

Building a new brand in SA

 By [Ilse van den Berg](#)

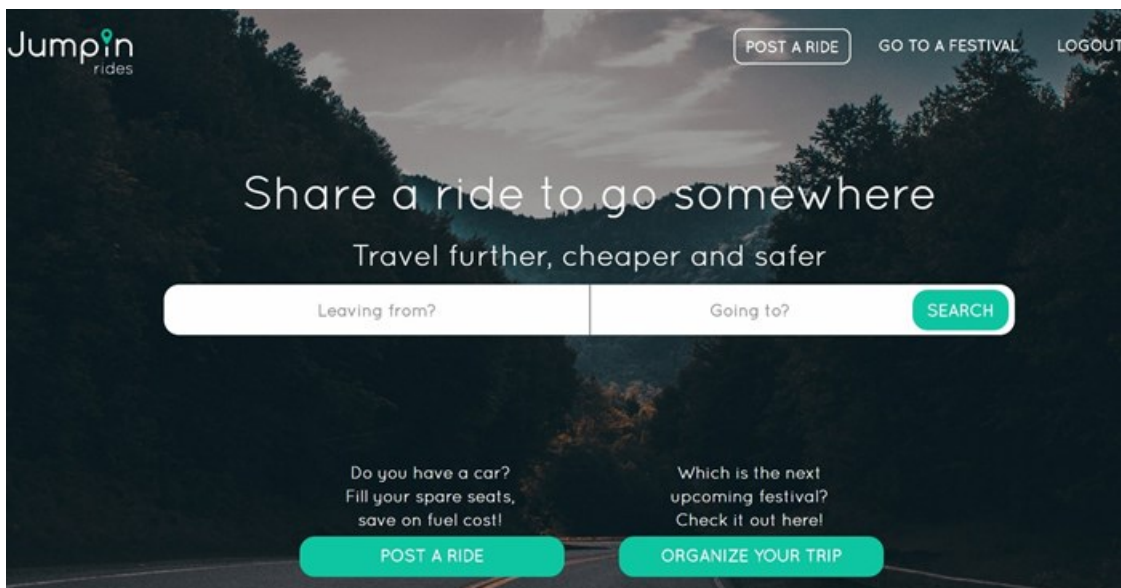
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I often wonder how I managed before Uber came waltzing into my life, solving the parking issue I so often have when in town, simplifying short distance travel and even pickups from the airport. But what about longer distances? Not only does Uber get way too expensive too quickly as the kilometres add up, but it also doesn't really offer long distance rides as a standard.

I recently chatted to Pauline du Paty, MD of the ridesharing startup, JumpIn Rides, which is redefining ridesharing and making carpooling pretty cool. Here's what she had to say on managing and building a new brand in South Africa.

■ Tell us about the JumpIn Rides brand, is it based on the BlaBlaCar principle?

Definitely! We got inspired by BlaBlaCar. It's a carpooling platform which connects drivers with empty seats with people looking for a lift. It's also a way to save money on fuel costs and an opportunity to meet new people and make new friends. It's a secure and safe platform - people register with their Facebook account and then they need to provide more detailed information such as name and surname, phone number, ID number etc.



[JumpIn Rides](#) was founded in July 2016 by two passionate entrepreneurs. They used [BlaBlaCar](#) as inspiration. BlaBlaCar is a massive platform, though, with something like 25 million users, spread over 22 countries. JumpIn Rides was incubated by [Far Ventures](#), an incubator and accelerator programme. At the moment, the platform is completely free, we don't take any commission, but once we get a bigger user base we will probably charge a fee. We're also actively trying to raise funds - round about R1,5 million to be specific.

■ What inspired you to launch this brand in South Africa?

We know that there is a really big need in South Africa in terms of safe, flexible, and affordable transportation. Some people might think we're competing with Uber, which is not the case because Uber focusses on short distances whereas we focus more on medium to long distances. The idea with JumpIn Rides is that anyone can be a driver, if you have a car and you're planning to go somewhere tomorrow, you can share your ride on the platform.

What's also cool is that, as a passenger, I can choose my driver (with Uber you don't have that option) and I can rate him/her. The driver can also rate the passenger (like on Airbnb). It's a great way to guarantee safety and reliability within the community.



Pauline du Paty

Another thing is the trains that are quite unreliable... the public transport infrastructure isn't well developed in this country, buses are slow and infrequent, flights are expensive, and airports are far from the city centre. Carpooling is a great alternative.

■ ***What's on your wish list for brand objectives for 2017?***

Definitely to be the leader in the market in South Africa. We do have some competitors in the market but I think we're all sort of at the same level. The other thing would be to raise funds and invest more in communications and social media and to have a better and more aggressive customer acquisition.

We currently have 900 users registered and the idea is to grow very quickly and have around 10,000 users by the end of the year.

■ ***Launching a brand is surely no easy feat. What advice would you give to someone wanting to launch their own brand?***

For me one of the main challenges is the management part, to get a good control of your team so that you're all on the same page, have a good vision with clear objectives. That is key in starting a brand. I would also say it's very important to be aware of what your competitors are doing. I think one of the main challenges for us is just to educate the community because it's a very new concept and we know that here in South Africa there is a high crime rate, so people aren't that keen to just jump in a car with a stranger. So, we have to educate the community.

Just look at Airbnb, it also took a while to get going here in South Africa. I think one of the key things when you start out is to do manual user acquisitions. You have to find them.

▣ ***What do you see currently as the main challenges and/or opportunities for your brand sector?***

The main challenges are educating the community and manual acquisition.

Opportunities are partnerships. Part of our main strategy is to establish new partnerships. We think our first target will be students so we're looking to partner with music festivals – we were recently a partner at the [We Love Summer Festival](#). We already have a few partnerships at this stage. Also sports events.

▣ ***What activations do have planned for your brand stable for the year?***

We'll be focussing on social media but we also have many students who are brand ambassadors and promote the service on campus. And then again, we're trying to get new, relevant partnerships with festivals, events, funders, and media. The main objective being to establish our brand as a credible one and to gain more visibility.

▣ ***What is your ultimate dream for Jump'n Rides?***

I want it to be the first thing that jumps to mind when someone thinks about transport. When I lived in Spain, BlaBarCar was my first and last option – I never used anything else because it was so convenient and I got to meet so many new people. I think we'd just love to see that it's working in South Africa and for it to become a standout solution and alternative means of transport.

ABOUT ILSE VAN DEN BERG

Ilse is a freelance journalist and editor with a passion for people & their stories (check out Passing Stories). She is also the editor of Go & Travel, a platform connecting all the stakeholders in the travel & tourism industry. You can check out her work [here](#) and [here](#). Contact Ilse through her website [here](#).

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