

# Could You Be An Accidental Millionaire?

by Roving Reporter

**A**ccidental million dollar ideas exist simply because someone discovered them - are you sitting on the next multi million idea? Sure sounds far fetched, but the reality is closer to home than you think.

Ever used one of those yellow post it notes to remember an important event or date? Would it surprise you to know the idea for repositionable notes struck Art Fry while singing in the church choir, 10 years

after Dr. Spencer Silver, a 3M scientist, had discovered the formula for the sticky stuff back? Fry's bookmark kept falling out of his hymnal, causing him to lose his page, a fellow colleague of Dr Silver, used a portion of his working hours to develop a solution to his problem. Now the world is singing the



Sonia Williams, author of 'Start Me Up'

praises of Art Fry. Before the release of Harry Potter, JK Rowling was just another average suburban mum, with a baby to feed whilst struggling to get over a short marriage living in Portugal. It is reported in 1990 Rowling came up with the idea for Harry Potter, stuck on a delayed train between Manchester and London but it would be a few years later, in 1993, before she would finally complete the script.

Shortly after her marriage break up Rowling moved to Edinburgh, Scotland to be closer to her sister, suffering through a period of poverty and depression, she struggled to earn a living and take care of her daughter. It was during this difficult time that she finally completed Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone. Rowling a first time author sent her finished script to several literary agents; she acquired an agent, who shopped around for a publisher. After a year of searching and a number of publishers turning it down, the agent finally found a publisher willing to print the book. Bloomsbury

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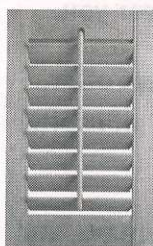
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made an offer for the book in August 1996, and the rest is history.

Perhaps a less known accidental entrepreneur is Sheri Schmelzer. Schmelzer's three children started wearing Crocs, the colourful resin clogs dotted with holes. In an effort to give her children's crocs a unique look, she got out her sewing kit and started to strategically attach buttons, rhinestones and fabric out of the sewing kit, her kids loved it and so did everyone else. Schmelzer set up shop online, she called her business Jibbitz, within six months she was doing so well, her husband left his job to help out. However the big moment of success was yet to arrive Duke Hanson, one of Crocs' founders, spotted Schmelzer's daughters made over Crocs, whilst at the local pool, he handed her his business card, and said, 'Have your mother call me'. In December 2006, Crocs bought Jibbitz for US\$20 million with the Schmelzers staying on board.

So what does it take to come up with a million dollar idea and turn it into a multi million success? Sonia Williams, author of 'Start Me Up', says there are great money making ideas and opportunities all around us, it's a matter of opening your eyes and questioning what you see. The a-ha moment for online newsletter, Mums

Grapevine came when founder, Caroline Taylor a new mum, found she was missing out on valuable discounts and bargains, because of a lack of awareness, after all who wants hundreds of individual newsletters arriving in their mail box day in and out.

**"Sonia Williams, author of 'Start Me Up', says there are great money making ideas and opportunities all around us, it's a matter of opening your eyes and questioning what you see..."**

Sick of missing out, she decided to set up and distribute her own newsletter, a consolidated listing where retailers can pay for advertising space and have their discounts reach a growing database of subscribers. To date Caroline has a subscription database of 20,000 members and has sent out more than 300 newsletters since starting out in May 2008.

In Sonia's third book, start me up Sonia lists over 100 ideas for the budding entrepreneur as well as guiding you through how you too can come up with

your million dollar idea. Sonia says it is not so important that the idea be innovative and new, stating there are very few new ideas, but an idea for a business should go along way towards solving an up meet need.

Like Caroline's idea for Mums Grapevine, at the core of Caroline's idea is making money through advertising. However it is how Caroline has delivered her idea that separates her idea apart, many mums just don't have the time or energy to go through email after email, or comparatively shop from shop to shop, a consolidated newsletter with the information they need to know satisfies the needs of those market of mums who long for a genuine bargain.

Using JK Rowling as a further example, authoring books has been around as long as story telling could be amortised in print, JK Rowling has succeeded where other authors haven't is because she provided a fresh and new story line that would captivate her audience. Sonia points out the difference 'The content of the Harry Potter stories was unique, the idea to write a book was not'.

Sonia an idea guru says success starts with the initial idea. 'Many people struggling to come up with a good idea, or they

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pursue the right idea, in the wrong way' says Sonia, adding 'the idea is the foundation for your success and like a house of cards, if you start building by placing the cards incorrectly, ultimately your business will fall down'. Ideas are a lot like opinions says Sonia everyone has got one with in them, whether it's the right one is a matter or research.

Sonia suggests when considering whether an idea is an award winning idea or not you need to do your research. 'Research and meticulous planning are key' says Sonia. It is important to do your research and create a strategy for the successful implementation of your idea. You need to understand what it will take to successfully start your business, not just financially, but time and resources. Some business ideas can be up and running within a month, however more elaborate ideas need time and planning.

Sonia a nominee for the 2008 and 2009 Telstra Business Woman's awards says, planning is extremely important because people can become so passionate about their beaming business idea that they can't truly see whether there's a market for their proposed product, or service or worse still find half way through converting their idea to a business they have run out of capital.

Sonia points out doing market research can be tedious however the benefits from finding out whether your product or idea has a target market - who they are, what they want, where they live, every intricate detail of that demographic, will help you to identify your businesses all-important "point of difference".

'Customers need a reason to shift suppliers or if your product or service is new and innovative customers need a compelling reason to trial your business, that's why it is so important that you do your research and clearly identify the unique point of difference that will make your business so appealing to your customers' says Sonia.

Look at your own strengths and weaknesses, directs Sonia a nominee for the Telstra Business Woman's Awards 2008 and 2009, people can have great ideas, but lack the important disciplines to become a successful businessperson. She explains, whilst you may not be able to knit, if you have strong sales and organisational skills, are passionate about all things knitted, you could start a business retailing knitted jumpers or knitted toys, by outsourcing the designing and manufacturer of the product, which then leaves you to concentrate on selling.

Sadly says Sonia, budding entrepreneurs in start up phase, try to be a jack of all trades, doing everything in an effort to save money, but ultimately they end up doing everything to a sub standard level and the business opportunities that could have been, fail to ignite.

There is a world of opportunity up for the taking says Sonia; it's merely a matter of discovering the right idea that's right for you.

**Sonia Williams is an accomplished author of three books, released between 2006-2009. Her latest, 'Give it a Go, What have you got to lose?', has already sold 8,000 copies, worldwide. A mother of two, Sonia owns and manages several businesses whilst advising other mums on how they too can make money from home. Nominated in 2008 and 2009 for the Telstra Business Women's Awards, Sonia is regularly requested for media comment, recently appearing on 60 minutes for comment on her success as a mumpreneur. To find out more visit [www.giveitagowhathaveyoutolose.com.au](http://www.giveitagowhathaveyoutolose.com.au) [www.showmummythemoney.com.au](http://www.showmummythemoney.com.au)**