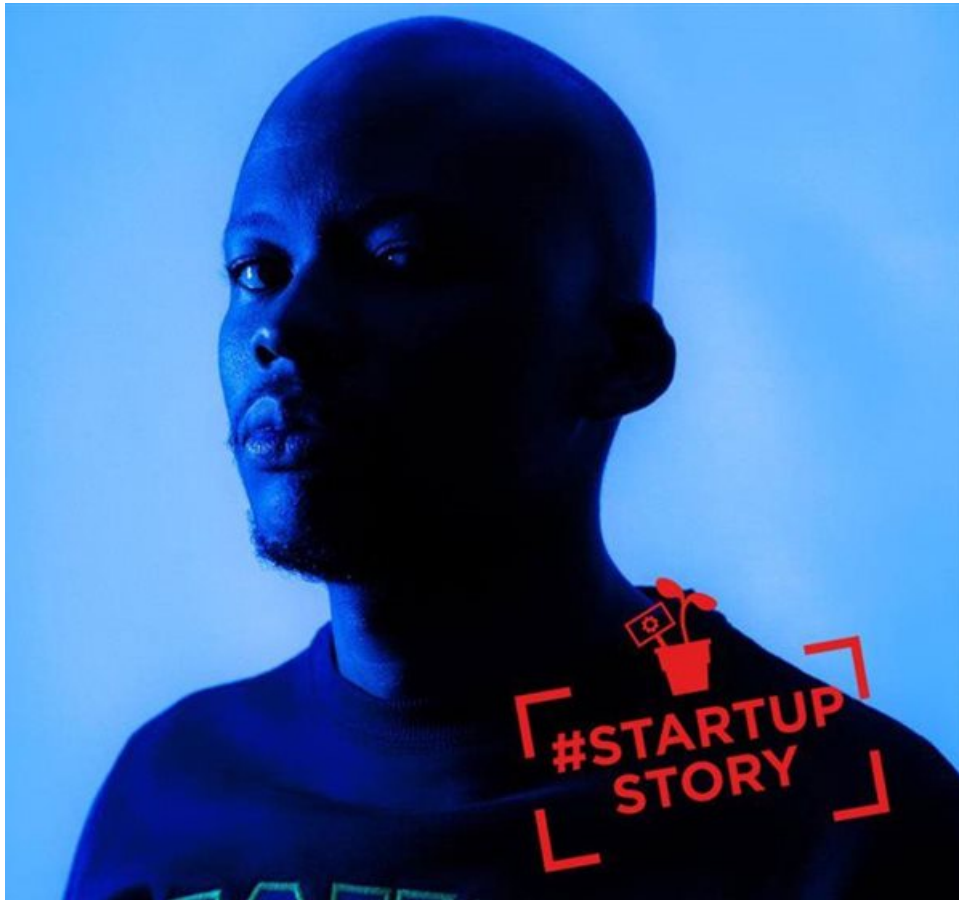


# Local entrepreneur dances to the beat of urban culture in SA

By  Evan-Lee Courie

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South African entrepreneur Andile Mathobela has launched [TheJournalistDJ.com](https://TheJournalistDJ.com), a digital video magazine documenting the dance culture in South Africa. Mathobela was co-founder and founding editor of Zkhiphani who just over a year ago was acquired by M&N Brands, the holding company that owns Avatar Johannesburg, Avatar Cape Town, Avatar Media Agency, Avatar PR, Mela Events and Bozza.



Andile Mathobela, founder of TheJournalistDJ.com

Mathobela, who also happens to be a DJ, talks to us about the digital video magazine

■ **Can you tell us a bit about TheJournalistDJ.com?**

“ TheJournalistDJ.com platform is a much needed content hub that documents dance culture in South Africa. House music has been a very popular movement in South Africa as it dates as far back as the early 90s, but there is no digital platform that preserves this amazing movement. ”

TheJournalistDJ.com is here to fill the gap in the market. It is also a first 100% video content based magazine in the country with minimum text based content.

■ **You initially started Zkhiphani, an urban youth culture platform. When, how and why did you get started?**

I started Zkhiphani, the popular urban youth culture platform when I was a fresh out of school. As a journalism student back in 2009, I started the magazine because there was no digital youth magazine at the time and I took it upon myself to launch

one. I approached two graphic designers who helped to develop the platform, they later decided to join the venture as business partners and the rest is history.



