

how this directory queen evolved from froth and bubbles

Mandy Stevens, who since starting out in business two years ago, is living proof that flexibility and adaptability in business is the key to success.

Mother of three and former solicitor, Mandy Stevens, is one half of the driving force behind the Fundraising Directory - a book and online directory full of fundraising ideas and products for community groups.

It all began with HeroWash laundry detergent. Having used HeroWash for many years, Mandy felt that there was an opportunity for schools and other clubs to raise money using the high quality environmentally friendly laundry detergent.

The fundraising concept had only moderate uptake, although HeroWash - now managed by Mandy's parents - is finding success as a grey-water detergent sold online and through independent retailers.

Through this experience, Mandy found that the only resource available to businesses wanting to promote their fundraising message was a website called Fundraising Ideas.

Through advertising on the site, Mandy met its owner, Helen Creswick, a mother of two with a long-standing involvement in the fundraising industry. After ongoing discussions, it became clear that a comprehensive and professional directory and website would benefit both fundraising suppliers and fundraising organisers.

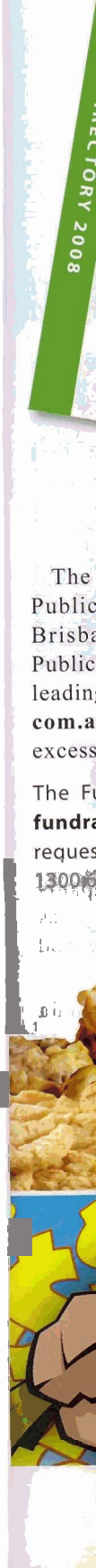
The concept for the Fundraising Directory took further shape when Mandy attended her first P&C meeting at her son's school. There was a box full of fundraising direct mail that had been received since the previous meeting. The volunteers were required to sort through the seemingly endless piles of information sent to them before they could even make a decision. And so the Fundraising Directory was born.

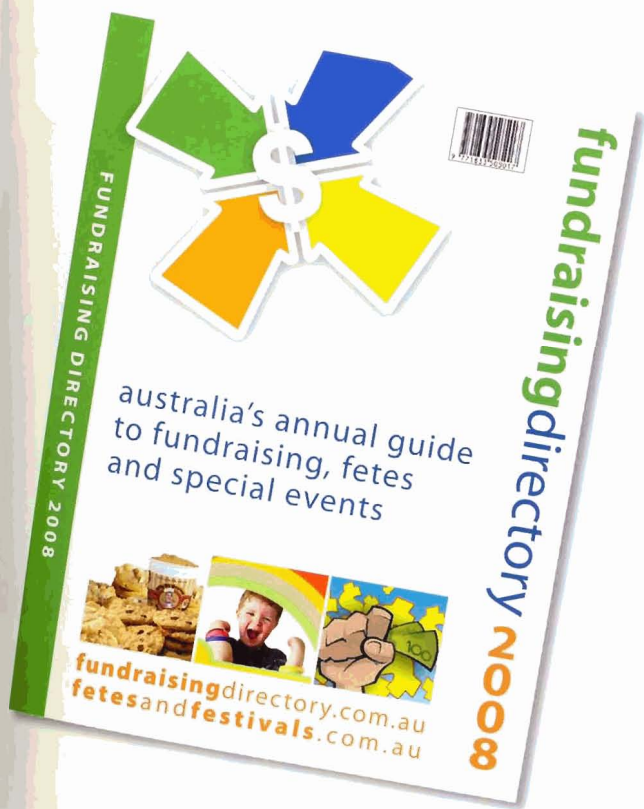
Bringing together the most comprehensive list of fundraising products and ideas ever seen in Australia, the Fundraising Directory has changed the face of fundraising in Australia. The first edition was a 192 page book. In addition to fundraising ideas and products, the book also contains a State-by-State Fetes and Festivals guide for those holding events.

The book is supported by two leading online directories www.fundraisingdirectory.com.au and www.fetesandfestivals.com.au With a print run of over 40,000, the first issue was sent free to every school, kindergarten and childcare centre in Australia, as well as many sporting clubs, special interest groups and charities.

"We wanted to make the fundraising process as easy as possible for schools, sporting clubs, community groups; all these groups across Australia who rely on fundraising," says business partner Helen Creswick. "The hardest part of fundraising should be selling the product or service, not figuring out which one to sell," Mandy adds.

Mandy reflects: "I was disappointed that HeroWash did not work as well as I had imagined as a fundraiser. Without that experience, however, I would not have been in a position to meet Helen and to identify with her the gap that existed in the market. The experience was an opportunity rather than a failure, and everything has turned out better than I could have imagined."





The company formed by Mandy and Helen, Direct Publications Pty Ltd, now has commercial offices in Brisbane and employs seven full time staff. Direct Publications has branched out to publish several market-leading online directories, including **HighSchoolFormals.com.au** and **CateringDirectory.com.au**, with traffic in excess of 65,000 unique visitors per month.

The Fundraising Directory can be accessed free online at **fundraisingdirectory.com.au** and copies of the book can be requested for a postage and handling fee online or by calling 1300 653 305 or collected free from their offices. ■



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