

Seeing the bigger picture – going viral

AIM: Local boys come home to put Maritzburg businesses on the map

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VIRAL marketing videos — which spread the name of a business or cause by being forwarded from one person to another — are an increasingly popular and effective global trend which could soon be an option for local businesses with the return to Pietermaritzburg of two young Midlands film-makers.

Daryl Kotze and Grant Ballot have returned home with one dream in mind — to start their own production companies. Viral marketing is an area in which both have shown promise so far.

At a time when jobs seem few and far between, the two local lads are making it for themselves. Kotze (24) studied film at the African Film and Dramatic Arts Academy (AFDA) and



Daryl Kotze (left) and Grant Ballot are working together to make their production-house dreams a reality. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

currently owns and runs Precision Cut Productions, while Ballot (30) graduated with a diploma in video technology at the Durban University of Technology and runs Barcode Media.

Essentially offering the same service, they have decided to band together.

After Ballot graduated, he leapt straight into an internship with First Edit in Durban, which produced shows for the likes of *Carte Blanche* and *Studio 53*, before setting off for the United Kingdom where he worked for DesiHits.com the world's largest Asian entertainment site as head of the production team, working with Sean Kingston, Lady Gaga, J. Sean, Estelle and the Pussycat Dolls, to name a few.

Kotze, who had opted to take a gap year in the UK after years of study, became disgruntled with working for someone else, in industries misaligned to his passion.

"I grew up in an entrepreneurial family, so I knew about the benefits of running your own business."

The nail in the coffin for his time in the UK came when Kotze was assaulted by six youngsters in the streets on his way home.

"One of them hit me on the back of the head with a brick. I somehow managed to remain conscious and it was while I was lying there that a moment of realisation hit. What am I doing? I hate this place. All the people and things that I love are in South Africa. Two weeks later I was back home. I kissed the ground as the

plane landed."

When the pair met back in South Africa Ballot was very focused on the corporate viral marketing world and Kotze was working mainly in wedding videography. As things started to pick up for Kotze, he began calling on Ballot to help him with his bigger projects, and a partnership has developed where they help each other with their respective companies' projects.

"Daryl and I don't see this as work — it is like a hobby we get paid to enjoy," said Ballot.

Weddings will continue to be an important part of their business and they have their eyes on providing cost-effective viral web marketing.

• See www.precisioncut.co.za or www.barcode-media.co.za