



Fort Vale targets new nuclear business

Precision manufacturer Fort Vale created a dedicated nuclear business after the F4N assessment highlighted the sector's requirement for a different approach.

Based near Burnley, Lancashire, Fort Vale Engineering is the world leader in the manufacture of stainless steel valves and fittings for bulk fluid transportation.

Fort Vale supplies industries including oil and gas, chemicals and food, and was well used to managing quality issues such as traceability and materials identification for safety-critical applications. In 2008, it won its first contract for the nuclear market.

"At that point we had one customer in nuclear and were looking at our competencies, skills and capabilities and trying to really understand how the market fitted together," recalls Pete Staveley, now general manager of Fort Vale Nuclear.

As director of quality at the time, Staveley led Fort Vale's first steps into civil nuclear, contacting the Nuclear AMRC and taking the initial Fit For Nuclear (F4N) assessment in 2012.

"The Fit For Nuclear assessment worked for us because it made transparent the gap of where we were, and where the industry would like us to be," Staveley says.

"It allowed us to analyse where we could maximise adding value to the customer, especially in terms of what the

industry expects from the supply chain. We saw F4N as a very positive vehicle to get there."

The initial assessment scored Fort Vale highly in key areas including internal quality management and health and safety.

The assessment also highlighted some areas for development, including project management skills and establishing clear business objectives for nuclear work. The company's action plan aimed to effectively flow down quality requirements to its own suppliers, as well as to embed a nuclear safety culture into the nuclear side of the business.

The actions that came out of the F4N assessment helped Staveley and his fellow Fort Vale directors take the decision to create a new standalone business to target nuclear work.

"The decision to create Fort Vale Nuclear enabled the nuclear business to grow in its own right, through its own business model and suitable business processes aligned with the nuclear industry," Staveley says.

"We believe it gives our current and future customers the confidence that we are serious about being a long-term player in the nuclear sector."

“The Fit For Nuclear assessment worked for us because it made transparent the gap of where we were, and where the industry would like us to be.”



The smaller team meant that Staveley was able to focus on the nuclear business’s needs. **“A key business driver is employing appropriate KPIs. By separating from Fort Vale Engineering, we could see our business unit performance in terms of health and safety, quality, delivery and cost,”** he notes.

“We have embedded nuclear safety culture, and ensured that everyone in the business has been through the Triple Bar Nuclear Manufacturing as a minimum so they understand what the difference is between nuclear and the core business.”

Staveley’s primary objective is now to develop the company’s client base, while maintaining the quality of delivery to current customers. To build relationships with potential clients, Fort Vale Nuclear has been active at networking events arranged by the Nuclear AMRC and National Skills Academy Nuclear Manufacturing.

“We want to be the supplier of choice for machined and fabricated components, including mechanical design for the main Tier Twos,” Staveley says. **“We can supply value-added services through our skills, competence and knowledge of manufacturing and engineering processes, and help the clients with the design for manufacture process, and bring the design into reality.”**

“F4N definitely highlighted how we could develop. It allowed us to identify areas of improvement and, importantly, to see

the differences between the nuclear industry and the core market.”

In November 2014, Fort Vale completed its second F4N assessment, validating the improvements made in project management, business objective development and other areas.

“This progression gives me more confidence that, when we bring clients on site, Fort Vale Nuclear is seen as a supplier of choice,” Staveley concludes.

www.fortvale.com

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

F4N
Fit For Nuclear

F4N was developed by the Nuclear AMRC with leading industrial partners, and is delivered in partnership with the Manufacturing Advisory Service, part of the government-backed Business Growth Service.


F4N also offers grants to companies based in England for business improvement or R&D projects.

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



NUCLEAR AMRC

To find out how the Nuclear AMRC can help your business:

 namrc.co.uk

 enquiries@namrc.co.uk

 0114 222 9900

Nuclear AMRC, University of Sheffield, Advanced Manufacturing Park, Brunel Way, Rotherham, S60 5WG

Supported by the
 Regional Growth Fund

 **EUROPEAN UNION**
Investing in Your Future
European Regional
Development Fund 2007-13

CATAPULT
High Value Manufacturing

 The
University
Of
Sheffield

MANCHESTER
1824
The University of Manchester
Dalton Nuclear Institute