

Are you an entrepreneur?

 By [Sue Northam](#)

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While crowdfunding, angel investment and incubation are a few ways that many bright-eyed entrepreneurs seek to further their fledgling start-ups and grow them into burgeoning businesses, these are not the only ways to get your small business or venture to the next level.

Sometimes we just need some guidance, perhaps a soundboard for support and most definitely a step back to reassess and get clear on a few immediate actions that have the most impact.

Have you heard of Daddy's Dragons?

How many times have you watched a Dragon's Den episode and cringed for the sanity of the person in the firing line, feeling their anguish and embarrassment at not being clear on their numbers, the core financials that could secure them an investment?

It is the only TV programme my fiancé and I watch over the proverbial 'dinner table', an intellectual side serving of brain nourishment. Though if only we could come up with that solid earning concept with clear and clever numbers. But how often in business do we overlook the obvious and not consider where the next opportunity and source of work is already presenting itself?

According to Paul Dalton ([@PaulDalton28](#)) of Daddy's Dragons ([@DaddysDragonsSA](#)), it is less about the big idea and more about the subtle differences of how certain business people are successful.

The new dragons in town

What Dragon's Den doesn't share, despite hours of trying to learn its tricks, is that there are many tested business models with practical applications for ensuring products and services can be more in demand.

We're not talking phones ringing off the hook, but rather the one or two logical actions to implement almost instantly that will almost definitely result in ongoing business. This is the promise of a new entrepreneurs course as offered by the new dragons in town, Cape Town.

With a mandate to have a positive impact on all entrepreneurs, Daddy's Dragons have recently entered the entrepreneur support arena.



Daddy who?

With a title of Cash Course, a two day workshop is offered by an experienced group of entrepreneurs going by the name of Daddy's Dragons. This new venture is part of the Daddy's brand along with sibling businesses Daddy's Deals, the Daddy Long Legs hotel, the Grand Daddy (though now fostered by new parents) and the Old Mac Daddy, as well as the Pink Flamingo cinema, the Old Biscuit Mill and the Woodstock Exchange.

The logo is as tongue-in-cheek (and cute) as the name, and the flyer was enticing though broad. It promised a process for entrepreneurs that would help you get clear on your next steps with the intention of increasing the cash flow. The price was also right, and an opportunity like this is one worth grabbing!

Not too bad a start. I mean we all want to increase cash flow, right? And who better to learn from than some of Cape Town's boldest entrepreneurs.

Getting into the dragon headspace

The timing was ideal for me as it followed an intense project culmination the weekend before. Maybe a little bit too post an event for my own sanity, but good to have space and distance none-the-less. That's the thing with this kind of course, it always depends on where your headspace is at.

It was a Monday and Tuesday workshop, based at the gorgeous Old Mac Daddy trailer park in the Elgin Valley. I gasped a little, with delight, as I rounded the bit of dirt road on that early misty August morning, as I first saw the mountainside with its silver Airstream trailers propped on the slopes of this hidden gem off the N2 only an hour outside Cape Town.

The true beauty of this workshop for me was the fact that you stay overnight. Perhaps it is the magic of staying in one of the gorgeously decorated unique trailers, or the ambience of the floor to ceiling windows of the Pedersen & Lennard designed barn that makes you feel at once at home, as well as part of the natural environment outside. Being away from an office boardroom or the expectation of wearing a suit or smart boots also made for a relaxed atmosphere where the 14 participants could share openly, get creative and spark ideas.

The Daddy's Dragons way

The format is simple and the content is digestible and well-portioned. The experience is rich and just the right length. For what you put in is certainly what you get out, and here you can continue conversations over the actual dinner table or with a glass of wine around the fire.

The point is to talk, to practice how to talk about your business better - to get clear on what you do, what you need and where to next. And all of this without the months of analysis or the endless strategy sessions.

There are all the usual aspects one would expect from a workshop - the introduction of who you are and what you do, the desired outcomes and a few group exercises where you move around the room and map out your entrepreneurial profile.

Lucky for me, the exercise on hand is one I have been meaning to do for a while. But since I don't often associate myself with 'being an entrepreneur' (but rather a freelancer who dabbles in ideas), I had decided I would wait until one day I was ready to be one. This was my day. And it was hugely insightful.

To be or not to be (an entrepreneur)

It didn't actually matter if I made the choice actively or not. In fact, as I introduced myself as a freelancer, I realised that the word choice could be quite interchangeable. Freelancer. Entrepreneur.

It is more a mindset of how I chose to grow my business that made me one more than the other. Confidence was also a common ingredient amongst fellow attendees. And course director Paul Dalton hit the nail on the head when he spoke about his own previous corporate experience and how when he left to consult, he soon realised that he was in fact just an employee in a bunny suit, selling his skills back to corporates, but without the benefits of parking, an office and all the equipment that comes with it. This fact dawned on me with a solidness that I hadn't accepted before.

While I probably wasn't the ideal candidate for the course at that time, it still worked for me. The principles still applied, the models made sense, and Paul guided me beautifully to a solution that had my eyes sparkling as I know they need to in order for me to move forward on a project.

All of Daddy's friends

On leaving we had formed hard and fast insights into fellow attendees' approaches, some relationships started that would support each other's businesses and with actions and clarified thoughts to steer our next steps. The diverse mix of attendees and businesses is as much a delight as the Daddy's Dragons programme itself.

The C@ash Course is not only a great two day workshop with a trip to the apple orchards and a stay in one of the iconic Daddy's trailers, but a hugely valuable opportunity to connect with the Daddy Group and even be considered for their ongoing incubation programme of mentorship and connection into the network of Cape Town's entrepreneurial spirit. It's an exciting time and the right place to be, that's for sure!

Move over Duncan, Peter, Theo, Debra and Hillary, Paul Dalton and Daddy's Dragons not only offer insights into financial and market feasibility, but advice and support going forward too.

Since it started in July 2013, it has already delivered three sold out workshops. The next one is in early September, www.daddysdragons.co.za.

ABOUT SUE NORTHAM

Sue Northam is a curious Capetonian with a desire to discover and capture stories of innovative and inspiring projects and people. She explores initiatives that are impactful and making a difference in her city. Shaping words and ideas is her thing. Sue is a freelance content and comms strategist, editor and writer. www.suenortham.blogspot.com and www.inspirebeing.blogspot.com

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