## #NewBiz: Zkhiphani (what's happening) with M&N Brands' M&N Entertainment launch

21 Jan 2019



### What made you progress from Zkhiphani to TheJournalistDJ.com?

My decision to progress from Zkhiphani to TheJournalistDJ.com stem from personal growth.

“

*I believe that the future of digital content is niche platforms and it's a journey that required me to take things back to basics and TheJournalistDJ.com made sense since I am a passionate house music fanatic who also happens to be a DJ* ”

I believe that work shouldn't feel like a job, I love creating house music content so it was an easy decision. Also, big media houses are shutting down publications because they don't understand how to navigate the digital space, I do, I have been creating digital content every day for the past ten years, it's time to expand.

### What is the core goal of TheJournalistDJ.com?

The core goal of TheJournalistDJ.com is to preserve dance music culture in South Africa in a quality manner. The platform seeks to give a platform to many voices and talents in the space that continue to shape youth culture. TheJournalistDJ.com is also created to disrupt the manner which people consume content. I will be implementing revolutionary methods that will shape modern day vlogging in the next couple of months.

“ *The goal is to create cool things and have fun with it while building a legacy for the dance movement pioneers.* ”

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

There are too many challenges to mention when it comes to being a digital content creator in South Africa. Back in 2009 I didn't even have a laptop or internet access, but here I was on a mission to create an online magazine. I had to blog at internet cafes. It is easy to look back and laugh at those things now, but to answer the question, the biggest challenges I had and continue to have is access to resources.

“ *Content creation is a thankless job that requires passion. Nobody believes in you until you make it. You have to prove yourself every day.* ”

I think that people that have the power to change the face of media in SA are too stuck in their ways and lack imagination which makes it very difficult for the industry to grow, but then again, people like me wouldn't be around if gatekeepers had visions.

### Covid-19 and the national lockdown has impacted many businesses. In your opinion, how did this affect urban culture in SA?

This is an unpopular opinion, but I think that Covid-19 has been good for urban culture. First of all, I have never seen society appreciate the work that creatives do like I have seen since the lockdown started.

“ Creativity really saved the day, especially during the early days. Digital platforms numbers sky rocketed and also, people are starting to see who the real content creators are as the counterfeits are being exposed. ”

All creatives I know have been hard at work doing what they love doing best - creating. It's sad that people are robbed of the opportunity to gig but I think that urban culture will come out of the pandemic better and stronger.

■ **How did you prepare for the lockdown?**

Honestly, I did not prepare for the lockdown, everything happened so fast and all the plans I had for the year had to be altered. Fortunately for me, my plans have always been about digital so I was able to adapt quickly.

When I think about it, I have been preparing for the lockdown all my life, I have always been the kid that was indoors after school to watch TV. I have always been that teenager who was always on social media apps like Mxit. I am always on Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Netflix and so on. The first thing I did when I moved into my own place was to install fibre internet before I bought anything else so when the lockdown was announced I was like "well, at least I got the internet to keep me busy".

■ **What's the biggest challenge you are facing during this pandemic?**

The biggest challenge I am facing during this pandemic has to be not being able to see my family as frequently as I like. My family stays in Northern Cape so seeing them is a mission, I have to get permits and go literally go through roadblocks just to see my mother.

■ **What sort of assistance will you need going forward?**

The assistance that I will need going forward in my next venture will definitely have to be resources. I have insights, experience and all I need now is the right tools to bust this thing wide open!

“ I also plan on collaborating with like minded creatives, building platforms is like raising a baby, it really takes a village. ”

■ **What do you predict the next 6 months will be like for the entertainment industry?**

I think the next six months for the media industry will be really interesting in a sense that the business is not lucrative right now so anyone who is in it for financial game would have moved on to something else, meaning that it's going to be about passion like the old days. Also, the people that are in this game for fame with no talent will also be exposed because talented folks are really putting in the work and it is starting to show, so fake talent will also be filtered out.

“ My prediction for the next six months is that everyone will be delivering great content across all spheres, the community will really be spoiled by entertainers and I just hope that brands will also play their parts accordingly. ”

### ■ What has been your biggest lesson from all this?

My biggest lesson from all of this is that what's meant to happen will happen - nobody really has the answers - all you can do moving forward is to just trust your gut and follow your vision. I was watching a video online of a pastor who was preaching to his congregation in late 2019, he claimed that God told him that 2020 will be a great year for everyone. Nobody saw Covid-19 coming, nobody, even to this day new things are being discovered by this virus every day, even experts don't know what to tell society anymore.

My biggest lesson is that what needs to happen will happen and all I can do everyday is my best.

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