



“It’s been 10 months since I’ve been able to do design work because I’ve been too busy running around trying to manage this organisation,” he says.

Another pitfall of instant and very visible online crowdfunding success is seeing counterfeit products appear online. This is exactly what happened to Ezipz’s Lindsey, who has seen versions of her Happy Mat pop up on online marketplaces such as

China’s Alibaba. “I am fairly confident that unethical manufacturers watch crowdfunding platforms for successful products to copy,” she says.

“A lot of these manufacturers already have equipment and resources, so it’s relatively easy for them to replicate strong products and ideas. We are choosing to take the high road and continue with our mission.”

Even copies of Flow Hive appeared on the market within months of Cedar’s crowdfunding campaign.

“The imitations are unlikely to work,” he says. “But we didn’t think it would happen quite so soon. What they’re doing is completely illegal, so we’ve been pointing it out to the platforms.”

As well as dealing with imitators, the Andersons have had to cope with unexpected attention and the huge volume of emails they’ve received since their campaign finished – sometimes as many as 1000 per day.

“We’ve got a dozen people working full-time just writing back to the emails that come in,” says Cedar. “And all

of these people are really important to us because they’re our customers, they’re our future. They’re the people that supported

this project so it’s important we get back to them and it’s important they get good answers. That’s quite a challenge, and in some ways that was unforeseen by me.”

According to Wes, communicating effectively with investors is the single most important element during and after any crowdfunding campaign.

“Engaging with your backers, taking on their suggestions and ideas, answering questions and addressing concerns are all essential to a successful campaign,” he says.

For Lindsey, that constant communication with backers has even created a community of passionate Ezipz brand advocates.

“Kickstarters, our early adopters, are the best product testers and sounding boards, and they generate a ton of word of mouth for the business,” she says.

“Our backers received the Happy Mat before it was available to the general public, which gave us a ready-made focus group – all before we sold our first mat on ezipzfun.com.”

Despite all the unseen challenges of a campaign that far exceeds its goals, a successful crowdfunding campaign undoubtedly provides a huge boost for

## FUTURE-PROOF A SUCCESSFUL CAMPAIGN

### UPSCALE PRODUCTION

Scope out bigger factories and suppliers before you launch the campaign.

### UPSCALE BUSINESS SIZE

Realise you might need to employ people, and consider what you want your role to be if/when this happens – do you even want to be a boss?

### COMMUNICATION

**STRATEGY** Remember to keep your supporters updated with emails, videos, etc. Figure out if you have capacity to be across this or if it’s easier to hire some help.

**MEDIA INTEREST** Hire staff to field media enquiries, or contract a PR agency.

**BEWARE COPYCATS** Decide on a strategy for dealing with these and consult a lawyer.

start-ups. Erroyl’s Wes believes crowdfunding exposed his business to an audience it never would have otherwise captured or engaged with online. Erroyl has now shipped its watches to more than 40 countries, established a stockist in Singapore and released its second collection in late November.

Since its campaign ended just over a year ago, Ezipz has launched in 15 countries and pulled in close to US\$1.5 million. Happy Mats are stocked in Nordstrom department stores across the US as well as in more than 300 boutiques.

In Australia at Flow Hive HQ, orders and media interest show no sign of slowing down either, with semi-trailer loads of the revolutionary bee hive dispatched every day. Cedar Anderson says one of the most rewarding parts of his company’s success is seeing how family and friends have rallied behind it.

“I’ve been surprised that so many people have stepped up and just done amazing work and stood behind the project, often working crazy hours to keep things going. I’m lucky to have such skilled and supportive friends and family.” ■