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Pinz: competing with China and winning

Pinz is a classic 'overnight success' story – taking 25 years to build. A manufacturer of sewn products, based in Adelaide, it is a second generation family company that has successfully met the challenge from imports head on. Originally a producer of clothing, it now makes blinds, awnings and a range of specialist items.

Current owner David Snoad bought the business from his parents seven years ago. One of his first steps was unusual: he went backpacking for four months, including two months out of contact in the South American jungle. He wanted to see how his team stepped up to the mark, and the results were excellent – people he promoted on his return are still part of his senior management team.

David's first goal when he returned to take the reins was to create an Advisory Board, which helped to give him some excellent insights. Followed by a business review from Enterprise Connect, the result was a rapid move from an inward-looking business which was 'ticking along' to a dynamic and fast growing company.

Pinz now employs 38 staff and is looking for 10-15 more in the next couple of months. It was one of only two manufacturing companies that appeared in the BRW Fast 100 in 2010, and also one of the oldest – with a spectacular average 45% growth in the previous three years - very unusual in this sector. The GFC killed off many competitors, but Pinz survived and gained market share.

David has built a great team around him and the Pinz workforce is flexible, producing a diverse product mix. Outdoor blinds are the biggest line, supplied to retailers across Australia, but other products such as specialist military equipment and spa covers help to compensate for the cyclical nature of blinds and awning orders.

David has always focused on having strong systems and up to date equipment: "We have made some very targeted purchases and now have one of the most advanced manufacturing facilities in Australia. Competition from abroad,



especially China, has been a big challenge. We have used a number of strategies to beat it, including short minimum runs; fast turnaround; 100% accurate and defect-free fulfilment; and a capacity to tailor-make products – for example, we now make only replacement and custom spa covers."

Work-life balance remains a priority for David, who tries not to work more than 40 hours a week, instructing his team to do the same. He says more business owners should strike a better balance: "If you can't fit your work into 40 hours a week then bring in help."

Working with PKF for the last 18 months has already made a big difference to the business, including professional, accurate and timely profit/cash flow forecasts, budgets and costing. David now outsources many aspects of finance to PKF, saying, "PKF has put a professional face on our numbers." The result has given David more breathing space, significantly better business information on which to base decisions and the evidence needed to seek funding from financial institutions.

PKF Partner Matthew Laming is delighted to be able to contribute to Pinz's success: "It's great to work with people that are so passionate about their business. David lets us get on with what we do best, leaving him to do the same. We are very proud to be associated with Pinz".