

# Find unique spaces online with GetVen



By [Evan-Lee Courie](#)

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GetVen, a South African online marketplace to find and book space for meetings, events and production, has announced its arrival. The online platform is bringing Cape Town's most unique spaces online with its simple to browse and book marketplace.



Gift Qetu-Yates, founder and CEO of GetVen.com

GetVen's team has been hard at work over the last two months bringing Cape Town's most exceptional venues onto its platform. At launch, over 100 listings are available for booking. The marketplace showcases a wide breadth of spaces, ranging from trendy Bree Street Bars to Bond styled Villas.

We chat to Gift Qetu-Yates to find out more about GetVen, the online marketplace to find and book space for meetings, events and production...

## **Can you tell us a bit about GetVen?**

[GetVen](#) is a free venue search and booking platform for event organisers and a free digital marketing tool for venue hosts. Our mission is to create the number one destination for all the best private hire spaces in South Africa, enabling event organisers to compare, enquire and book venues.

We're not an agency. We work in the same way Airbnb does. You'll be in direct contact with organisers or venue hosts.

At GetVen we want to eliminate the need for intermediaries, like location scouts and event planners. We see more and more business travellers using Airbnb for accommodation and Uber for transportation as opposed to hotels and taxis. We believe a shift will happen in the corporate meeting and events category. People will ditch the usual conference venue for something more unique and we are the platform for that.

### ▣ **What is your role at GetVen?**

I am the founder and CEO of GetVen.com

### ▣ **When, how and why did you get started?**

GetVen was founded with a vision of bringing online venue booking in South Africa to the 21st century and make it quick and convenient to book event spaces.

In 2016, whilst searching for a venue for my 21st, I found the venue booking process to be incredibly tedious and frustrating. It was a source of great irritation that booking a venue was not an easy and transparent process. I ended up asking myself, why was there no platform where you could find, book and pay for a venue all in one place and that is where the idea for GetVen was born.

I put the idea on ice for a few years to continue with my degree and only once being involved in another startup (DigsConnect.com), where I learnt the ins and out of a startup, did I feel that I was well equipped to go out on my own and start this journey and I've loved every second of it.



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Evan-Lee Courie 16 Sep 2019



I credit the founders of DigsConnect a lot with getting me to where I am today. They believed in me and equipped me with relatively useful knowledge and skills and I think that is one of the best gifts you can give to somebody who wants to one day be an entrepreneur.

South Africa is also known for its beauty and a wide variety of culture and vibrant hangouts. We knew finding spaces with that wow factor wouldn't be difficult, but we wanted to curate a collection that not only looks great, but also meets the needs of all our renters, whose uses will range from 21st's, to film shoots and engagement parties.

So with this in mind, we wanted to be the destination for any function that South Africans would like to have happened outside of the usual home or office by making the untapped potential of South Africa's most interesting locations accessible.

We also wanted to empower those individuals who find that they have an interesting home to be able to earn an extra income by advertising on our website. We think some truly unique and absolutely memorable activities will happen in these places.

### ▣ **What are some of the services you provide?**

At launch, we will be just a venue booking platform and we provide 24/7 to all our users to ensure that their event goes off seamlessly without any hitches. A few months after launch, the GetVen team plans to roll out a logistics service which will also assist renters with finding audio equipment, catering, DJ's and any other services that might be required. Ensuring that GetVen.com is a one-stop-shop for all event needs is our number one priority.

Users will one day be able to log on to our site, find the venue, book and pay for the venue and then sort out their catering, staff, audio equipment and décor all in the space of a few minutes.

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

Since we haven't launched yet, I will speak on the obstacles I've encountered up to now.

The biggest obstacle I would say is probably the tech side of our company. Not having a full-stack developer as a co-founder has been difficult. I initially built the website myself and it was far from where I wanted it to be. I then outsourced our dev work to Indian developers, which definitely had its challenges. Devs in South Africa are some of the best in the world and that comes with a hefty price tag for startups. So I think for any tech company, try and have a co-founder with tech experience from the jump. It's so important.

If you're a young entrepreneur, speak to people. Speak to everyone in fact. Everyone will have a different take on your business and use what they say constructively into making your business better. I think I put a lot of emphasis on realising that I don't know everything (which is an obvious obstacle) so it was important for me to consult with everyone that I possibly could.

### ▣ ***What advice would you give to other aspiring entrepreneurs?***

Choose your co-founders carefully. It's important that everyone brings something different to the company and has a strong work ethic.

Brian Chesky, the founder of Airbnb, said that you need to get co-founders that are better than you, and I completely agree. Surround yourself with people who make you be better every day. Also, surround yourself with people that you can be around all the time. Most of your life is going to be spent in the office or travelling so you need to make sure that you can be around them.



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Learn from your past failures. I've been fortunate to have tried out ventures when I was younger that had some successes and some failures. This really equipped me well to be able to navigate things this time around. I have a habit of jotting down all my failures and I write down how I can improve on them or what I can do instead the next time around. It's really helped me a lot this time around. There is no use in failing and not learning from it.

Startup life is tough and when you have limited resources its even tougher. The internet has so many free to use applications that can really change the game for your company and save you a lot of money. I wrote a LinkedIn post of some of the best apps and programmes that really changed the game for us.

Start at 0 and work your way up from there. If you can do it for free and yourself, rather do that. Rather spend hours learning things now. It will serve you so well in the long run. You will know the ins and out of your company so well.

