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# F ST STARTERS

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## GO-BETWEEN

● ChinaDirect Sourcing's managing director, Lindy Chen, is one of the lucky few to have benefited from the global financial crisis.

Her business is straightforward: assistance for Australian companies wanting to move the manufacturing of their products to China to cut costs. Chen's turnover has grown rapidly to reach \$1.25 million in 2008-09, its fourth year of operation, which earns her company a ranking of 81 on this year's *BRW Fast Starters*.

Chen followed love to Brisbane (which didn't last), instead discovering a niche market (which did).

The 38-year-old from Guiyang in southern China found she couldn't get a job when she moved, so she volunteered to host a Chinese Culture Emerging Day in association with a local art centre. Chen became confident in her ability to present and quickly made local contacts, who asked if she could help source quality Chinese-made products.

Before emigrating,

Chen worked in manufacturing and pharmaceutical industries in China, where she attended trade shows and compiled a database of suppliers.

When this venture proved successful and popular, Chen founded ChinaDirect Sourcing. Clients save between 30 per cent and 80 per

**Business enabler:**  
**ChinaDirect Sourcing**  
managing director  
**Lindy Chen**



cent by importing directly from Chinese factories, even when they outsource the management of the process to Chen. She solves one of the biggest risks – the language barrier – with a team of five in China managing the negotiations. Chen guarantees her clients' intellectual property will be protected through non-disclosure agreements and suggests they

trademark their intellectual property within their target markets.

ChinaDirect tests the feasibility of moving production overseas, develops and receives tenders including samples for quality control, and handles all the price and delivery negotiations.

Chen keeps the process transparent; the most suitable supplier is chosen from a pool of more than 30,000.

Products range from steel nails and bathroom, kitchen, bedroom and office fittings to furnishings, textiles, chemicals, paper, plastic and electronic gear.

Chen started with minimal start-up capital; she couldn't afford a computer and worked from internet cafes, saving her entire business operations onto a \$49 USB portable drive. She no longer presents her proposals to clients in coffee shops, and runs a home office with 10 employees who handle more than 300 clients.

She is keen to expand ChinaDirect internationally – first aiming for New Zealand, the UK and US. Gillian Tan