



Mum's the word in business

Two Brisbane mothers are sharing their business expertise with other 'mumpreneurs' through their website and at seminars across Australia. **Nicola Card** reports

IT'S SAID if you give a busy person something to do, they will still find the time to do it. Now it seems Alison Basson and Sharon Wood are taking this to new levels. Both are young mothers with their own respective successful businesses who have now teamed up to create Mums in Business to help others.

Described as a knowledge sharing, business coaching, networking group to "deal with the minefield of business", Mums in Business (MIB) helps mothers starting out or already running their own business.

The wealth of information is delivered via the comprehensive website, which has a special member-only section, and at bi-monthly MIB events in and around Brisbane, which, courtesy of word of mouth, are drawing ever-larger numbers. What appeals to MIB participants is the practical, whole-of-business-advice from scratch, which is exactly what the ladies set out to achieve.

"Starting and running a business is hard enough and we want to share the wealth of knowledge we have gained and help other people," said Alison Basson. "We go through all the relevant aspects about how to start, run, promote and develop a business and we list all relevant contacts."

Aspects covered include: managing a business; increasing sales and profits; operations and finances; information on reliable suppliers; and marketing, advertising and promoting the business.

"For example one lady had spent thousands on advertising that didn't work," Basson said. "With our resources she can now stop wasting money and instead plan her marketing budget efficiently. MIB members can download budget and other forms from our website and we also provide leads on how to complete forms."

Wood and Basson say they are providing the sort of information it took them years to find out about and they are sharing the tricks and tips learnt over the years. "Today up to half a million mums are involved in their own business, most



Sharon Wood and Alison Basson are the driving forces behind a business networking and mentoring organisation focused on helping mothers build their businesses

of which are run from home because part-time work in their area of speciality isn't always readily available," said Basson. Mums want to work to help contribute to family finances – for many that is an imperative. We don't want any of them to go broke after starting up a business, and have made that our aim.

"Running Mums in Business is not about reinventing the wheel, there are many similar government initiatives and services for small business, but ours is a little more user friendly as people know exactly who they are dealing with."

But what gives them the wherewithal to teach others how to start and run a business? Wood is a qualified and expert aromatherapist and recently created a successful business called Healing Hippo, which markets children's skincare goods across Australia. Basson is an experienced accountant and business coach who has worked with some leading companies in Australia, the UK and New Zealand.

Two years ago Basson launched Tiny Talk, the first company to offer baby sign language products and classes to all Australian parents and carers. Wood was organising baby expos, which is where she ran into Basson. The duo quickly struck up rapport and soon found mums were turning to them for advice, and so they decided to take their business nous further.

"It was a light bulb moment realising we could help others in a more orchestrated way," Basson said. "Everyone told us there was a lot of [business related] information out there, but much of it was confusing and not user friendly to access. They also said networking gatherings didn't meet all their needs."

Despite its name, participation at MIB seminars is not confined to mums: dads and non-mothers are welcome. Seminars attract a mix of attendees: retailers of kids' clothing; clothes designers; bookkeepers; personal coaches; PR agents; photographers and specialist car hirers; the full gamut of small business people. Workbooks are provided as well as the all-important on-site childcare. "We try to be practical and realistic about all aspects," says Basson.

Success has spurred them to take their venture interstate and reach more mumpreneurs; during July MIB is staging events in Melbourne and Sydney. More seminars are planned for regional areas across the states. ●

If you are interested in joining or want to attend the seminars visit the website
www.mumsinbusiness.net