

McFarland Johnson Sets the Standard for Responsible AI Implementation in Engineering

Industry Veteran Jason Kentzel Named AI Implementation Lead to Drive Firmwide Transformation

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Chad Nixon

as a trusted leader in planning, engineering, and construction management, [McFarland-Johnson, Inc.](#) (MJ) has launched a strategic, firmwide AI initiative designed to set a new benchmark for responsible technology adoption in the industry. The 100% employee-owned firm is embedding AI directly into its operations to sharpen client outcomes, accelerate delivery, and strengthen the professional judgment that has defined MJ for eight decades. Chad Nixon, President and Chairman, framed the move not as a response to industry pressure but as a deliberate expression of MJ's dedication to responsible

innovation.

“McFarland Johnson has spent 80 years earning the trust of our clients and communities by doing things the right way,” said Nixon. “This initiative carries that same commitment forward. AI, implemented responsibly, makes our people more capable and our work more precise. We are not following the industry on this; we intend to lead it.”

Rather than treating AI as a standalone platform or an add-on layer, MJ is embedding intelligence into existing tools and workflows. This reduces friction, enables faster decisions, and frees employee-owners to apply the critical thinking and expertise that clients depend on. “Our AI strategy is built around our people, not the other way around,” Nixon said. “We're giving our teams sharper tools so they can deliver the kind of thoughtful, responsive, and high-quality work that has always set MJ apart.”

To lead the initiative, MJ has appointed Jason Kentzel as the firm's AI Implementation Lead, a choice that reflects the firm's commitment to governance as much as innovation. Kentzel brings more than 30 years of experience directing operations in highly regulated environments, with a track record that spans machine learning deployment, executive leadership, and military service.

He has demonstrated measurable results applying predictive analytics to complex, multi-site operations. This is precisely the kind of disciplined, outcomes-focused background MJ sought. “Our mandate is clear: move AI from experimentation into everyday, governed practice across the entire firm,” said Kentzel. “Trust, transparency, and accountability are not constraints on this work; they are the foundation of it.”

In the near term, AI will accelerate documentation, drafting, review, summarization, and compliance workflows while also giving MJ’s professionals faster access to over 80 years of accumulated institutional knowledge. The result is a more responsive, better-informed workforce that can allocate more time to the high-judgment work clients value most. “We are unlocking the full expertise of this firm,” Kentzel said. “AI surfaces the right knowledge at the right moment so our people can make better decisions, faster, without ever compromising the professional standards we are known for.”



Chad Nixon, President and Chairman
McFarland Johnson

AI will increasingly support operations, but leadership emphasizes that final decisions remain with people. “We’re an AI-enhanced company, not an AI-only company,” Nixon said. “Clients rely on our expertise and judgment. AI strengthens this expertise and judgment; it never replaces them.” Kentzel echoed that perspective, noting that AI is designed to support, not substitute, professional responsibility: “All final decisions remain with our people. AI helps us deliver superior results, while accountability remains with our people. The professional responsibility for every outcome remains exactly where it belongs—with us.”

Looking ahead, MJ sees AI as an invisible layer of support fully integrated into core systems with background governance. “Within one to two years, AI will be a natural part of our work,” Kentzel said. “With the right guardrails, it becomes a sustainable advantage.”

“Eight decades in, we are still setting the pace,” said Nixon. “This initiative is a statement about who McFarland Johnson is: a firm that combines deep expertise with the discipline to adopt new technology responsibly and the ambition to lead our industry in doing so. Our clients deserve nothing less, and our people are ready to deliver it.”

About McFarland-Johnson, Inc.

McFarland-Johnson, Inc. (MJ), is a 100% employee-owned planning, engineering, and construction management firm distinguished by our commitment to empowering employee-owners and delivering customized solutions. In 2026, MJ proudly celebrates 80 years of innovation. Since our founding in New York, MJ has led significant projects nationwide in aviation planning and design, transportation, facilities, site/civil, environmental, construction services, and technology. With offices across the United States, we serve clients in diverse regions and markets. Our collaborative culture and depth of expertise drive innovative, sustainable infrastructure designs tailored to each client's unique needs. McFarland Johnson is a people-centric company dedicated to quality, community betterment, and making a meaningful impact in every community we serve.

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