



Art festivals showcase true entrepreneurship

March 28, 2024

Written by Prof [Tommy Du Plessis](#)

“One thing becomes clear at arts festivals: entrepreneurship and creativity go hand in hand...In their unique way, they embody the true spirit of entrepreneurship!”

Aardklop has taken many forms over many years in Potchefstroom, and there are always quite a few people who wonder how much this arts festival really means for the city and its residents. There is, after all, a lot of money being spent. It's not our place or intention to get involved in this dispute. What we do want to highlight, from an entrepreneurial perspective, is that there are so many people who could benefit from arts festivals like Aardklop.

We see guesthouses, restaurants, and food stalls on the premises all doing well and making money over the span of the festival, but do we always consider all the preparations that were made well in advance to be ready for this “harvest” time?

Many exhibitors travel from arts festival to arts festival and can be viewed as modern-day traders, with one important difference: arts festival exhibitors are entrepreneurs who have turned their own creativity and/or hobbies into a business. How viable this business is, only they can answer...

Just like a trader selling products from fixed premises, these exhibitors must calculate whether their sales over the festival period were sufficient. "Sufficient" means that the ultimate net income realised after such an arts festival has exceeded the operating costs incurred during the festival. These operating costs will look quite different from those of traders doing business from a shop or designated premises. Here, one must also consider the travel costs to and from an art festival, the rental of stalls, accommodation in the city for the festival period, as well as other expenses such as phone or data costs, salaries of support staff or assistants, and losses that may arise. Exhibitors also often forget to include their own time and energy in their calculations, often saying that they are “here for the love of the cause” or only participating in a particular festival because they “want to use the opportunity to test the market”.

There's nothing as satisfying to entrepreneurial creatives as when a customer is satisfied with the product they bought. It is indeed a proud moment when an exhibitor's products change hands—there is someone else who appreciates the creativity, the "creation," the innovation.

But should arts festivals be the exhibitor's or entrepreneur's only marketing action? Surely there are other possibilities too, like selling to traders, printing brochures, or conducting direct mail campaigns. Yet, there's something different—something extra for exhibitors to find at arts festivals. Perhaps it's the network of like-minded souls exhibiting here. Or perhaps it's the adrenaline pumping when someone buys one of their products?

One thing becomes clear at arts festivals: entrepreneurship and creativity go hand in hand. May the exhibitors at our arts festivals achieve great success, even if they don't want to grow bigger or conquer the world. In their unique way, they embody the true spirit of entrepreneurship!

*This article was originally written in Afrikaans (“*Advies vir Kleinsake: Aardklop stal ware entrepreneurs ten toon!*”) by Prof Tommy du Plessis.