



No room for FAILURE

Taking on the FAMILY BIZ and EXPANDING internationally in the same breath? Why not, say two Sydney brothers – anything’s possible with some LOCAL KNOW-HOW and a no-holds-barred attitude.

WORDS KELLI ARMSTRONG



I don't think it's been that successful," says Harrison Condos of the outdoor furniture company he and his brother have expanded from a family-run Australian business to aspirational US design firm.

"I think we've been very successful," offers younger brother Nicholas. "He's just being humble. Considering we're only five years old, we've achieved a lot."

It's this brotherly counter culture and split-vision drive that has quickly seen Harbour Outdoor cater to global hotel companies including the Starwood Group, be regularly used by interior designers like Jonathan Adler and Thom Felicia (to custom-make furniture for the US' elite), and land floor space in one of the US' largest furniture retailers.

To anyone who's ever tried to crack the US market – at anything – that sort of growth within five years would taste very sweetly of success.

It was 2010 and Harrison was feeling burnt out from the grind of New York property development when he found himself wandering around a trade show. He got chatting to another Aussie about the Condos family's business, Tecno Furniture,



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which Harrison's former blacksmith father, Jim, founded in 1976.

"He was like, 'You should bring it over here,'" says Harrison.

At the time, Nicholas was in Sydney working for the family, specialising in both graphic design and building the traditional-style furniture that Tecno is known for, when the brothers conceived the idea of an extension to the family business.

The pair spotted a gap in the market for outdoor furniture and traded on the backyard, oceanside lifestyle they'd grown up with.

"We didn't want to enter into indoor because there are so many competitors, the Europeans do that so well," continues Nicholas. "We targeted a lifestyle brand based around our upbringing in Australia and living outside."

The brothers worked together on designing the furniture, but turned to China when it came to securing a better manufacturing price point.

"It was difficult," admits Harrison. "We'd never exported anything, we were making



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everything in Australia then suddenly we're in China to make a container of furniture to ship to the US.

"That initial investment was quite high and trying to get enough work to go

through it in the first year or two was really scary. But now we're turning people down. We've grown a lot over the past year."

They launched at the ICFE (International Contemporary Furniture Fair), an annual high-end furniture trade fair in New York, though Harrison admits they probably launched too early.

"We should have spent six months to a year researching and figuring out the market, but we launched it and signed loads of clients."

This bullish attitude has been the brothers' modus operandi from day one. With 20 staff scattered across the US, they've expanded their original Manhattan location to two showrooms in New York and four in the Los Angeles area, where they're now based, with one soon to open in Puerto Rico. >

