

The impact of South African storytelling and the power of podcasting

 By [Matt Brown](#)

17 Jul 2017

It was Sunday, 1 January 2016 and I was stuck. Stuck in my uninspiring corporate job and trying to decide on what my next entrepreneurial play was going to be. After months of research, contemplation and soul searching I had observed two things. The first was how the main stream media was portraying the realities of entrepreneurship. Here is a series of headlines from this week alone.

Nestle Leads \$77M Funding Round In Meal-Delivery Startup Freshly

The RealReal ropes in \$50 million in new funding

Language learning startup Lingokids scores \$4M funding and partners with Oxford University Press

Vice has raised \$450M ahead of a potential IPO

Justin Kan confirms \$10.5 million in funding for his legal tech startup Atrium LTS

Spin raises \$8 million as bike-sharing battle heats up in the US

Hardware Club raises \$28 million for its hardware seed fund

MATT BROWN
MEDIA

What this does is paint a picture of entrepreneurship that isn't entirely real but more importantly, it creates a perception that being an entrepreneur and starting a business is easy. I mean come on right, let's all quit our jobs, start a business and be millionaires overnight? How great would that be? After starting eight companies, six of which failed and two of which I sold, I knew this type of news was painting a picture of entrepreneurship which simply wasn't true.

Painting the realities of entrepreneurship

The second interesting thing I came across, was this [article](#), *Apple: One billion iTunes podcast subscriptions and counting*, on MacWorld dated 22 July 2013.

Today, there is now an estimated 1.5 billion podcast subscriptions around the world – that's 1 quarter of planet earth. Contrary to this was the South African context where podcast statistics were non-existent.



[BizTrends 2016] The 2016 podcast push in South Africa

Warren Harding 25 Jan 2016



So, I came up with what seemed to be a terrifically bad idea, which was largely driven by one question and that question was this:

“How can I paint the realities of entrepreneurship and help South African entrepreneurs succeed using a podcast?”

By all accounts I should have failed – there was no podcast market to launch to and I had little to no idea about how to even produce a podcast. Despite all the reasons not to do it, I decided to do it anyway. From literally one listener (that was me) – fast forward 18 months to today, where I reach on average 30,000 people per episode with no bought media and have built a loyal listenership in 100 countries around the world.

The leap into the world of podcasting

By taking the leap into the world of podcasting and consequently building the *Matt Brown Show* into a global media platform, my life has completely changed. Today, I speak about my story to businesses and decision makers all about story telling. You see, the question I am asked most often is: “What has made your podcast successful?” To answer this question, I must point to two things.

Firstly, I’ve discovered that South Africans – especially South African entrepreneurs – have some amazing stories to tell, but for some reason the richness of these stories are lost in 400-500 word articles so commonly found in the main stream media.

The second reason is that I simply got lucky. While I launched to a podcast market that didn’t exist at the time, by fluke I caught the wave of new consumers who have switched onto the world podcasting thanks to growing smartphone penetration and overall awareness of the term “podcasting.”

There are an estimated 30 million smartphones in South Africa, and the interesting thing about this stat, in the context of podcasting, is that if you have a smartphone and more broadly an internet connection you can access a podcast and therefore the world of informal learning. But as great as this statistic is for South Africa, herein lies the problem.

South African podcast statistics are still almost non-existent to this day.

But I want to change this once and for all.

The Pod Power survey

And this is where I need your help. I have just released the "Pod Power" survey with the goal of undertaking the largest independent research project into the South African podcasting industry.

Why am I doing this?

Well, I believe that we all have a story to tell and as South African’s, the ability of a single story to make a positive difference to the communities that we hold dear are grossly under estimated. Every time I publish a new episode, I receive feedback from entrepreneurs who I have never met describing to me how much of a difference my show is making to their lives.

With that in mind, my intention with this initiative is to share the research data with a view to hopefully encouraging other brands and business owners to tell their own stories through podcasting so that they too can make a positive difference to the communities and customers that they serve.

And this is where your help is fundamental to the success of this initiative. Click [here](#) to give your opinion of South African podcasting. It will only take a few minutes to complete and your answers will be kept confidential.

As a small token of thanks, you will also receive a free eBook on South African podcasting at the end of the survey. In today's digitally connected world we should never underestimate the power of our media to make a difference. So please join me in supporting this initiative.

ABOUT MATT BROWN

Matt is the CEO of Digital Kungfu - a purpose built lead generation company for technology businesses.
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