

# A Class Act

They say dynamite comes in small packages. This is certainly the case with petite Kay Cheytanov, Managing Director of Three Ring Circus, who's passionate about helping young adults fulfil their dreams

When Kay Cheytanov matriculated, she had no idea what career path to follow. She ended up taking a secretarial course and then worked her way into graphic design and IT management. But her first love still lay with music.

A talented singer, Cheytanov sang with a band in her free time and released an album in 2002, which reached No 2 on 5FM. However, touring with a band wasn't the life she wanted. Instead, she embarked on a tour of 45 schools over three years, singing to the children. This was when the idea of the Rocking Future Roadshow came into being – using a musical performance as “edutainment”, to get a message across to students.

It was tough going initially and Cheytanov admits she considered giving up. “My business partner, Tanya Vandenberg and I had no money and were living from hand to mouth. We tried many people without getting anywhere.”

Eventually, at the end of 2003, they got their first big sponsor and managed to add more schools to their circuit, as well as take on more employees. They now have eight permanent staff members and four to 10 contract staff.

The concept behind the Rocking Future Roadshow is to allow kids to find out more about future career opportunities in a language and environment that speak directly to them. They're given access to people who can provide first-hand, relevant information on various vocations.

“The concept's now evolved into a real youth marketing company, based firmly in education,” says Cheytanov. “The schools trust us with the information we bring to the kids.”

The roadshow was originally aimed exclusively at matric students, but now encompasses relevant shows for Grades 8-12. The company works with around 800 schools nationally over a normal academic year and remains an innovative and interactive method of giving youngsters career guidance. Three Ring Circus and its affiliates (exhibitors from different professions) come to schools and greet pupils with loud music and funky presenters. The exhibitors (colleges and university sponsors) bring their own experts, who have two minutes each (in a scripted show) to explain their jobs. “The show's exciting and speaks to the children on a level they understand. It's like MTV at school,” explains Cheytanov.

She has big plans for the future of the business. “In the next 10 years, my vision is to have a Three Ring Circus division operating in each of the major cities in SA and to be able to reach all schools across the board. I'd like to see us taking over the country's life orientation curriculum, which is very limited right now.” ■

• For further information, visit:  
[www.threeringcircus.co.za](http://www.threeringcircus.co.za).

