

Xact Communications

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We chat to Arshad Ebrahim, founder of XACT Communications and Events, to find out the journey and challenges an entrepreneur faces with startups.



Arshad Ebrahim, founder of XACT Communications and Events

Over a year ago Arshad Ebrahim and his wife started a small female clothing line and attended various pop-up markets on a monthly basis to promote their label and in exchange, make sales. Months went by and more and more local entrepreneurs surfaced with the same vision and passion to pursue their own small business. This was when Ebrahim realised there was a gap in the small business market.

Ebrahim soon realised that these local entrepreneurs were so passionate and dedicated to making their businesses work, but they had failed to realise the importance of PR and strategic networking events.

And that was the beginning of XACT Communications and Events...

We chat to Arshad Ebrahim the founder of XACT Communications and Events, to find out the journey and challenges an entrepreneur faces with startups.

■ ***Tell us a bit about XACT Communications and Events***

XACT Communications and Events is a communications and events business, with the aim of creating solutions with a modern edge. In an ever-changing world, Xact promises to stay abreast with industry trends to bring you the 'exact' solution. I take the client's vision, I step out of the ordinary, and work on innovative ideas and then bring it to life.

■ ***What makes your business different?***

We don't portray ourselves to know it all. We work with you and your brand to establish a meaningful and collaborative relationship and solution or solutions that will ignite a spark like no other. Our experience and expertise give us the confidence and to you the surety that we won't let you down. We basically walk the journey with you and collaborate to reach a meaningful and impactful solution.

■ ***When, how and why did you get started?***

XACT Communications and Events Management officially launched in March 2018.

Over a year ago my wife and I started our own female clothing line and took part in various pop-up markets - a growing industry - to promote our label and make sales. Months went by, more and more local entrepreneurs surfaced with the same vision and passion to pursue their own small business. This was when it clicked, there's a gap in this industry!

All these local entrepreneurs are so passionate and dedicated to making their business work and believe that their product or service is unique and different from the rest, however, they are not aware of the importance of PR and strategic networking events to create a buzz around their business and to grow their customer base.

■ ***What are some of the obstacles you've had to overcome since starting out?***

Starting a business in this huge industry is extremely intimidating without a doubt, but believing in the brand and what it stands for is what motivates me to continue this journey.

Businesses or clients tend to shy away from startups, especially of this nature and breaking through that wall is still an obstacle. You constantly need to push and push until you're heard. This is how your client base can be established.

■ ***What advice would you give to other aspiring entrepreneurs?***

Hesitation can cause you many regrets. The whole world can tell you not to, but if you believe in your idea, go for it - it's yours, own it! The key to the success of your business is determination and persistence.

Entrepreneurship is a fast-growing trend that will inevitably create a huge impact on the South African economy in years to come. Be part of a broader success story!

■ ***What has been your proudest achievements thus far?***

One of my greatest achievements must be that I have overcome procrastination. This is something most of us tend to have when you're on the verge of either starting a business or not.

I have come this far and have no intention of looking back.

■ ***What does the future of entrepreneurship look like to you?***

Entrepreneurship is the next big thing; in South Africa especially. As I mentioned earlier, it's the building blocks of what's to be a great and strong South African economy.

■ ***What is the importance of start-up accelerator/incubator programmes?***

It can be an isolating endeavour to build and grow a business, so the ability to connect with and learn from others who are in the same place is not only an advantage for emotional health but can build a collective rapport that increases chances of success.

■ ***What would you like to see changed in the South African start-up landscape?***

Although this sector has grown significantly and still is, there are far too many who turn a blind eye on startups and prefer to stick to what and who they know. The perception needs to be changed and opportunities need to increase.

❑ ***What do you believe are the traits an entrepreneur needs in order to succeed?***

Have a vision. To stay grounded will gain you lots of respect which can open many doors. Determination and persistence is what gets you results. Be motivated by people's negativity. Lastly, link up with industry competitors, not everyone will be open to sharing advice, but the few who do will help you make a huge impact on your business.

❑ ***Tell us about your biggest struggles as entrepreneurs, as well as some major highlights.***

Competition! There are many who offer the same or similar service as you, so getting through to them is of utmost importance.

Another challenge at first is also pushing your own boundaries. You'd be surprised at what you come up with to make it work for you.

On a much lighter note, putting in the hours and going over and above to kick-start your venture, is one of the most gratifying things you can do for *yourself*. It empowers and encourages you to do more. The journey to your own success is a life-changing feeling.

❑ ***Why would you encourage someone to become an entrepreneur?***

Self-empowerment. One of the best things in life is to witness your dream or vision come to life and see people believe in you and what you do. The road won't be easy, but it will be worth it.

❑ ***What is the importance of entrepreneurship - especially in a country such as South Africa?***

Job creation. It introduces new products and services which create new markets and jobs along the way.

❑ ***Where would you like to see Xact Communications and Events in the next 5 years?***

Stability is of utmost importance to me. Making sure we have engaged with the right clients that will support our sustainability in the industry. As I have mentioned before, it is not our intention to focus on working towards being among the big names in the industry but linking in with organisations who will have had a success story that Xact was significantly part of. I believe this will put us in a league of our own.

Also, probably set up in a little office with an employee or two who share the same vision as Xact.

For more, go to <https://xactcomms.wixsite.com/events>

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