

Leading with Certainty

A Conversation with **Neil Gunnion**, McDermott Country Head and Vice President, Operations, Qatar



How does digitalisation fit into McDermott's long term strategy for operations in Qatar?

Gunnion: Digitalisation, for us, has evolved beyond driving efficiency. It is now a tool for delivering certainty for our customers. To minimise

schedule disruptions, we leverage digital technologies to rehearse the project before we build it. With McDermott, a seamless digital thread, driven by project management, links engineering, supply chain and our QFAB fabrication yard together to identify conflicts, constraints and bottlenecks months ahead of execution. The increased visibility tells us exactly where to focus our attention and resources.

We're not simply digitising documents; we're digitising the execution logic. This is how we ensure predictability.

Adoption of new technologies is a perennial challenge. How do you ensure legacy systems integrate with new digital solutions?

Gunnion: One of the industry's perennial problems is that engineering, procurement and construction data often lives in isolated silos, each speaking its own digital language.

Instead of forcing everyone into a single proprietary "black box," McDermott is a technology agnostic integrator. We implement visualisation and orchestration layers that sit above existing tools, creating a unified, logic driven information highway.

Whether it's a 3D model, a procurement milestone, or a construction sequence, all stakeholders see one aligned reality—from a supervisor in Ras Laffan to a design engineer in London.

Our goal is to democratise data, not imprison it. And with the support of key digitalisation partners, we're already seeing meaningful success.

Digital twins are becoming standard for new builds, but what about "brownfield digitalisation"? How are you applying modern tools to Qatar's mature offshore facilities?

Gunnion: Merging brownfield digitalisation with modern technology is essential for Qatar and the region. You cannot build a true digital ecosystem if half your assets live on paper and the other half in the cloud.

To close the gap, we forge strategic partnerships that combine reality capture with AI. Using high resolution 3D laser scanning, we can capture the "as is" condition of aging offshore facilities. AI then converts those vast point clouds into intelligent CAD models automatically.

This allows us to place decades old platforms into the same modern visualisation environment as new expansion projects. Suddenly, a 20 year old asset can be managed with the same digital precision as a brand new one.

The key is collaboration—bringing together operators, an integrated EPC contractor, a next generation digitalisation provider and cutting edge scanning technology to transform brownfield data into actionable intelligence.

There is often a perception that AI replaces human talent. How has digitalisation changed skill requirements across your workforce?

Gunnion: We see AI as an accelerator, not a replacement. Our goal is to build an AI augmented workforce here in Doha—one where technology removes friction, allowing our subject matter experts to focus on high value engineering and decision making.

For example, we're developing an AI expeditor to predict supply chain delays before they materialise and AI driven document generation tools to dramatically speed up execution.

Instead of engineers spending days chasing dates or counting pipes, AI provides the intelligence, and the engineer applies judgment and solution making. By 2026, our document management workflows will be heavily AI supported, automating the enormous effort of managing thousands of documents. •

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