

# Future Directions

*This paper written by Darryl Howman*

## Corel Down Under – September 2009

This paper is written to put forward different ideas on where Corel Down Under as an organisation can go from our present position which is quite difficult. Our main problem appears to be a lack of membership. We are currently at an all time low in numbers, at around 35 members, which is not financially viable.

### **Option 1**

Option one is the easiest option, in that we do nothing. We simply see out this financial year, let the current funds be used up and simply fold up Corel Down Under at the end of this year.

This to me would be a great pity, as I believe that Corel is a fantastic product, and that Corel Down Under provides a great service to like minded individuals to learn much more about what anyone can achieve with this software, as well as being an extremely good networking group.

### **Option 2**

The group could survive at its present size if it was restructured. Our current meeting place is quite expensive and quite large considering the small numbers of members who usually turn up to our meetings. The meetings could be either moved to a smaller, cheaper venue, or indeed to member's homes, possibly on a rotational basis to those who agreed to host meetings.

It seems that the main reason against this is the fact that we would need a data projector. I believe that that would be not such a large expense to stop this from going ahead. We do have funds available right now which would enable this to happen, and the cost would be saved this financial year, from not having to pay for our current venue.

Although this is not an ideal scenario it would allow Corel Down Under to survive for several years to come, and provide a base to grow from in the future. If all other options fail, then I believe we should take up this one, rather than letting Corel Down Under cease to exist.

### **Option 3**

Corel Down Under needs to become proactive with the help of Corel. A lot of Corel products are sold in this country every year, but most of the users have never heard of Corel Down Under.

There are several ways that Corel themselves could help in turning this situation around.

#### **Email Campaign**

Firstly, Corel has a data base of every person, group or company that has ever bought a Corel product. This data base could be used with an aggressive email campaign to all users making them aware of the Corel Down Under users group. This program should be run over several months to increase awareness.

One of the problems that have been raised with this idea is that we as a group can not access this data due to privacy issues. I really don't see this as being a problem, as I believe that Corel themselves can run this campaign on behalf of our group. It is in Corel's interest to have a strong viable user's group, as dedicated 'fans' of the product are ultimately going to produce more sales of product, not only to themselves, but to the larger public as they extol the virtues of the product to family and work colleagues. I know I already do this, and in my case it also includes clients who are looking for their first publishing layout programs.

#### **Sticker on box Campaign**

All Corel products that come into this country come beautifully packaged and blister wrapped. I wouldn't think that it would be too difficult to have a sticker advertising Corel Down Under placed onto every software box. This is something that would need to be discussed further with Corel themselves, as we don't know the logistics involved. However, at some point in the products distribution, the product has to be placed into the boxes and sent for shipment to Australia. If the product is clearly identified as being for Australian distribution, a sticker could be placed on every box *before* having the final blister pack applied.

#### **Sticker on Blister Pack Campaign**

If it is unknown where the final country of use is to be at the packing stage, surely there must be some stage where the entire Australian product is clearly identified and in the one point of distribution. At this stage, a sticker could be placed on the outside of the blister pack. Although this is not as ideal, as the sticker will be thrown away with the blister pack, it at least puts Corel Down Under's name in front of the purchaser for a little while and still be enough to gain some new members.

#### **Re-Sellers Campaign**

The third area, if either of the above scenarios can't work for some reason, is with the re-sellers of the Corel software here in Australia. Again stickers on the product and possibly even our postcards, could be used when the re-seller delivers the goods to the end client. Surely this would again be in the re-sellers interest, as once the customer

becomes a member of Corel Down Under further software sales are likely, especially when they are introduced to the other Corel products at our meetings. Let's face it, after seeing an exciting presentation of one of the other products at one of our meetings, I am sure a certain amount of people are then going to go out and buy that product. Chances are, they will buy it at the same retailer as they used in the past. This makes the retailers becoming involved a win win situation.

#### **Option 4**

Corel Down Under needs to become more proactive in gaining new members. Regardless or not of wether the Corel Corporation comes to our aid as in option 3 above, we as an organisation *must* get out there an find new members.

In doing this, we may change the demographics of our group, but I don't think this is necessarily a bad thing. Corel Down Under has what can only be termed as an aging membership, made up mostly of private users who are in the group for both fun and social needs.

It may be that we need to target membership from business areas. Probably one of the largest industry groups who use Corel Draw are the screen printers. We should do a mail out to all the screen printers in the yellow pages, inviting them to become members. This would again be very valuable for them, as many of these printers are small one or two people businesses who would welcome the chance to talk over software problems with like minded users. Our Q&A sessions would then take on more of a real world problem solving, which would be a real money saving reason for these people to belong to Corel Down Under. This would possibly turn our group more into an industry forum and would definitely bring in younger members, which we must have for long term viability.

According to the graph of the Corel Down Under membership, we at one stage had over 130 members in one year alone. I would guess that over the full life of Corel Down Under we have in fact had several hundred members who have since drifted away. Members leave for many reasons, I know, as this is my second time around as being a member.

We need to contact all past members and let them know that we still exist, (hopefully for some time to come). Maybe even go as far as asking why they left; you may be surprised by the answers. You would find that a certain number of old members would come along to at least one more meeting, to see what is happening now. If all past members where offered **one free night**, including receiving a magazine and all other member privileges for the night, some would certainly re-join Corel Down Under.

Hopefully lists with e-mail's and even phone numbers still exist. If so, this could be made a priority as I believe it is easier to re-sign an ex member than it is to find a brand new one.

#### **Option 5**

Corel Down Under needs to consider having talks with Melbourne PC and merging with them. We would lose our identity but could still exist as a sub group or interest group of Melbourne PC. At least this way, people with an interest with Corel would still have a forum to be able to go along and discuss Corel specific problems.