to,” Byrne says. “Thankfully, the number of suppliers is increasing all the time through programmes like F4N and the RCC-M users group. It’s becoming easier to locate and meet with companies who share a nuclear mindset.”

The company’s F4N journey did take longer than the team expected, Hart acknowledges. “We had to readjust ourselves as a company and realign our strategy, but that’s been a really good thing. It’s almost been like doing due diligence – it’s paid big rewards overall, not just in the nuclear sector.”

“Invoking the change to a nuclear culture can be difficult with an existing workforce, but it’s become easier as time goes on,” Byrne adds. “People are running alongside the programme, and the language they’re using is changing. People do believe in it.”

After taking a stand at the 2014 World Nuclear Exhibition in Paris, Graham Hart is now talking to a number of companies in the French civil nuclear supply chain and has received several invitations to quote for Hinkley Point C. The team are also talking to top-tier nuclear groups in the UK, and building relationships in the process industries in Saudi Arabia.

“Our literature carries the F4N and Nuclear AMRC logos,” Hart says. “Whether it’s in France, Saudi Arabia or any other country, the initial response is always one of curiosity that soon leads to respect when they know what the logos mean.”

www.graham-hart.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 was developed by the Nuclear AMRC with leading industrial partners. More than 300 companies have completed the online F4N assessment, with most receiving ongoing support and development to help them close any gaps.

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



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