



As a single mum, Keran worked hard to achieve her goals

## From school drop-out to movie maverick

**Keran Wicks, 48, left school with no qualifications. Now she's the MD of a multimillion-dollar movie rental company.**

'I never liked school. I found sitting in a classroom and being told what to do dull. So, bored with books and teachers, I left school at 13, determined to make something of myself.

I'm a great talker – it's one of my strengths – and by the time I was 16, I'd bluffed my way into a job as manager of a clothes shop. By 20, I was managing a chain of 20 stores. Then I fell pregnant and was sacked, with the words "It's for your own good..." ringing in my ears.

When my baby was six weeks old, my marriage broke down and I was left with no money, no partner and no prospects. That's when I took a position in a local video store. I loved it, and it

wasn't long before I came up with an idea to boost the business. There were racks of videos that customers didn't even look at, "Give me those videos and I'll sell them for you," I told the owner one day. I started selling them to other video stores and bought stock from shops that were closing down. Before long, I was making enough money to leave the video store and work for myself as a wholesaler.

Demand was huge and after the first year, I opened my own warehouse. Word got around and I started preparing whole video libraries. Soon I was selling packages of up to 4000 videos in one go. For a single mum, I was earning a decent salary – enough to save some money.

But when I fell pregnant again, I decided I wanted to be a stay-at-home mum, so I closed the warehouse down.

I loved being a mum but after 12 months I was desperate to go back to work. With my savings

I opened Little Monster Video, a reference to my mischievous sons Paul and Chris. Within two years, it had grown from a store turning over \$80,000 a year to one pulling in \$700,000.

But deep down I knew I could achieve even more. I realised that franchise video stores could buy stock much cheaper than I could. But I wasn't prepared to join someone else's business.

So I convinced other independent video stores to come on board with me. I named my new company Network, and today I have 400 stores throughout Australia. We now own 15 to 18 per cent of the \$700 million DVD rental business.

You often hear scare-mongering stories of pipe dreams crumbling. But I've never had a year where I've lost money. Sure, I work a long week – around 70 hours – but I've managed to bring up two very happy sons, and I wake up every morning knowing I'm going to a job I love!

[www.network.com.au](http://www.network.com.au) ➤