Bill Buzenberg, who has spent years raising funds from foundations, reveals the secrets to his success.

New benchmarking reveals that events need no longer play the role of a poor second cousin to your direct marketing portfolio.

Learn why knowing when and how to ask is the most essential weapon in any effective fundraiser’s arsenal.

The rise and rise of regular giving – Pareto Fundraising’s Fiona McPhee explains how to get donors over the line and keep them on board for the long term.

MOTHER LOVE

Using Facebook alone, St Kilda Mums’ CEO and founder, Jessica Macpherson, raised $1.2 million in four years. Find out how!
All fundraisers work for good causes. If you share those stories on your Facebook page with the emotion you feel about them, your followers will be driven to take action to help you. In the case of St Kilda Mums, this has allowed us to build a community of supporters who give to us time and again.

St Kilda Mums is a public benevolent institution that started in 2009 and now also trades as Geelong Mums (since 2013) and Eureka Mums (since 2014) in the Ballarat region. We believe that by recycling kids’ gear, we can share the joys of motherhood and save the earth’s resources. So far we’ve re-homed more than 60,000 pre-loved items to families in need. We rely on our supporters to donate baby goods... and to pay our rent.

Our fundraising began on Facebook and in four years we have realised over $1.2 million with no fundraising staff, only volunteers. I believe it’s worked because of the stories we share on Facebook every day.

Born in a photocopy room

In 2009 I gave my maternal and child health nurse some clothes my baby son had grown out of, to pass onto other families. When she told me to put them in the photocopy room, I found it was chock-full of donated items. So with my girlfriends as volunteers, we sorted the mess and packed it all into a cupboard for the nurses to find more easily.

Then I started networking within my family and friends to get more donations for St Kilda agencies and social workers – from clothing and breast pumps to cots and prams. When they closed the centre and we lost our storage space, a press release we sent to the local paper led to a generous couple loaning us their double garage in Elwood for three years.

Around that time, one of my committee members recommended using Facebook to tell the community what we were doing. As a non-user, I forced myself to try it and immediately realised its potential!

Launching our fundraising

In the beginning, our Facebook posts mainly asked people to help us and showed what we did, such as sharing before and after photos of prams we’d cleaned. Then in January 2012 we applied for deductible gift recipient status and could start receiving cash donations. We had signed up with GiveNow, a great platform for small organisations to accept donations online. We even picked up some regular givers simply from sharing the opportunity to donate on our website.

Then in March 2012 we won a $10,000 Bank of Melbourne grant towards renting our own warehouse.

Finally, in March 2013 after some raffle ticket drives, Bunnings barbecues and saving hard, we found a 300sqm warehouse in St Kilda. We raised $30,000 in 21 days to take out the lease. First we asked the 3,000 people who “liked” us on Facebook if they could all pitch in $10 to help. Then when they gave $19,000 in under a week, we raised the rest through a second callout on Facebook, in our enewsletter and on our blog.

Following this, in June 2013 we launched our first email campaign (we innocently called it a tax appeal – on the creative!). Sending it to a list that had been developed from just family and friends into a sizeable database, we raised another $30,000.

After a Perpetual Trustees grant paid for my appointment as CEO – and I became the first of now nine part-time staff – I used Facebook to seek help from skilled volunteers. An example was the fantastic local dad who in 2013 showed me how to implement the CRM system Salesforce, which I’d used in a past life selling wine. Now if I want to post on Facebook that we need money to buy an electric breast pump, in about 15 minutes I can create a PayPal button, tag that to a Salesforce campaign, and also set up an automated receipt and thank you letter.

We also use our Facebook page to test these mini-campaigns via which we request cash donations for specific items. If they get

Jessica Macpherson shares the success story of how one small charity, St Kilda Mums, has raised $1.2 million in four years using Facebook.
lots of clicks and shares, we then build them into a bigger campaign, perhaps accompanied by an email ask.

Our Facebook following has increased in line with our revenue growth and is now 21,800. From 2013/2014 to 2014/2015 our total annual donations jumped from $142,088 to $404,620.

How media coverage can amplify results
In February this year, great media coverage saw our annual rent appeal raise 45% more than the $62,000 we were seeking to expand our dangerously full warehouse space. Our supporters generously gave $36,000 after we launched a Facebook and email campaign. Then TV’s The Project aired a story presented by Dannii Minogue at our jam-packed warehouse. Dannii also shared the link to our appeal on her personal social media sites, and a post thanking her on our Facebook page was seen by 93,000 people, 80,000 of whom were not among our existing followers.

After that, we raised $54,000 more – meaning the campaign achieved $89,866 in total, covering nearly 18 months of rent.

**Jessica Macpherson**
Jessica is the CEO and founder of St Kilda Mums. Previously she held positions in sales and marketing management at wine companies including Jackson Estate and Oyster Bay Wines.

### The lessons we’ve learned

1. If you know why you’re on Facebook you can understand your followers and adjust your posts accordingly. Ours are 35% women aged 25 to 34 and 85% are on mobile devices.
2. Use the ‘saved replies’ tool on the Pages App to deal with common enquiries more efficiently – this allows you to forward pre-set responses to people who send personal messages to your organisation.
3. Always include photos with your posts along with the story ‘types’ people will like, such as: donor as hero, profiles of people, stories of impact and stories of need.
4. Post frequently. We post up to 10 times a day but even if you can only manage a few times a week, you are still interacting with people.
5. Imagine your Facebook page is your website, and include a clear summary of what your nonprofit is about and where it is plus a donate button to take people to the donate page on your website.
6. Involve people in solving your problems in any way you can. For example, ask people for advice, an introduction, their skills or an in-kind or cash donation.
7. Empower your staff and volunteers to create digital content for your page – in the induction all our warehouse volunteers receive, they are walked through our communications and social media policy so they can take relevant photographs for us to use across our social media sites.
8. Schedule posts for times you know your audience is interested in reading them – a good time for us is what I call ‘the chardonnay post’ to inspire people after the kids are in bed on a Friday night.
9. Always get permission from people in writing before you share photos of them. Have a policy for managing trolls such as deleting the post.
10. Be authentic in your content. Don’t write a post like it’s coming from a committee. Tell a personal, passionate story.
11. In tone, be thankful and positive. Just as with emails, being ironic or flippant will fall flat. Also talk about people doing awesome things not about your organisation being great.

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**Get in touch**

**EMAIL** jill.ruchel@redletterfundraising.com.au

**PHONE** 0438 916 094

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