So many tech companies spend hundreds of thousands of Rands building a product that ends up failing at market. Try and build the website yourself. Explore website builders such as Shopify, Wix, Squarespace and don't underestimate the power of WordPress.

Build a product, iterate fast and spend as little as possible so that you can get it to market and see if you have a company. If it works and you foresee doing more stuff to the site beyond the out the box functions, you can build it yourself but you will be in a position to know exactly what to build, for who, and you won't waste time and cash.

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

My proudest moment is still to come. The day our social media pages and our website goes live will be a really proud moment. The past three months have been hard graft and it will definitely feel like a watching your kid go to school on the first-day sort of moment. I'm really excited to see how Cape Town receives us and helping connect people and space and seeing companies and individuals celebrate more often, work together more often, and create great things more often because of us.

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### ■ ***What is the importance of startup accelerator/incubator programmes?***

Bridging the gap between the startup and potential investors. The mentorship that accelerators offer cannot be understated. They can help you improve your product and some accelerators even invest in your company.

### ■ ***What would you like to see changed in the South African startup landscape?***

One of the most unfortunate realities of the South African tech sector, we have so many ideas and not even enough funding. I would like to see more funding being made available to South African startups in the Angel Round. The lack of funding is a major deterrent for a lot of entrepreneurs.

I also think in a country such as ours where the majority of the poor is disproportionately black, it affects the black entrepreneur a lot more. So, I would also like to see more black tech entrepreneurs in South Africa and I think government and the private sector need to play a bigger role in that.

I think also, people underestimate how difficult it is to start a business if you have nothing and know very little about business. We need to start going into impoverished communities, equipping them with the necessary entrepreneurial tools so that they can begin their entrepreneurial journey.

When I say tools, this can be anything from bringing the successful entrepreneurs into these communities to teach, providing better knowledge resources and even making it easier to start a business within these communities with less red tape.

It's so much easier to start a business when you come from a middle-class background. You have access to people who own businesses so you can get an incredible source of knowledge that has the experience, by your proximity to these people you also have an idea of how to start a business and you already have a base with which to launch from. You know who to ask for money to start etc. So I would like to see more of those sort of opportunities being afforded to black entrepreneurs and South Africans from impoverished communities.

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

Hunger, passion and enthusiasm!

I had a boss who was so overly energetic and full of life and so into the company she built. After seeing how well people responded to that, I can't understate enough how important it is to be incredibly passionate about what you're doing.

When you're so hungry to make something great and your passion and enthusiasm comes through, it more often than not rubs off on the people around you. If you're half into it, people can pick that up immediately and you should expect to get the same in return. Be passionate and you must believe that your product is the next big thing.

Also, don't be scared to fail. Knowing what's on the other side of not succeeding will be the biggest motivation for you on your entrepreneurial journey.

### ■ ***Tell us about your biggest struggle as an entrepreneur, as well as some major highlights.***

Knowledge and failing. I think one thing that annoys me, is that I will never know everything about business and being an entrepreneur. This is the 3rd "business" that I have tried. I tried to bring Bar Crawls to Cape Town after seeing them

overseas. It had varying degrees of successes and we ultimately decided that SA wasn't the market for that sort of things.

Then my second one was an events company, we had many successes and some failures that were down to being naïve in business and not knowing enough. But this goes to my point about learning from your failures.

When you're faced with adversity, it's important that you learn from that strife and that you come out as a better person and entrepreneur. So that's one thing I'm really grateful that I've done.

I've failed and I've learnt from past mistakes and this has ultimately contributed to the knowledge that I have now.

I also think that when you know what's on the other side of not succeeding it serves you really well as an entrepreneur and it always acts as a constant motivation. I don't think there is one incredibly successful entrepreneur who hasn't failed. Mark Cuban, Brian Chesky, Steve Jobs and Jeff Bezos. They all failed so many and look where they are.

### ▣ **Why would you encourage someone to become an entrepreneur?**

It's very debatable, but I think entrepreneurs are one of the most, if not the most contributing members to societies.

“ *Entrepreneurs create jobs, change lives, bring about innovation and grow the economy* ”

. There is such an emphasis placed on being a lawyer, doctor or accountant but very little emphasis on encouraging young people to become entrepreneurs. Especially in a country like ours where the majority is living in abject poverty, we need entrepreneurs more than ever and I would encourage that.

I think it's important that when we encourage entrepreneurs and specifically young entrepreneurs is that we tell them that instant wealth isn't going to happen overnight. Be patient to start small while thinking big. Start where you are and build small steps. You aren't going to be a millionaire overnight nor are you going to get funding overnight.

Be prepared to put in the hard graft when needed even when you potentially aren't seeing returns on your hard work. It's a lesson I only learnt this year. Had I been more patient with other ventures, it would have yielded rewards later on.

### ▣ **Where would you like to see GetVen in the next five years?**

I would like to look over at an office of hundreds or thousands of people that are employed. I want to know that our company is making a difference in our country, that we're empowering people and ultimately that we are changing lives. Airbnb is putting money in the pocket of somebody who only owns a couch in their small apartment. I want to do the same. I want GetVen to be putting money in the pockets of the average South African and helping uplift people.

I would also like to be in every major city in South Africa and definitely in another African country. Our dream is to be in every African country one day. In 5 years, I would also like GetVen to be synonymous with the venue booking process. If you are thinking of booking a venue for your wedding, bar mitzvah, African celebration or whatever it may be, GetVen should be the first thing any South African thinks of.

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