# Rob Crothall and Associates

**Rob Crothall & Associates** is a small consulting and contracting business with access to a significant number of product and subject specialists.

Contact us via e-mail at rob(at)robcrothall.co.za (replace "(at)" by "@") or by phone on 083 678 5055.

We provide management consulting, project management, and normal development services using Microsoft .Net, mainframe tools under MVS and VM (on IBM-compatible mainframe computers), on Unix® and Linux®, and on Intranets using appropriate server and client-side tools and technology.

We have experience with a variety of proprietary tools, but work extensively with selected Open Source products.

In particular, we are skilled and have experience in:

* [Project Management](http://www.robcrothall.co.za/sitebuilder/" \l "Proj)
* [Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP)](http://www.robcrothall.co.za/sitebuilder/" \l "VoIP)
* [Systems Development](http://www.robcrothall.co.za/sitebuilder/" \l "SysDev)
* [Database Design and Administration](http://www.robcrothall.co.za/sitebuilder/" \l "DBA)
* [Management Information and Control systems](http://www.robcrothall.co.za/sitebuilder/" \l "MIS)
* [Human Resources Systems, including complement control](http://www.robcrothall.co.za/sitebuilder/" \l "HR)
* [Performance management systems](http://www.robcrothall.co.za/sitebuilder/" \l "PMS)
* [Budgetting and forecasting systems, including financial modelling](http://www.robcrothall.co.za/sitebuilder/" \l "Budget)
* [Costing systems](http://www.robcrothall.co.za/sitebuilder/" \l "Cost)
* [Share Registration and Investment Recording systems](http://www.robcrothall.co.za/sitebuilder/" \l "Shares)
* [Customer Relationship Management systems](http://www.robcrothall.co.za/sitebuilder/" \l "CRM)
* [Contact Centre support, management and control](http://www.robcrothall.co.za/sitebuilder/" \l "CC)
* [Conversions and unusual application challenges](http://www.robcrothall.co.za/sitebuilder/" \l "Conv).

We have access to teams of consultants and specialists in a variety of disciplines, making us useful in project management and systems integration roles.

We do not normally sell hardware or software, but can usually find a suitable supplier for Clients who need such products.

The following paragraphs give more detail on the type of services and systems we are able to provide, develop and support.

### Project Management

We have experience in managing significant projects, not limited to the development of computer systems. Functions include:-

* the development and implementation of an appropriate project management methodology, or the use of any appropriate standard methodology already used by the Client,
* the implementation of a suitable change management and progress reporting process,
* project planning and control,
* the training of staff in the use of the products of the project,
* documentation and reporting of key learnings,
* measurement and reporting of quality, costs and time.

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### Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP)

We are agents for [Vox Telecom](http://www.vox.co.za/robcrothall/), and can evaluate the savings your company could make using VoIP. Please visit our page on the [Vox Telecom](http://www.vox.co.za/robcrothall/) site [here.](http://www.vox.co.za/robcrothall/)

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### Systems Development

Our developers are capable of supporting each phase of the standard systems development lifecycle, including:

* the major phases of application delivery i.e.
  + ID and Assess
  + Analysis
  + Design
  + Build
  + Deploy, and
  + Maintain.

Each of these phases is concluded with a Gate Review, which includes a sign-off by the Business Customer.

* the development of a project brief,
* the development of a business case and feasibility study,
* requirements specification,
* systems analysis and design,
* database design,
* building of prototype functions using Rapid Application Development (RAD) tools,
* development of the system,
* the training of staff in the use of the system,
* implementation of the system, and
* maintenance of the system.

We have worked for several large multi-national companies, and understand the need for adherance to standards and compliance requirements, including SOX.

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### Database Design and Administration

We are able to provide remote and on-site data and database design and administration for Oracle and DB2, including:

* Logical database design
* Database product installation and configuration
* Physical database design
* Database tuning
* Database security and auditing
* Database backup and recovery procedures
* SQL script writing

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### Management Information and Control systems

Managing without statistical reporting and control tools is a high risk activity. Without some form of regular management reporting, the financial reports of a business unit can come as a surprise each month.

We can help you to identify the statistics which will put you back in control of your business, and create systems that will measure and report on how your business is running.

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### Human Resources, including complement control

There are several good Human Resources packages on the market, but installing, configuring, and implementing an HR system is complex and sensitive.

While the use of computer systems may improve productivity and control, inattention to the human side of such systems can be extremely costly.

Human Resources are a critical asset in all knowledge intensive businesses, and the value of these assets should be correctly exploited to contribute to profitability. Unfortunately, the cost of these resources continues to escalate, and are notoriously difficult to control.

We have experience in implementing Human Resources systems that help managers to develop the potential and performance of their staff and measure individual contribution, while maintaining the records required by law and good practice.

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### Performance Management Systems

We can help you to develop "Key Performance Indicators (KPI)" which measure the "Key Performance Areas (KPA)" of your staff. Using these, you will be able to measure and influence the activities which control the revenue streams of your business. You will be able to identify your top performers, and those at the other end of the scale! We also help you to select and set measurable performance standards, which, when breached, trigger performance management procedures which will result in an improvement in performance to acceptable levels or the replacement of the non-performer.

To support these management processes, we can design and build measurement and reporting systems which will maintain the statistics that will back you up in any conciliation or arbitration discussions that may be necessary.

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### Budgetting and forecasting systems

Financial planning in a changing environment is a complex task which requires skilled resources, generally at times when senior management is very busy. We are able to implement and control financial planning processes, in support of senior management, using accepted tools and techniques.

We are also able to carry the financial plans produced into costing and management reporting systems, which results in an improved likelyhood of achieving successful implementation of those plans.

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### Costing systems

We are able to design and implement cost control and reporting systems which give meaningful forcasts of end of period expenditure against budget, even where the financial environment is complex.

Costing systems are often seen as a tool of Accountants, with little benefit for line management in an organisation. We believe that we can develop costing system solutions which put necessary information in the hands of line managers and enable them to manage their operations with financial confidence.

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### Share Registration and Investment Recording systems

With the advent of the JSE STRATE model of electronic share trading in a dematerialised environment, the investment recording systems of some companies and individuals need revision and, sometimes, replacement.

We have qualifications (South African Institute of Financial Management) and experience in the development and maintenance of investment recording and decision support systems.

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### Customer Relationship Management systems

It is possible to spend vast sums of money on Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems without actually achieving commensurate benefits.

We have experience with managing customer experiences, and can focus attention on the key aspects of CRM which encourage your customers to be loyal to your brand.

We can also supply selected CRM application system components at very competitive prices.

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### Contact Centre support, management and control

Many companies have created Call Centres, but few senior executives are satisfied that the expected benefits are being achieved. Even fewer customers are satisfied with Call Centre service.

The creation and management of a Contact Centre is even more difficult to manage. There are significant challenges in the technology, people, and processes associated with the running of a Contact Centre, and with the management of performance.

We have experience and resources that make managing a successful Contact Centre possible.

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### Conversions and unusual application challenges

Some conversions have more challenges than others, particularly when data formats differ (e.g. IBM MVS and Unix), or when operating system facilities are incompatible (e.g. print spooling).

New products and standards permit implementations which are better suited to business problems than those of the past (e.g. XML, web services, SOA).

We have, and can create, productivity tools that assist in the conversion of data and programs between otherwise incompatible systems and environments. In particular, we have tools which can parse and manipulate text, including source code, and reformat it intelligently.

We are also familiar with the models of different types of database (e.g. relational, network, hierarchical, custom) and can devise appropriate conversion strategies between them.

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