

Strictly passionate about the whole solution

Richard Polling of MRC Group shares his passion for his work and doing it right, no matter what.

By Ntsako Khosa

What are your responsibilities in your current position?

I am the co-founder and group director of the MRC Group. MRC Group is an industry leading building envelope refurbishment contractor, proudly working with property owners, facility managers and landlords to deliver turnkey solutions that make up the entire external building envelope from roof to walls and internal façades and partitions.

As a group director and a member of the management of the company I am responsible for the company's commercial, technical, health and safety, quality assurance and installation practices, ensuring the highest quality solutions to the client's brief.

My day-to-day activities including sales, marketing, estimating and technical expertise. Marc, my business partner, co-founder and group director, is responsible for health and safety and the delivery of our projects, within budget and on time.

Explain how you got started in your career and how did you end up where you are today?

I started life in the construction with a specialist steel building fabricator undertaking re-measures, pricing variations and agreement final account, fulfilling the role of a quantity surveyor for many years. I then moved into the sales and commercial side of a range of construction businesses including precast concrete structures, roof slating and tiling and finally metal roofing and cladding. I worked for some of the most

well know international suppliers and installers, being immersed in good practice and high technical expertise for some of the most complicated building envelope systems available.

Before I left the UK to come to South Africa I successfully set up a sales and marketing technical consultancy business for suppliers and installers/applicators, showing how to ensure high quality systems are supplied and installed accurately and within budget.

Since coming to South Africa, I have taken all these skill sets and am part of a team that is creating one of the finest refurbishment building envelope contractors in South Africa. I say part of a team because none of this would have been possible without my business partner and co-founder, Marc Ferriman, and the team who all work tirelessly at MRC Group at each of the offices around South Africa and our unique customers.

What qualifications (and from where) do you have?

HNC Building Studies – Lincoln University.
Technical Member of the Royal Institute of Builders.

What attracted you to this industry?

Like most people in the world, opportunity knocks rather than choosing an industry, but I have never had a day where I have been disappointed. It's an absolute privilege to be part of an industry which creates spaces that people have pleasure in being in or viewing from outside.



Richard Polling, co-founder and group director of the MRC Group.

Do you enjoy what you do and why? What is the favourite part of your job?

I enjoy my role immensely because I believe what we do at MRC Group is to improve and 'lift the bar' on all types of building envelope systems and methodologies, ensuring the highest quality installations and therefore the long-term energy efficiency of the building.

I enjoy the ability to pass on my technical expertise and knowledge to others, most of which are not as privileged as I have been, enhancing their skill sets and abilities to install new and exciting building envelope

systems, empowering them and ensuring their readiness for the world that is ahead.

How do you see your future? What do you still want to achieve?

I see the opportunity in southern Africa to be exciting, as an emerging economic market, with all its highs and lows. There is no doubt that challenging times are upon us, but these are things that very few haven't seen before, it's whether we have learnt the lessons to continue to grow.

“ I am excited to be part of a growing brand.”

I am excited to be part of a growing brand and over the years to come we have set out big targets to be well known not just in Africa but also in Europe, Australasia, Middle East and the Americas, but they will all know that it started here in South Africa.

Which large projects have you been part of?

I have been involved with projects such as the metal roofing and waterproofing at the Wembley Football Stadium, the retractable roof at Wimbledon, rolling out numerous schools within the Building Schools for Future initiative in the UK, along with green roofs and living walls viewed by many on the British TV show *Grand Designs*, to name a few.

In southern Africa, MRC Group is delivering a long-term contract to upgrading insulation for a major international 'blue chip' retailer who is

taking energy efficiency and fire as seriously as it needs to be taken. Along with refurbishing a paint shop for a major car manufacturer, something that has never been done before, anywhere in the world, by any manufacturer due to the risks of not completing the works on time.

What is your work philosophy?

'The harder I work the luckier I become' is a statement that many people will use, but in real terms the harder I work the more I learn and the more that I can do. I enjoy my work immensely and what it can do for others. The key, in my opinion is to work in a logical, focused manner that maximises the time that to complete the task at hand.

By completing those tasks it's amazing what can be completed within budget and programmes ensuring that all members of the team remain healthy and safe. ☺

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